

Bible Studies for Life: July 16

Set Apart: The Holiness of God • Psalm 99:1-9

By Don Hicks



Hicks

Le
t'
s
wo
rs
hi
p
Go
d
as
we
be
gi
n
ou
r
Bi
bl
e
St
ud
y
to
da
y
wi
th
th
e

mu
ch
lo
ve
d
an
d
fa
mi
li
ar
hy
mn
:

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty! Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee;

Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty! God in three Persons, Blessed Trinity!

“Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty! All Thy works shall praise Thy name, in earth, and sky, and sea; Holy, holy, holy; merciful and mighty! God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!

The Oxford Languages Dictionary defines holy as an adjective that is “dedicated or consecrated to God or a religious purpose; sacred.” For example, The “Holy” Bible. A little better definition of holy comes from the Merriam-Webster Dictionary: “exalted or worthy of complete devotion as one perfect in goodness and righteousness: divine.”

We can turn to The Holy Bible itself which is infallible, without mixture of error. The last phrase of the 99th Psalm says, *for the LORD OUR God is holy (CSB)*. We can get more emphasis by looking at the Message translation which reads, *Yes, holy is God our God.*

The point of this lesson as printed in the senior adult study guide from LifeWay is, "God is holy and set apart from everything else in His creation."

Vice President Freddy Cardova from Grace Theological Seminary in Winona Lake, Indiana, tells us in his introduction to our lesson about studying and visiting with leaders of many of the world's non-Christian religions. He concluded that only our "God has given us a sure Word..."

In this study, we'll learn how to live our lives set apart in such a way that it brings good to us and glory to God.

The psalmist gave a list of several characteristics of Yahweh to aid us growing toward holiness. In the New Testament, Jesus promises to send the Holy Spirit to help us with seeking God's holiness. Here is a partial list from Psalm 99:

- "The LORD reigns" (v.1).
- "He is enthroned" (v.1).
- "The LORD is Great in Zion" (v.2).
- "He is exalted above all the peoples (v.3).
- His name is great and awe-inspiring (v.3).
- "He is holy" (v.3).

The first three verses of the 99th Psalm also focus on these great Old Testament truths as summarized by our author, Freddy Cardova:

- "God is the greatest of kings"
- "All people owe God honor and worship"
- "God's holiness is the foundation of His greatness."

Now let us turn our attention to the truths of Psalm 99:4-5.

- "The mighty God loves Justice" (v.4).
- He "established fairness" (v.4).
- He "administered justice and righteousness" (v.4).
- We are told to, "Exalt the LORD our God; bow in worship at his footstool" (v.5).

Verse five then repeats and emphasizes the recurring theme, "He is Holy."

The concepts of justice, fairness, righteousness, and especially holiness are beyond the reach of sinful man, as expressed in Romans 23:23, *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God (KJV)*. I do not believe we do any violence to the end of Romans 2:23 if we say, "short of the holiness of God" instead of "the glory of God."

We can see a little bit of this difficulty in Mark's Gospel when he gives his account of Jesus' interaction with the rich young ruler.

John Mark tells us, *Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before Him (Mark 10:17a NIV)*. Then the rich young ruler spoke to Jesus calling him, "Good teacher."

In verse 1,8 Jesus answered: *Why do you call me good? ... No one is good – except God alone.*

To explain so the young man could begin to understand, Jesus said, *You know the commandments: Do not murder, do not commit adultery,* and continued His list of commandments. The rich young ruler answered boastfully, *Teacher, ...all these I have kept since I was a boy.*

Mark tells us that Jesus loved the young man. Jesus knew the young man's wealth was the stumbling block that totally kept him from seeing any shortcomings in his life. The step Jesus

knew would help his understanding of his need for forgiveness – of his unholy attitude – was for him to sell the riches that totally possessed him.

Note also that the young man would still need to *come, follow me*(Jesus, the Christ).

Psalm 99:6-9 tell us that Moses, Aaron, and Samuel all called on the Lord and He answered them and led them. We are to exalt the LORD and worship Him because, *The LORD our God is holy (CSB)*.

Hicks is missions director for Jasper Association in Bay Springs. He may be contacted at donaldwhicks@gmail.com.