Subject: God's Holiness
Posted by william on Fri, 08 Jan 2010 06:49:00 GMT
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In another note someone brought up "love" as being a key to the Bible and it got me to thinking about the attributes of God. The Bible is the revelation of God, or to put it another way the revelation of His attributes. Since He is perfect/complete in all of His attributes it might be a bit presumptuous to lift one attribute above another but I believe that one could make a pretty good case that "holiness" is the premier attribute of God, not "love". Obviously from our standpoint we benefit from God's love more than we do from His holiness but it is because of His holiness that we need His love in the first place!

The whole of the biblical revelation seems to be designed to highlight His holiness. Yes, His love can be seen throughout as well --the atonement is the exclamation point that reveals just how great and far-reaching that love is-- but were it not for His holiness there would not be a need for the atonement. The scriptures start out by teaching us this fact. This truth (the Holiness of God) is behind all of the Mosaic Law. All of the teaching about the "clean" and "unclean", all of the difficult rituals, all of the separation rites and even the election of a separate people, was a clear indication not of His love, but His holiness. This teaching continues in the New Testament --Heb 12:14 Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:

Comments?

Blessings,
William

Subject: Re: God's Holiness
Posted by james on Fri, 08 Jan 2010 14:40:18 GMT
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You're right about us benefiting more from His love, but it's because of His Holiness that we need His love. Thank God for His love for us and His willingness to make a way of restoration.

I looked several places to see how many times the word 'holy' is used in the Bible, the number seems to be around 1,200 times...Then I looked up 'love' and it is reported to be about 600 times.(according to which account one uses, these are from the KJV) Not that that proves anything, except God emphasizes His Holiness almost twice as much as He speaks of love.

A Calvinist named R.C.Sproul wrote a book entitled 'The Holiness of God' and is well know as a teacher who's teaching centers on God's Holiness. Here's a quote from him; "The Bible says God is holy, holy, holy. Not that He is merely holy, or even holy, holy. He is holy, holy, holy. The Bible never says that God is love, love, love, or mercy, mercy, mercy, or wrath, wrath, wrath, or justice, justice, justice. It does say that He is holy, holy, holy, the whole earth is full of His glory."

Isaiah 6:3  Rev.4:8

Another thought, we understand far more about God's love than we do about His Holiness. Though we don't fully understand the depth of either, we experience the benefits of His love daily and just to be able to grasp His Holiness at all is a results of His love for us to open our eyes to begin understanding His attributes.

One thing is certain, God requires both in our lives and learning to make those attributes of His part of our character is of uttermost importance. I John teaches us the importance of us loving one another, Jesus tells us that we fullfill the commandments when we love God with our whole heart, mind, and soul and our neighbor as ourselves. Matt.22:37-39  And as you pointed out from Hebrews, without Holiness no man will see The Lord.

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Subject: Re: God's Holiness
Posted by Mark L on Fri, 08 Jan 2010 16:54:42 GMT
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Hmmmmm. A very insightful comment. I never really thought about it before. I guess I would have to agree with you. I would add that I think love would be the expression of his being whereas holiness would be the basis of his being. In other words holiness is more basic. Holiness is what he is ; love is what he does. Very interesting

---

Subject: Re: God's Holiness
Posted by william on Fri, 08 Jan 2010 17:09:37 GMT
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Quote:Hardbones wrote:

> Holiness is what he is ;love is what he does. Very interesting

Yes, that is a good way to put it.

In fact, the more I think about expressing it that way, the more accurate it seems. We need a skeptic to chime in with an opinion now... anyone?

Blessings,
William

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Subject: Re: God's Holiness
Posted by james on Fri, 08 Jan 2010 17:34:58 GMT
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I'm pretty skeptical about a lot of things, but not on this subject. And while thinking about who God is and how who He is is expressed, Mark posted that simple yet profound statement, "Holiness is what He is; love is what He does". More than interesting, a revelation.

I was looking at some Hebrew names of God, like 'Hakkadosh', meaning The Holy One. The One set apart as utterly perfect and unique, utterly transcending the realm of the finite, the fallen, and the imperfect. Only God is worthy of worship, for He alone is Holy.

Here's an interesting link to some Hebrew names of G-d.

http://www.hebrew4christians.net/Names_of_G-d/Holy_One/holy_ one.html

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Subject: Re: God's Holiness
Posted by william on Fri, 08 Jan 2010 17:46:00 GMT
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Good link... I really like the pronunciation audio!

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Subject: Re: God's Holiness
Posted by james on Fri, 08 Jan 2010 17:53:57 GMT
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The Jewish man I wrote about in the thread titled 'Interesting Experience' came over and watched the championship game with me last night. He can read and pronounce the Hebrew, it is VERY interesting getting a Jewish explanation of The Old Testament.

If only The Lord would remove the scales from their eyes...

Subject: Re: God's Holiness
Posted by sparkles on Fri, 08 Jan 2010 18:12:37 GMT
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Very thought provoking and convicting subject.

I was reading in the Exploring Biblical Theology book on these two attributes and on page 101 it says:

"The love of God and His holiness are His two most mentioned attributes in the Scriptures. All of His perfections express holiness or love in some way. For example, God's holiness required man's atonement: God's love provided it. The basic text would be I John 4:8b, "God is love," with John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Because God is holy and we, as believers in Jesus, are to be set apart unto God we are to be different from the world.

I Peter 1:15-16 "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy."

On page 105 in Exploring Biblical Theology it says: "God did not need man, but He created man to enjoy Him and to share in His love and blessings. God was self-sufficient within the triune Godhead; yet because of His loving and giving nature He wishes to share Himself and His love with other."
So if it weren't for God's love, we wouldn't need to think of His holiness, because we wouldn't be here.

If we are like Jesus we will show the love of God to others.
I Corinthians 13 shows how important love is.
Rom. 13:8-10 says we are to love one another, love works no ill to his heighbour: there fore love

is the fulfilling of the law.

Because we are like Jesus we will walk in holiness and love and be separate from this world in our lives.

When we realize what God has offered us there is nothing in this world worth keeping us back from all that we have been promised.  Communion with Jesus here and the blessing to spend all eternity with Him and all the saints of God!

---

Subject: Re: God's Holiness
Posted by GWB on Fri, 08 Jan 2010 19:38:07 GMT
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Good reply Sage.

We both ran to get the book too!

Hardbones wrote:
> Holiness is what he is; love is what he does. Very interesting

The only way I can think to shoot holes into this is that â€œGod is loveâ€• 1 John 4:8, and not just an expression (action), if I understand you correctly. All of us know they are both attributes of God. To put one above anotherâ€¦.hmmm.

Coming from Godâ€™s perspective:

Godâ€™s holiness required manâ€™s atonement; Godâ€™s love provided it. â€œGod is love,â€• with John 3:16. (Exploring Bib. Theo. HEF page 101.)

Coming from a human perspective:

For me as a Christian, love is proof that I have been born again, 1 John 1. However, I am being perfected unto holiness daily and â€œwhen we see Him we shall be like Him.â€•

Our love of others is our proof of restoration to Him. In the here and now, wouldnâ€™t that be more important, at times, than holiness? Holiness or the lack thereof, produces judgment, chastisement, or rewards. Because of this, it seems there can be different degrees of holiness because there are different degrees of judgment and chastisement (or the crime fits the deed).

Because love is the expression of grace and mercy, unmerited favor, our loving the unlovely does not have limits or degrees. Initially, it is just a choice to love or not to love.

Holiness is choosing (an action) to love someone, even when your flesh is crawling. This is more than a state of being for me as a human. The state of holiness depends on your will to make choices (actions) to love.

In the end, for me, the most important attribute of God will be his patience towards me.

Blessings,

GWB

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Subject: Re: God's Holiness
Posted by william on Sat, 09 Jan 2010 04:41:13 GMT
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Quote:GWB wrote:

>
> The only way I can think to shoot holes into this is that "God is love" 1 John 4:8, and not just an expression (action), if I understand you correctly. All of us know they are both attributes of God. To put one above another... hmmm.
>
>

He "is" love, you are right. He "is" also truth. He "is" the way, truth and life. God "is" a sum total of His attributes, He is all of those things but certain attributes seem dependent or maybe a better

term--subordinate--, to the attribute of holiness.

Think about this:  what attribute is subordinate in the end with respect to sinners?  Love gives way to His holiness and the unrighteous are eternally punished.

Blessings,
William

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Subject: Re: God's Holiness
Posted by william on Sat, 09 Jan 2010 04:52:28 GMT
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Quote:Sage wrote:
> So if it weren't for God's love, we wouldn't need to think of His holiness, because we wouldn't be here.
>

So I guess you are using my argument in reverse... when I say that love becomes the subordinate attribute so that holiness prevails (with regard to sinners) at the end of time, you are turning it around and saying that holiness may have subordinated itself so that love could dominate in creation! <grin>

Blessings,
William

--

Subject: Re: God's Holiness
Posted by GWB on Sat, 09 Jan 2010 05:42:39 GMT
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â€œGod deals with creation according to righteousness and justice.â€• (1) Believers are made righteous (to be made straight or firm; to conform) through the atonement received by faith. Justice is dealt to the wicked for deeds and unbelief. â€œIsaiah uses carpentersâ€™ terminology; judgment will be laid to a line and righteousness must conform to a certain standard.â€• (2)

â€œRighteousness and justice are the two aspects of Godâ€™s holiness. He can fulfill the righteousness of the law by loving his neighbor as himself.â€• (3)

Love leads to Righteousness & Justice which are Holiness.

(1) & (2) & (3): HEF, Exploring Bib. Theo., page 97 &101

You win! I thinkâ€¦we both won by learning His Word! Now, that was fun!

Blessings, GWB

Subject: Re: God's Holiness
Posted by william on Fri, 15 Jan 2010 05:20:51 GMT
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Quote:moulder@overcomersonline.com wrote:
> The whole of the biblical revelation seems to be designed to highlight
> His holiness.  Yes, His love can be seen throughout as well --the
> atonement is the exclamation point that reveals just how great and
> far-reaching that love is-- but were it not for His holiness there
> would not be a need for the atonement.  The scriptures start out by
> teaching us this fact.  This truth (the Holiness of God) is behind all
> of the Mosaic Law.  All of the teaching about the "clean" and
> "unclean", all of the difficult rituals, all of the separation rites

> and even the election of a separate people, was a clear indication not
> of His love, but His holiness.

To continue... if it is accepted that the biblical revelation (I would go further and say even the revelation through the whole of creation) is a revelation of God's holiness, then it isn't difficult to understand why it was necessary to introduce 'the tree of the knowledge of good and evil'. How could His holiness be revealed unless there was knowledge of the unholy?

If one wanted to reveal the fundamental aspect of the holiness of God, how would you do it without showing the opposite of holiness? The base meaning of the word is the idea of separation which is why we describe God as being completely 'other than' anything that we can imagine... He is HOLY! He is "other than" anything in creation!

As mentioned before, from the beginning God is constantly showing the distinction between Himself and all uncleanness, or unholiness. The whole sacrificial system highlighted the distinction between the clean and unclean, the holy and the unholy, and man's desperate need for redemption in order to fellowship once again with this HOLY GOD. (As a side note, even the demons in the New Testament are called "unclean spirits".)

If it is true (and I believe that it is) that God's ultimate plan was to reveal Himself (all of His attributes, all of His Glory) to His creation, then it would become necessary to devise some method to make Himself known to His creation. To fully grasp His holiness, the opposite of holiness would need to be revealed. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil played a great part in our comprehension of this revelation. Interestingly enough, it is stated that Jesus was slain from before the foundations of the earth, why? Well, at least one reason I can think of was so that God's intent to reveal Himself to His creation (His holiness, His love, His mercy, His truth, etc.) could be accomplished!

Rev 13:8 And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

Comments?

Blessings,
William

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Subject: Re: God's Holiness
Posted by james on Sun, 17 Jan 2010 17:16:40 GMT
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I've heard people discuss this point before, some took the position that God set mankind up to fail from the beginning,
in order to reveal the extent of His love for us, in sacrificing His own Son, Jesus for our sins.
And that His placing of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was so that man would chose to disobey,
which allowed Him to reveal His holiness and set into motion His plan of redemption. I don't agree with that...

I don't know what God was thinking when He planned creation, outside what the Bible reveals,
and I don't know what Adam and Eve were thinking when they chose to disobey.
I'm just thankful He chose to include me in His plan of redemption.

His Word does say that it was ALL planned before the foundation of the world...(including Jesus' going to the cross)
it wasn't that He had several contingency plans that would be based upon which direction MAN chose to go in...

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Subject: Re: God's Holiness
Posted by william on Mon, 18 Jan 2010 02:17:41 GMT
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Quote:James wrote:
> I've heard people discuss this point before, some took the position that God set mankind up to fail from the beginning,
> in order to reveal the extent of His love for us, in sacrificing His own Son, Jesus for our sins.
> And that His placing of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was so that man would chose to disobey,

> which allowed Him to reveal His holiness and set into motion His plan of redemption. I don't agree with that...
>

I've never heard it discussed before, but my question would be why did God place the tree in the garden if it didn't have something to do with the revelation of His holiness?

I am not saying that Adam and Eve HAD to partake to understand His holiness, obviously there was already the element of unholiness in the world with the fall of Satan and presumably this could have been enough to reveal His holy nature, and would have revealed His wrath against all that was unholy when Satan was punished. Of course this is conjecture and might qualify as a "contingency" plan so I won't go there... <grin>

Then there is that passage in Romans...

Rom 9:22-23 What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory,

Blessings,
William

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Subject: Re: God's Holiness
Posted by james on Mon, 18 Jan 2010 02:52:17 GMT
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Right, God did use the tree to show/reveal His holiness.

What I didn't agree with from the discussion I referred to, was the implication that 'God set man up to fail'.

I know the way we word things can get dicey, and while it's true that God knew from the beginning what the ending was going to be like, man still had a free will.

God's wisdom, sovereignty, holiness, love and all the other attributes He only allows us to understand on a limited basis.

II Corinthians 13:12 "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am know."

I'm sure not arguing against God's holiness, nor His sovereign right to do as He wills both in heaven and on earth.

"The Lord is righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works." Ps.145:17

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Subject: Re: God's Holiness
Posted by sparkles on Mon, 18 Jan 2010 03:35:14 GMT
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Interesting thoughts, William. Sometimes these things are so deep I just can't comprehend the why's and why not's. If God choose to reveal His holiness in another way we wouldn't even be thinking of some of these things in this way, but for whatever reason he allowed the fall of man. Being that God is omniscient He knew that they would eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, even after he warned them. God told them that when they would do this they would die. I wonder how much they knew about death, and what that meant and how it could affect man from that time forth. Good lesson for us to take God seriously when he tells us not to do something.

This also makes me think of the verses in Romans 11:33-36
33) O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!
34) For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?
35) Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?
36) For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

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