

This study sheet belongs to:

Study 1. The Holiness of God

READ: Isaiah 6: 1-8

HOLINESS REFLECTED

In Old Testament times, God's chosen people was the nation of Israel. To them He made known His laws, and it was His desire that they should reflect His holiness, by the kind of lives they lived. He said to them, **"You shall be holy; for I am holy"**. (*Leviticus 11: 44*) He wanted them to be different from the other nations, in the sense that He had chosen them to be **"a people for Himself"**. (*Deuteronomy 7: 6*) Just as a mirror portrays whatever object is held before it, so Israel was to 'mirror' God's holiness to surrounding nations.

But being different is never easy! The nation of Israel failed miserably in their God-given role of reflecting His holiness. Instead of being 'different', Israel became 'like' the heathen, and fell into idolatry and immorality of all kinds. By the time of Isaiah, sinfulness so characterised God's people that the prophet said, **"I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips"**. (v. 5) He meant that the whole nation had become polluted by the 'spiritual leprosy' of sin!

HOLINESS EXPRESSED

When individuals and nations disregard God's standards, punishment is the inevitable consequence. This is an aspect of God's holiness which we may be inclined to overlook. Because He is holy, He cannot turn a blind eye upon those who defy His laws - He **MUST** punish sin! For this reason, the Old Testament contains numerous examples of how Israel came repeatedly under the judgment of God. **"The wrath of the Lord"** is one form in which the holiness of God is expressed. (*2 Chronicles 36: 16*)

HOLINESS EXPERIENCED

Today, God's will is that every believer in the Lord Jesus should live a holy life. To be a Christian requires us to turn FROM everything which we know to be displeasing to God, and to turn TO Him, in whole-hearted commitment. This is the highway to the highest and best in life! **"Present your bodies a living sacrifice, HOLY, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service."** (*Romans 12: 1*)



KEY VERSE: Isaiah 6: 3
"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!"

When we consider God as Creator, we immediately think of His power and wisdom. We must realise, however, that He possesses many other qualities, such as holiness and righteousness.

HOLINESS DEFINED

What does 'the holiness of God' mean? Basically, it means that He is absolutely pure; He is totally separated from every form of sin. In His being and nature, He stands apart from all evil. We think, say and do things which are impure, but GOD cannot, for HE IS HOLY. (*See Exodus 15: 11*)



HOLINESS REVEALED

It was the holiness of God which was impressed upon the mind of the young prophet Isaiah, in the vision described in the Bible Reading. Just a little while earlier, he had witnessed King Uzziah suffering and dying from leprosy. (*2 Chronicles 26: 16-23*) Now, in sharp contrast to that loathsome disease, God was showing His prophet how pure and holy He is. The effect of the vision was to make Isaiah feel like a 'spiritual leper', so great was his sense of being sinful in the sight of God. It is the same today; when we understand how holy God is, we discover how impure and unclean we are!

1 A) EXPRESS IN YOUR OWN WORDS WHAT IS MEANT BY THE 'HOLINESS OF GOD'.

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B) WHAT EFFECT DID THE VISION OF GOD'S HOLINESS HAVE ON ISAIAH?

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C) IN WHAT WAY WOULD A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING OF 'THE HOLINESS OF GOD' AFFECT A PERSON TODAY?

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IN THE VISION, THE LIVE (OR BURNING) COAL FROM THE ALTAR WAS LAID UPON ISAIAH'S LIPS. THIS WAS A SYMBOL TO TEACH HIM THAT CLEANSING FROM SIN IS ONLY AVAILABLE THROUGH A SACRIFICE BEING OFFERED. Read *HEBREWS 9:26-28* and *1 PETER 2:24*.

OF WHAT VALUE IS THE SACRIFICE OF THE LORD JESUS TO US?

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WRITE OUT THE WORDS WHICH THE SERAPH (ANGEL) SAID TO ISAIAH, AS HE LAID THE COAL UPON HIS MOUTH.

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IN WHAT WAY WAS ISRAEL 'SPECIAL'? (SEE *DEUTERONOMY 7:6-8*)

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A) WHAT IS THE REACTION OF THE HOLY GOD TO OUR SIN?

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6

B) GIVE ONE CLEAR ILLUSTRATION, FROM BIBLE HISTORY, OF THIS REACTION.

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"PRESENT YOUR BODIES A LIVING SACRIFICE, HOLY, ACCEPTABLE TO GOD . . ."
WHAT DO YOU THINK IS INVOLVED IN THIS STATEMENT?

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7

WRITE EITHER TRUE OR FALSE AFTER THESE:-

1. Isaiah had no need of being cleansed from sin.
2. King Uzziah died of palsy.
3. In O.T. times, Israel was God's chosen race.
4. The Holy God must punish sin.
5. Followers of the Lord Jesus Christ should not indulge in sinful practices.

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This study sheet belongs to:

Study 2. The Justice of God

READ: Psalm 11: 1-7 & Psalm 89: 11-18



KEY VERSE: Psalm 11: 7
 “For the Lord is righteous, He loves righteousness.”

A RIGHTEOUS GOD

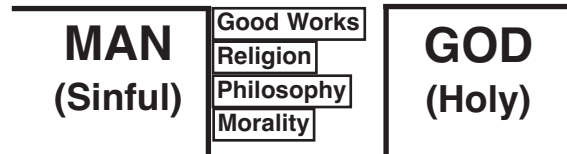
A holy God - pure and sinless - must necessarily be a righteous God, absolutely fair in all His dealings with men. The laws which Moses received on Mount Sinai for the nation of Israel, (**Exodus 20**) proved God’s concern for His people’s behaviour. It was His desire that every level of society should be treated fairly and justly. **“He is the Rock, His work is perfect; for all His ways are justice, a God of truth and without injustice; righteous and upright is He.”** (**Deuteronomy 32: 4**) The Ten Commandments, given by God, had made clear what is right and what is wrong. God had covered every contingency. The laws of the nation had the firmest and best of foundations - they came from the hand of God. (**See Deuteronomy 4: 5-8**)

THE JUSTICE OF GOD

But as with all nations, injustices crept in to the national life of Israel. Often it was the poor who suffered at the hands of the rich and powerful. (**See Amos 2: 6**) God had said that they were not to pervert justice, nor were they to show partiality to the poor, or favouritism to the great. Instead they were to act fairly towards their neighbours in every circumstance. (**Leviticus 19: 15**)

When justice was perverted, God sent His prophets (men who brought God’s Word to the people) to pronounce His hatred of what He saw. They condemned, in the strongest language, the behaviour of greedy and selfish men. The people’s injustices demanded action from a holy and just God. Through His prophet Jeremiah, He said, **“Shall I not punish them for these things?”** (**Jeremiah 5: 28-29**) And punish them He did!

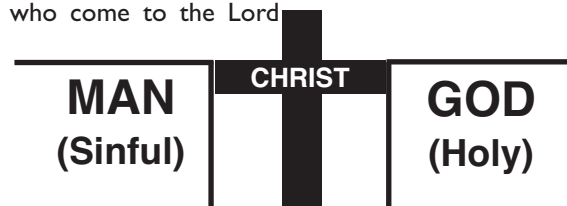
THE JUDGMENT OF GOD



So the case for fair and just behaviour was established by God. **“The authorities that exist are appointed by God.”** (**Romans 13: 1**) Like many things in this sinful world, some governments are unjust and unfair. They resemble those mentioned in **Jeremiah 5**, but God is not deceived! One of the wisest men who ever lived, King Solomon, ended his book, Ecclesiastes, with these words, **“For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether it is good or whether it is evil”.** (**Ecclesiastes 12: 14**)

This is supported by Paul’s teaching when he wrote of **“the day when God will judge the secrets of men”.** (**Romans 2: 16**) Actions, words, even secret thoughts - God knows them all. Sooner or later each one of us has to answer for them all! Even now, the teaching of the New Testament is that God has put persons in positions of authority and He expects them to rule justly. God expects all who are Christians to submit to the ‘powers that be’. (**See Romans 13: 1 & 2**)

So what about your sins, secret or otherwise? God is holy and cannot go against His character. Therefore He must judge our wrong-doing. We have all sinned, we all stand condemned and we all deserve to be punished. (**Romans 6: 23**) But God’s love and mercy and the self-sacrificing love of His Son make it possible for Him to forgive us. The Lord Jesus Christ has been punished instead of us. God **“has laid on Him the iniquity of us all”.** (**Isaiah 53: 6**) Judgment is inevitable (**Revelation 20: 12**), but forgiveness is available for all those who come to the Lord



Study 2. The Justice of God

1 USE THE STUDY NOTES TO HELP YOU JOIN THE NAMES OF THESE PEOPLE TO THE WORDS SPOKEN BY EACH OF THEM:-

Isaiah

“God will judge the secrets of men . . .”

Solomon

“The Lord is righteous, He loves righteousness.”

Jeremiah

“God will bring every work into judgment . . .”

The Psalmist

“Shall I not punish them . . . ?”

Paul

“ The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.”

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A) TO WHOM AND AT WHAT PLACE, DID GOD GIVE THE TEN COMMANDMENTS?

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B) WHY DO YOU THINK GOD GAVE THESE COMMANDMENTS?

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A) GOD EXPECTED HIS PEOPLE TO TREAT ONE ANOTHER FAIRLY. READ AND WRITE OUT

DEUTERONOMY 16: 20.

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4

B) GIVE AN EXAMPLE OF UNFAIR TREATMENT OR INJUSTICE, YOU KNOW ABOUT.

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EXPLAIN IN YOUR OWN WORDS, WHY WE BELIEVE THAT SIN CANNOT FOR EVER GO UNPUNISHED.

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HOW IS IT POSSIBLE FOR A JUST AND RIGHTEOUS GOD TO FORGIVE SINNERS?

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READ Acts 13: 38 & 39 AND EXPLAIN CLEARLY HOW WE, AS INDIVIDUALS, CAN RECEIVE GOD’S FORGIVENESS.

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Total marks for this study

This study sheet belongs to:

Study 3. The Love of God

READ: 1 John 4: 7-19



KEY VERSE: 1 John 4: 19
“We love Him because He first loved us.”

GOD IS LOVE

There are many aspects of God’s nature, but none is more important than this, **“God is love”!** These simple words describe His very ‘heart’ - what He is now, always has been, and never will cease to be! The wonderful message of the Bible is that His love has not remained hidden within Himself. He has shown it in many ways.

GOD’S LOVE FOR ISRAEL

Hundreds of years before the Israelites were slaves in Egypt, God had made a promise to their ancestor, Abraham, that He would make of them a great nation. **(Genesis 12: 1 & 2)** God, who is always faithful to His promises, did as He said. Over many centuries, He brought into existence the nation of Israel and gave them Canaan - ‘The Promised Land’. Towards the end of his life, Moses reminded the people that God had not chosen them because they had the makings of a strong and powerful nation, but because He had **loved** them and was keeping His promise to Abraham. **(Deuteronomy 7: 6-9)**

GOD’S LOVE FOR THE INDIVIDUAL

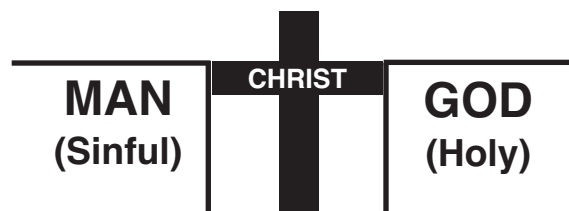
One man who wrote a great deal about God’s love was David. Different versions of the Bible translate the word he uses for love as ‘loving-kindness’, ‘unfailing love’, ‘mercies’, and ‘goodness’. **(See Psalm 31: 7, 36: 7, and 144: 2)** Throughout all his life, whether as an unknown shepherd at Bethlehem or as an acclaimed king in Jerusalem, he acknowledged God’s great love. His life may have been very different from ours, but once we read his songs we realise that in many ways he was someone to whom we can relate today. Success, failure, fear, joy, love, rejection - throughout it all, David clung to the enduring, faithful love of God and never more so than when he had an affair with another man’s wife. **(2 Samuel 11)** When he realised how terrible this great sin was, he cried, **“Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your loving-kindness . . . blot out my transgressions”.** **(Psalm 51: 1)**

GOD’S LOVE FOR THE WORLD

We move away now, from the confines of the nation of Israel, and find that God’s love extends to the whole world. **(John 3: 16)** God’s holiness and justice demand the punishment of sin but God’s love has made it possible for sinners to be forgiven. **(See Psalm 51: 7)** We learn something of the extent and character of that love from the Old Testament in **Psalm 36: 7**. In the New Testament, we have the supreme example of His love in a Person - in the life and death of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God. **“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”** **(Romans 5: 8)** God did not wait for us to come to Him; in love, He came to us, by sending His Son to be the Saviour of the world. But the world is made up of individuals like you and me. Do you know God’s love as David knew it, in forgiveness and blessing? Can you say, **“Christ died for me”?**

OUR RESPONSE TO GOD’S LOVE

When we really value God’s love for us, we truly love Him in return. We show our love to Him by being obedient to His Word. **(John 14: 15 & 23)** The Lord Jesus also taught His disciples another important truth about love. **“Love one another as I have loved you.”** **(John 13: 34)** Divine love, as demonstrated by the Saviour, is quite simply self-sacrificing love, laying down your life for others, not pleasing yourself, but pleasing God. When we think of the extent of His love and self-sacrifice, can we do anything **except** surrender our lives to Him?



Study 3. The Love of God

1 USE *DEUTERONOMY 7:6-9* TO FIND **ONE** REASON WHY GOD DID **NOT** CHOOSE THE ISRAELITES AND **TWO** REASONS WHY HE **DID** CHOOSE THEM.

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2 WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM DAVID'S CONFESSION IN *PSALM 51:1*

i. About his sense of guilt?

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ii. About God's love for him?

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3 WRITE OUT THE WHOLE OF *ROMANS 5:8* AND **UNDERLINE** THE PART WHICH TELLS US THE EXTENT OF GOD'S LOVE.

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4 READ THE KEY VERSE AGAIN, AND **IN YOUR OWN WORDS** EXPRESS WHAT YOU CONSIDER TO BE THE GREATEST PROOF OF GOD'S LOVE.

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5 SUGGEST SEVERAL WAYS CHRISTIANS CAN CLEARLY SHOW THEIR LORD AND MASTER HOW MUCH THEY LOVE HIM?

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6 GIVE EXAMPLES OF HOW A YOUNG CHRISTIAN TODAY COULD SHOW THE LOVE OF CHRIST TO:-

i. His parents.

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ii. His friends at school/work.

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iii. An elderly neighbour.

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6


25

Total marks
for this study

This study sheet belongs to:

Study 4. The Mercy and Grace of God

READ: Acts 26: 1 & 9-19

 **KEY VERSE: Ephesians 2: 8**
“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.”

It is impossible for God to cease being holy, righteous and just. Therefore, He must punish sin. It is equally true, however, to say that His love towards sinners never ceases! His wonderful love includes both His mercy and His grace.

These can be defined as follows:-

GOD’S MERCY -

withholds the punishment we deserve.

GOD’S GRACE -

gives us special kindness, which we do not deserve.

MERCY AND GRACE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Throughout the Old Testament the twin themes of mercy and grace are repeated to both individuals and to nations. In the days of great wickedness prior to the flood, **“Noah found grace...”**. (Genesis 6: 8) Another example is found in the experience of the Ninevites, who were saved from destruction, when they believed God’s message through Jonah. They proved that the Lord is **“a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in loving-kindness”**. (Jonah 4: 2)

God’s justice and love were constantly declared by the prophets to Israel and the nations, but often their hearers were not interested. They were not willing to change their ways and consequently, ended their lives under the judgment of God! Yet the offer of mercy was always there, as shown by Isaiah’s words, **“Let the wicked forsake his way . . . let him return to the Lord, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon”**. (Isaiah 55: 7)

MERCY AND GRACE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Our sin has made a gulf between ourselves and a holy God which can never be overcome by anything which we do. It was never God’s will for men and women to be separated from Him. Without God’s way of salvation, punishment is inevitable! But the good news is that **“God so loved the world...”**. (John 3: 16) This verse is a simple and clear

description of God’s way of salvation - His offer of mercy and grace through the Lord Jesus Christ.

MERCY means we shall not perish, even though we deserve to be punished for our sins, for the Lord Jesus Christ has been punished instead of us.

GRACE means we have everlasting life, as a wonderful and undeserved gift from God. It is ours, the very moment we believe on Him and accept His offer.

MERCY AND GRACE IN THE LIFE OF PAUL

One man who experienced God’s mercy and grace to the full, was the apostle Paul. He was a strict orthodox Jew, who hated Christians and did all he could to destroy both them and their faith. He was actually on his way from Jerusalem to Damascus with orders to arrest the Christians there, when he was arrested - by the Lord Jesus Christ! At that moment, as he came face to face with the risen Lord, his whole attitude to Him was completely changed! Following this remarkable conversion, Paul became one of Christ’s most devoted followers. Looking back at this great spiritual work in his life, he said, **“I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief, and the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant...”**.

(1 Timothy 1: 13 & 14)

His future work was to take the good news of God’s mercy and grace - forgiveness of sins and eternal life - to both Jews and Gentiles. Not only was Paul forgiven for his terrible persecution of Christians but God also gave him the gifts and opportunities to become the greatest teacher and preacher of the faith he had once set out to destroy.

Paul was a man with a deep understanding of human nature, but he never forgot that it was only by God’s grace that he could accomplish anything worthwhile for God. (See 1 Corinthians 15: 10)

God’s grace and mercy should produce in us a response of gratitude which makes us want to please Him. God is loving and gracious, but He is also holy and just. Therefore, we should endeavour to live lives that reflect in some degree the characteristics of the God in whom we have believed. **“What does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?”** (Micah 6: 8)

Study 4. The Mercy and Grace of God

1 WRITE, IN YOUR OWN WORDS, DEFINITIONS OF MERCY AND GRACE: - 4

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2 A) WRITE OUT JOHN 3: 16

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.....

B) THE FIRST PART OF THE VERSE TELLS US TWO THINGS WHICH GOD HAS DONE.
Write them here:- i God

ii God

C) THE SECOND PART OF THE VERSE MAKES TWO PROMISES TO ANYONE WHO "BELIEVES". 6

Write them here: i They

ii They have

3 READ WHAT PAUL SAYS ABOUT HIMSELF IN 1 TIMOTHY 1: 12-16, THEN ANSWER: -

i How does he describe himself before his conversion?

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ii Write out from verse 14 what he says about "the grace of our Lord"?

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4 iii Express IN YOUR OWN WORDS the reason which he gives in VERSE 16 for having obtained mercy. 6

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5 READ JONAH CHAPTER 3 AND ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS:- 3

i What was Jonah's message to the people?

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ii How did the Ninevites react to his message?

.....

iii As a result, what did they learn about God?

100

Total marks
for this Unit

Return your study sheets to:

25

Total marks
for this study