

LIVING HOLY LIVES BEFORE A HOLY GOD

By Mark Hatfield

One thought that has boggled the minds of men for ages is the holiness that all people are called by God to attain. From the first human being to the last, all are called to be holy ("separation," or "setting apart," NUBD). In the word of God, we are called to emulate the holiness of God so that we might have an eternal home with Him when this life is over. While we see ourselves as sinful and immoral people, God sees us (in His image) as having the right and opportunity to be holy and blameless in His sight. Let's look at what the Bible says about man being holy before God.

GOD IS HOLY

In Exodus 15:11, we read, "Who is like you among the gods, O LORD? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in praises, working wonders?" The obvious answer to this question is that no one is like our God. Many recognized God's holiness and professed it in their life. In 1 Samuel 2:2, it is written, "There is no one holy like the LORD, indeed, there is no one besides you, nor is there any rock like our God." David said in a psalm concerning God, "Exalt the LORD our God and worship at His holy hill, for holy is the LORD our God." God is the only one ever to be known as the fullness of holiness (Psalm 99:9; 111:9; Isaiah 6:3). Even to this day we are to recognize our God as holy, for, "Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy; for ALL THE NATIONS WILL COME AND WORSHIP BEFORE YOU, FOR YOUR RIGHTEOUS ACTS HAVE BEEN REVEALED" (Revelation 15:4).

MAN NEEDS TO BE HOLY LIKE GOD

Once we understand that God is holy, we are then encouraged to be like Him. Jesus said, "Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matthew 5:48). Another rendition of this passage is seen in the writing of Peter in I Peter 1:15-16, "...but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all {your} behavior; because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY." If we are encouraged to be like God we should strive to learn about the holiness of God, and the ways in which we are to attain it.

THE WAY MAN CAN BE HOLY LIKE GOD

The evidence that man can be holy is seen not only by example, but by direct description. In II Kings 4:9 it is said of Elisha, "She said to her husband, 'Behold now, I perceive that this is a holy man of God passing by us continually.'" Herod knew that John was, "...a righteous and holy man, and he kept him safe. And when he heard him, he was very perplexed; but he used to enjoy listening to him" (Mark 6:20).

In Ephesians 4:22-24 we find that the main step unto holiness is to obey the gospel, and put on the new man. Paul wrote, "that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which in {the likeness of} God has been created in righteousness and holiness

of the truth." Before someone has washed away the sins from their life in baptism (Acts 22:16) they have not put on the new man of holiness (Romans 6:1-8). Peter said of those who have been sanctified, "...you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." (I Peter 2:5). It is after we are sanctified that we continue to perfect holiness. Paul wrote to the Christians in Corinth with the exhortation, "Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (II Cor 7:1).

WHY BE HOLY LIKE GOD?

The Bible encourages us to be holy by reminding us that the only way to be with God is to live a life of holiness. The writer to the Hebrews stated, "Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:14). Paul directed the Thessalonians, "...and may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for one another, and for all people, just as we also {do} for you; so that He may establish your hearts without blame in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints" (I Thessalonians 3:12-13). There should be no doubt in our mind that we must live, "In holiness and righteousness before Him all our days", which is our "spiritual service of worship" (Luke 1:75; Romans 12:1-2). Are you living in holiness before a holy God?

If you are not a Christian, living a life that is completely dedicated to the holy service of God, we want to encourage you to obey the gospel, following the Holy One who gave His life for you (Acts 3:14).