

## **THE HOLINESS OF GOD**

*“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty.”* – Revelation 4:8

The root meaning of “holy” is “to be set apart; sanctified.” God is set apart from His creation; thus there is a gulf separating the sacred from the profane, the supernatural from the natural, the heavenly from the earthly. God is infinitely different from everything and everyone; He is “other,” i.e. in a profound sense He is alien to us and all His creation.

“The original root of the word *holy* was of something beyond, something strange and mysterious and awe-inspiring. ... a mysterious Presence from another world.”  
– A. W. Tozer

“[Holiness] points to the infinite distance that separates Him from every creature. ... It means primarily that God is transcendently separate. He is so far above and beyond us that he seems almost totally foreign to us. To be holy is to be ‘other.’” – R. C. Sproul

Holiness refers to divinity, i.e. the very nature or essence of God. God is holy because He is God. Holy is what God is. *“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty”* (Revelation 4:8).

“‘Holy’ in this use refers to the utterly transcendent Nature and the unapproachable Glory and Majesty of God.” – Thomas F. Torrance

God, the divine Being, is holy and thus He is inherently worthy of worship and service. *“Worship the Lord in the splendor of His holiness ...”* (Psalm 96:9). Only God is to be worshiped because only God is holy.

*“He is a holy God; He is a jealous God.”* – Joshua 24:19

*“There is no one holy like the Lord; there is no one besides You.”* – 1 Samuel 2:2

*“Who will not fear You, O Lord, for You alone are holy.”* – Revelation 15:4

Holiness refers to God’s perfection and purity. *“As for God, His way is perfect”* (Psalm 18:30; also 2 Samuel 22:31). God’s holiness consists of all of His attributes wrapped into one perfect Being, without flaw or weakness. God is morally pure, without corruption or taint. God’s integrity and ideal character make Him the absolute standard of morality for all creation.

Because God is holy and morally perfect, He is separated – set apart – from sinful man. Thus Jesus is described as *“holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens”* (Hebrews 7:26). There is a moral chasm, infinitely wide, between God and man. It is God’s holiness which will not allow Him to look upon sin (Habakkuk 1:13; Isaiah 59:2), nor allow sinners into His presence (Exodus 3:2-5; Psalm 5:4-6; Psalm 24:3-4). *“Without holiness no one will see the Lord”* (Hebrews 12:14); only the perfectly pure in heart will see God (Matthew 5:8).

*“But just as He who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written, ‘Be holy, because I am holy.’”* – 1 Peter 1:15 and Leviticus 11:44

*“Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”* – Matthew 5:28

*“Let us purify ourselves, perfecting holiness.”* – 2 Corinthians 7:1. Also see Hebrews 10:14.

To fully describe holiness would be to fully describe God. Thus it is impossible for humans to fully define or grasp the meaning of holiness. Just as God’s love is best defined not by looking in a dictionary, but by looking at Calvary, God’s holiness is best defined by looking at Mt. Sinai. There, the holiness of God can be seen and experienced.

The first time God revealed His holiness to the people of Israel was at Mount Sinai. See Exodus chapter 19. He instructed Moses to consecrate the people, and to warn them to not even approach the mountain or they would be killed. The people were terrified by the power of God’s presence on the mountain top, which was revealed by lightning and thunder, fire, clouds and smoke, earthquakes, and a deafening trumpet blast. God was teaching the people that He is exalted, sacred and divine while they were mortal, sinful, earthly and unclean. He wanted them to know that He was approachable only under certain conditions which He dictated. Any disobedience was punishable by death.

Again and again God made it clear that His holiness was literally a matter of life and death. The priests had to strictly follow all of the regulations when they went into the Tabernacle, or they would die (Exodus 28:42-43). When two of Aaron’s sons (Nadab and Abihu) *“offered unauthorized fire before the Lord”* God struck them dead. Moses understood why God did that, and explained, *“This is what the Lord said, ‘Among those who approach Me I will show Myself holy’”* (Leviticus 10:1-3). God then reminded Aaron that, even though he was a high priest, he could not enter the Most Holy Place *“whenever he chooses ... or else he will die”* (Leviticus 16:2).

God assigned the tribe of Levi to help Aaron and his sons with their duties. But the Levites were not priests, and could not enter the sanctuary, or they would die (Numbers 3:5-10).

When the Israelites moved their camp in the wilderness, the Kohathites were to help carry the things in the Tent of Meeting. But first, Aaron and his sons covered all of the items in the Tabernacle with the hides of sea cows, and special cloth. Only then could the Kohathites come in and carry the items. *“But they must not touch the holy things or they will die.”* Also, they were not even *“to go in to look at the holy things, even for a moment, or they will die”* (Numbers 4:15, 20).

God was consistent in His lessons. At one point, He had to kill several men because they mishandled the ark (1 Samuel 6:19-20; 2 Samuel 6:6-9). God commanded that a particular man be stoned to death for breaking the Sabbath (Numbers 15:32-36), which was the stated penalty (Exodus 31:14). He required the death of another man who blasphemed (Leviticus 24:13-16).

At one point, Moses asked to see the glory of God, and God only allowed him to see His back, because the full revelation of God’s glory would kill Moses (Exodus 33:18-23). Similarly, Moses and the priests could not enter the tabernacle when it was filled with the glory of the Lord (Exodus 40:34-35; 2 Chronicles 5:14, 7:1-2; Revelation 15:8).

“God is fearsome in His holiness, and His holiness is intense and dangerous to sinful humans. ... As John E. Hartley says, ‘It is little wonder that the vision of the holy God is both awe-inspiring and frighteningly terrible. Humans either retreat in dread or bow in contrite worship.’” – Thomas R. Schreiner

God’s holiness is often revealed as a devouring or purifying fire. God uses fire both to purify His people and to destroy the wicked. (See Ezekiel 22:17-22 in which He seems to be doing both at once.) A. W. Tozer quotes Isaiah 33:14 – *“Who of us can dwell with the consuming fire? Who of us can dwell with everlasting burning?”* then says:

“What is this devouring fire? It is not hell, but the presence of God. Who among us shall dwell in the fiery burnings? Do you not know that [only] fire can dwell with fire? You can put the iron into the fire and the iron will absorb the fire and begin to glow in incandescent brightness in the fire. So we will dwell in the fire ...” – A.W. Tozer

*“So fire came out from the presence of the Lord and consumed them, and they died before the Lord. Moses then said to Aaron, ‘This is what the Lord spoke of when He said, “Among those who approach Me I will show Myself holy.””*” – Leviticus 10:2-3.

*“For the Lord your God is a consuming fire ...”* – Deuteronomy 4:24 and Hebrews 12:29

*“This third I will bring into the fire; I will refine them like silver and test them like gold.”*  
– Zechariah 13:9

*“See, the Lord is coming with fire ... For with fire and with His sword the Lord will execute judgment upon all men ...”* – Isaiah 66:15-16

*“He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. ... He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”* – Luke 3:16-17

See also Exodus 24:7; Leviticus 9:24; Numbers 11:1; Deuteronomy 5:23-26; Isaiah 10:17; Isaiah 30:27,30; Daniel 7:9-10, 1 Corinthians 3:13, Hebrews 10:27 and 2 Peter 3:10-12.

These lessons aren’t just for the Old Testament people.

*“For we know him who said, ‘It is mine to avenge; I will repay,’ and again, ‘The Lord will judge his people.’ It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”*  
– Hebrews 10:30-31

*“Therefore ... let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our ‘God is a consuming fire.’”* – Hebrews 12:28-29

*“But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after your body has been killed, has authority to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him.”* – Luke 12:5

### **SIN – Wickedness and Transgression**

*“As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins ...”* – Ephesians 2:1

1. Lawlessness and wrongdoing: A perverse desire to disobey the law, to rebel and disrespect authority.

*“Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is **lawlessness**.”* – 1 John 3:4

*“Nevertheless, I would not have known what sin was had it not been for the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, ‘You shall not covet.’ But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of coveting.”* – Romans 7:7-8

*“All wrongdoing is sin ...”* – 1 John 5:17

2. Anything not of faith: To love, follow, conform to the ways of the world, which is a system built upon ignorance of God and unbelief.

*“... and everything that does not come from **faith** is **sin**.”* – Romans 14:23

*“For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world.”* – 1 John 2:16-17

3. Falling short of God’s glory: Failing to live up to God’s expectations and the roles and responsibilities He has given us. In our relationships with family and friends, and our brothers and sisters in Christ, in our responsibilities in the home and at work God has called us to be “little Christs” exhibiting the Spirit of Jesus. *“All that you do, do to the glory of God”* (1 Corinthians 10:31) but we fail to do that time and time again.

*“...for all have sinned and fallen short of God’s glory”* – Romans 3:23

4. Enmity against God: Hating God, persecuting His people, working to defeat His will and blaspheme His glory.

*“The sinful mind is hostile to God.”* – Romans 8:7

*“If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated Me first. ... If they persecuted Me, they will persecute you also. ... He who hates Me hates My Father as well.”* – John 15:18, 20, 23

5. A love of darkness” People cover themselves in darkness, i.e. lies, deception, dishonesty, fraud, hypocrisy, to hide their sin.

*“This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.”* – John 3:19.

*“For he has rescued us from the dominion of **darkness** and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves ...”* – Colossians 1:13.

The dominion of darkness is the kingdom of Satan. A lie of Satan led Eve to sin. Satan is a liar and the father of lies.

“The Fall has resulted in man’s becoming the bonds slave of Satan. ... Scripture reveals that men are, morally, the devil’s children (Acts 13:10, 1 John 3:10), that they are his captives (2 Tim. 2:26), under his power (Acts 26:1, Col.1:13) ... The heart of fallen man is the throne upon which he reigns, and all the sons of Adam are naturally inclined to yield themselves slaves to him. ... Their corrupt nature

gives Satan the greatest advantage against men, for they are as ready to comply as he is to tempt.” – A.W. Pink

*“As for you, you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath.” – Ephesians 2:1-3*

6. All manner of wickedness – Galatians 5:19-21, Romans 1:29-31, 2 Peter 2, Jude

“Man’s very nature is corrupted: the virus of evil is in his blood. ... Sin is a power, as holiness is a power, but a power working to disorder and death.” p. 101  
 “Sin’s enormity is seen in what it has done to man; it has completely ruined his nature and brought him under the curse of God. Sin is the source of all our miseries ... There is no distress of the mind, no anguish of the heart, no pain of the body, that is not due to sin. ... If there were no sin, there would be no wars, no national calamities, no prisons, no mental institutions, and no cemeteries!” p. 116  
 “Sin contains within it an infinite evil, for it is committed against a God of infinite glory, unto whom we are under infinite obligation. ... The virulence and vileness of sin can only be gauged at Calvary, where it rose to the terrible commission of Deicide [the murder of God]. ... The demerits of sin are seen in the eternal damnation of sinners in Hell, for the indescribable sufferings which Divine vengeance will then inflict on them are but the righteous wages of sin.” p. 118

“Man’s apostasy from His Maker could not result in anything less than the complete mutilation of his soul, depriving it of that perfect harmony and balance of its faculties with which it was originally endowed, robbing them of their excellence and beauty. The whole of our inner man has been seized by a loathsome disease ...” p. 129

A. W. Pink, *The Doctrine Of Human Depravity*

Counterpoint: Although sin is the ultimate cause of humanity’s suffering, it is not necessarily the direct cause of a person’s problems or pain. *“As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, ‘Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?’ ‘Neither this man nor his parents sinned,’ said Jesus, ‘but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him.’” – John 9:1-3*

7. Rejecting Christ. This is the ultimate sin, based on pride; “I will not bow to anyone,” or “I refuse to admit I was wrong.” This was Satan’s initial sin, and it is the sin that finally will send men to their eternal doom.

*“You [Satan] said in your heart, ‘I will make myself like the Most High [God] ...’” – Isaiah 14:13-14; and “Your heart became proud [and corrupted] ...” – Ezekiel 28:17.*

*“Whoever believes in him [God’s Son] is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.” – John 3:18*

*“I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am he, you will indeed die in your sins.” – John 8:24*

*“They were seared by the intense heat and they cursed the name of God, who had control over these plagues, but they refused to repent and glorify him.” – Revelation 16:9*

### **SIN – The Sinful Nature**

Why do we sin? Because we are all born with a nature of sin, inherited from Adam.

*“Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned ...” – Romans 5:12*

*“Consequently, just as one trespass resulted in condemnation for all people, so also one righteous act resulted in justification and life for all people.” – Romans 5:18*

*“Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.” – Psalm 51:5*

*“As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins .... Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath.” – Ephesians 2:1-3*

Metaphorically, sin is called yeast (or leaven), indicating its capability to permeate and infect its host substance, altering its quality. *“A little yeast works through the whole batch of dough”* (Galatians 5:9, also 1 Corinthians 5:6-8). Similarly, sin may be seen as a virus or parasite invading its host, causing moral illness and dysfunction. Theologians say that Man is totally depraved. This does not mean that everyone is as evil as Satan, but it means that every aspect, every faculty of man has been corrupted and enslaved by sin.

*“... you used to be slaves to sin ...” – Romans 6:17*

*“... we were controlled by the sinful nature ...” – Romans 7:5*

*“I know that nothing good lives within me, that is, in my sinful nature.” – Romans 7:18*

1. The soul (the faculty of emotions and personal relations) has been infected with hatred, indifference, impatience, anger and selfishness which spoil our personal relationships.

*“Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.” – Ephesians 4:31*

2. The heart (the moral and ethical faculty) has been defiled.

*“Out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony and slander. These are what make a man ‘unclean.’” – Matthew 15:18-20*

*“... their [unbelievers] minds and **consciences** are corrupted.” – Titus 1:15*

3. The spirit (the spiritual and eternal faculty) has been separated from God and is blind and deaf to spiritual truth.

*“The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are spiritually discerned.” – 1 Corinthians 2:14*

4. The mind (faculty for intellectual and rational powers) is defective and thus ignorant and foolish.

*“For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their **foolish** hearts were darkened.” – Romans 1:21*  
*“For it is God’s will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of **foolish** people.” – 1 Peter 2:15*

5. The will (the faculty of decision and action) has become a slave to sin and cannot freely or willingly obey God.

*“The evil deeds of a wicked man ensnare him; the cords of sin hold him fast. He will die for lack of discipline, led astray by his own great folly.” – Proverbs 5:22-23*  
*“You used to be slaves to sin ...” – Romans 6:17 and “... in my sinful nature I am slave to the law of sin.” – Romans 7:28*

6. Scripture uses the term “flesh” to include all of man’s sinful nature – the heart, mind, spirit, soul and will.

Scripture uses the term “flesh” (Greek = *sárx*) in several different ways. In the literal, physical sense it means the meaty portion of an animal or human body (e.g. Luke 24:39). In some contexts (e.g. Philippians 1:22-25), “flesh” is synonymous with “body” (Greek = *sōma*). In these senses, it carries no spiritual or moral connotations.

“Flesh” may also be used figuratively to mean a person, a human (e.g. Luke 3:6). Again, in this sense “flesh” carries no spiritual or moral connotations. This seems to be the meaning of the term in the marriage covenant, wherein “... a man will be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh [*sárx*]. So they are no longer two, but one” (Matthew 19:5-6), i.e. the two become one person, united not just bodily, but in heart, spirit and mind.

Significantly, John 1:14 tells us that Christ “*became flesh* [*sárx*].” All theologians agree that this means more than the fact that Christ was born in a human body. This verse along with much other Scripture (e.g. Hebrews 2:14-18) tells us that Christ took into Himself a human nature, and became fully and truly a man. Thus “*flesh*” in John 1:14 denotes a human nature. In Christ’s case, His human nature is sinless (Hebrews 7:26). And here (as well as in the marriage covenant) we see that “*flesh* [*sárx*]” does not necessarily have any negative moral connotations; on the contrary, the flesh indeed may be sanctified.

In our case, our human nature is inherited from Adam and is corrupted by sin. In the context of fallen man, “*flesh* [*sárx*]” is used figuratively to mean the human nature of sin. The NIV translates it “sinful nature” (e.g. Romans 7:25). This is the sense in which Jesus says, “*Flesh gives birth to flesh, but Spirit gives birth to spirit*” (John 3:6). The sinful human nature is called flesh, because like the human body, it is inherited and born by natural generation.

Also, like the human body the sinful nature is destined to destruction at the resurrection. The sinful nature, like physical flesh – the body – is weak and mortal, ultimately destined for death and decay. *“The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak”* (Matthew 26:41). *“All flesh is but grass ...”* (1 Peter 1:24). Sin is a weakness and a mortal defect leading to spiritual death, and the deterioration and death of our body is a stark reminder of the power and consequences of sin.

7. Caution: It is important to realize that “flesh” in the sense of sinful nature does not mean in any way that the human body is inherently evil or that sin is a molecular virus or cellular cancer within our physical flesh and bones. Saying *“sin lives in my flesh”* (Romans 6:18) or *“the law of sin is at work within the members of my body”* (Romans 6:23) can easily be misconstrued to mean that our exterior, material bodies are intrinsically sinful (in contrast to our inner “spiritual selves” which are pure and innocent), but this is Gnosticism and must be avoided because it is false.

A body is integral to a human nature. Without a body, we are not fully human; even in glory we will inhabit a body (1 Corinthians 15:42-44, Philippians 3:21). But a body is a unique feature of human nature in two ways. First, it is the only physical feature. Second, it is morally neutral. Our bodies are amoral; that’s why Paul says we have a choice to submit the members of our bodies either to sin or to righteousness (Romans 6:13, 19). All the other features of human nature have been morally corrupted by sin; thus theologians say that humans are totally depraved. However, while the body has been physically subjected to the curse of sin such that it experiences pain, sickness, debilitation and death, it has not been morally corrupted.

After Adam and Eve sinned, God cursed the animals (Genesis 3:14) and the ground (Genesis 3:17), and Romans 8:19-21 tells us that all of creation is cursed and is subject to decay. Thus plants and animals die and everything gets old and deteriorates. But plants, animals, the physical world and our bodies are not sinful. Our bodies are simply *“jars of clay”* (2 Corinthians 4:7).

### **SIN - Summary**

*“There is no one righteous, not even one.”* – Romans 3:10

It’s easy to think, “I’m not that wicked.” But let’s remember that our very nature is sinful, corrupt and unclean in God’s eyes.

*“The mind governed by the sinful nature is hostile to God; it does not submit to God’s law, nor can it do so. Those who are in the realm of the sinful nature cannot please God.”*  
– Romans 8:7-8

*“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of the bones of the dead and everything unclean.”* – Matthew 23:27

Also remember that by one act of disobedience Adam doomed himself and the entire human race. He just ate one piece of fruit – he didn’t murder anyone or commit adultery. And remember Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11) – the Lord slayed them for one lie.

*“For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.” – James 2:10*

Each one of us is responsible for nailing Christ to the cross.

“... the cross ... unmasks the meaning of sin and the depth of man’s involvement in it. Humanity is so utterly selfish and so far astray that nothing would suffice for its salvation but that the Son of God should be plucked from the bosom of the Father and be crucified in sacrifice. The indescribable horror of Golgotha is the most terrible and searching judgment on man that could possibly be made; mankind is so bad it rose up, spat in the very face of God and slew him on a tree. None of us can disassociate ourselves from that ... If Christ came today we would still crucify him ... We cannot evade the fact that the cross is the most devastating judgment on men and women, on all of us, that could possibly be imagined. The gulf between God and man is so abysmal that Christ had to cry out, ‘My God my God why have you forsaken me?’ That is the midnight hour when we are all unmasked.” – Thomas F. Torrance, *Incarnation* (IVP Academic, 2008), p. 246

### **THE WRATH OF GOD**

*“See, the day of the Lord is coming – a cruel day, with wrath and fierce anger – to make the land desolate and destroy the sinners within it. ... I will punish the world for its evil, the wicked for their sins.” – Isaiah 13:9-13*

God’s wrath is His righteous judgment of sin, His punishment of wrongdoing (Romans 13:4).

“... God has made no attempt to conceal the facts concerning His wrath. He is not ashamed to make it known that vengeance and fury belong unto Him. ... A study of the concordance will show that there are more references in Scripture to the anger, fury and wrath of God, than there are to His love and tenderness. Because God is holy, He hates all sin, and because He hates all sin, His anger burns against the sinner (Psalm 7:11).” – Arthur Pink

God’s wrath is His “holy reaction to evil” (John Stott), a vehement repulsion and destruction of all that is antagonistic to Him and abhorrent to His nature.

Sin is a direct provocation and personal confrontation with God; the sinner is disobeying God and rebelling against Him. The sinner is usurping God’s authority and is even trying to be like Him (Genesis 3:4-5). God must respond to the sinner’s defiance, and His response is judgment and wrath.

“Sin in itself is not simply an act done by man – it is sin *against* God. [See Psalm 51:4.] ... It is not sin simply because it is against love or goodness or even against man, but because it is ultimately against God himself. ... If sin is an attack on the very Godness of God, upon God precisely as God, then by His very Godness ... he must and does resist sin – just in being God. ... [Sinners] are

actually asserting themselves to be God, and so placing themselves in direct contradiction to the Godness of God. ... God resists sin in the full Godness of God – that is the meaning of the *wrath* of God. ... God would abdicate from being God, would un-God himself, if he condoned sin.” – Thomas F. Torrance

God and the sinner, good and evil are mutually irreconcilable and one cannot rest until the other is vanquished. Evil hates what is good and spends its energy trying to destroy all that is right and virtuous; therefore God cannot allow it to triumph. He must necessarily destroy evil, and His action against it is called His wrath.

“Whatever is holy is healthy; evil is a moral sickness that must end ultimately in death. ... Since God’s first concern for His universe is its moral health, that is, its holiness, whatever is contrary to this is necessarily under His eternal displeasure. Wherever the holiness of God confronts unholiness there is conflict. This conflict arises from the irreconcilable natures of holiness and sin. God’s attitude and action in the conflict are His anger. To preserve His creation God must destroy whatever would destroy it. Every wrathful judgment of God in the history of the world has been a holy act of preservation. God’s wrath is His utter intolerance of whatever degrades and destroys. He hates iniquity as a mother hates the diphtheria or polio that would destroy the life of her child.” – A. W. Tozer

God’s wrath is a responsive attribute. He is never wrathful or angry for no reason; His wrath is only stirred into action when provoked by wickedness or sin. In a sense, God’s wrath is a defense; evil is “an attack on God” (T. F. Torrance), and God must necessarily respond. Evil men bring God’s wrath upon themselves by antagonizing and opposing Him (Jeremiah 4:18 and 32:26-35, Ezekiel 14:23).

- God’s wrath responds to disobedience – Ephesians 5:6.
- God’s anger responds to rebellion and hardness of heart – Hebrews 3:7-11.
- Jesus’ anger responds to stubborn hearts – Mark 3:5.
- God’s wrath responds to the sins of our worldly nature – Colossians 3:5-6.

God is withholding the fullness of His wrath until the end of this world, known as the “day of the Lord” (see Zephaniah 1:14 – 2:3). He is patiently and mercifully waiting for all to come to repentance, but the world is only going from bad to worse. Eventually Satan will gather the nations together to attempt a final rebellion against God and to kill all His people (Revelation 20:7-10). At that point, God will be forced to defeat Satan and destroy the world system of wickedness and rebellion (Revelation 17 and 18). He will judge the living and the dead (Revelation 20:11-15), punish the evil-doers and cast them into outer darkness, avenge the wrongs done to His people, and establish His kingdom of righteousness and peace (Revelation 21 and 22:1-6).

*“Rejoice O nations with His people, for He will avenge the blood of His servants; He will take vengeance on His enemies.” – Deuteronomy 32:43*

*“I will take vengeance in anger and wrath upon the nations that have not obeyed Me.”  
– Micah 5:15*

*“This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with His powerful*

*angels. He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the Majesty of His power on the day He comes to be glorified ...” – 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9*

### **Personal Application**

Jesus, as our High Priest, has gone before us to the throne of God to intercede for us. As required by the law, He took blood; however, it was not the blood of bulls or goats, but His own holy, precious blood, which is able to truly atone for our sins and wash us clean – to make us holy. See Hebrews 9:12-14.

“If we would know fullness and power in Christian life and service, we must first of all know the power of the blood of Christ, for it is that which brings us pardon, justification and confidence in our approach to God. We cannot know the power of the Spirit unless we first know the power of the blood. We certainly cannot know the power of prayer unless we know the power of that blood by which alone we can approach God’s throne of grace.” – R. A. Torrey

Jesus is our mediator (1 Timothy 2:5, Hebrews 9:15 and 12:24). Jesus is our high priest (Hebrews 4:14-16). Jesus is our intercessor (Romans 8:34). Jesus is our advocate (Job 16:19). Therefore, unlike the Israelites, we can boldly approach the very presence of God because – and only because – we are made acceptable to God in and by Jesus.

Instead of fearfully avoiding Mount Sinai, we can under the new covenant boldly approach the throne of the holy God in the name of Jesus (Hebrews 12:18-24).

We can be holy by the cleansing blood of Jesus (through confession and repentance), by obedience, and by being filled, through faith, with the victorious power and very presence of the Holy Spirit who indwells us. (However, a Christian still has an old nature, and sinless perfection will not be attained this side of heaven.)

Avoid deliberate sin (Hebrews 10:26-31); do not turn away from God or harden your heart (Hebrews 3:12-15), for “*the Lord will judge His people*” (Hebrews 10:30).

Confess your sins and claim the mercy and forgiveness God has promised.

*“If we confess our sin, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” – 1 John 1:9*

*“You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires;... and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.” – Ephesians 4:22-24*