

Holiness/Sanctification

1 P. 2:9 - But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, **an holy nation**, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.

God pours out His Spirit, not just for us to speak in tongues, do miracles, or have power to witness, but so we can be **like Him – holy**. Without real, personal holiness, all those other things are just dead works (Mt. 7:21-23).

1. Holiness is the PRIMARY attribute of God.

Ex. 15:11 - Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?

Isa. 6:3 – (the cherubim) cried, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.

Rev. 4:8 - And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.

The OT tabernacle and temple had the Holy of holies where God's presence was manifest.

Holiness is so fundamental to God's being that he is called the HOLY Spirit.

2. Holiness means to be set apart or consecrated.

The most common Hebrew word is qodesh, and its Greek equivalent is hagios. (See the back side for details)

It is significant that the words “holy”, “sanctified”, and often “consecrated” (in all their grammatical forms) in our Bibles are translations of the same words in the original languages (mostly qodesh and hagios). A good example is 2 Chr. 29 – 31, describing the reforms ordered by good king Hezekiah. In this, the Levites “sanctified themselves” (29:15), they “sanctified the house of the Lord” in 8 days (29:17). This meant it was cleansed (v. 18), along with the altar, table of shewbread, and their vessels. This was followed by sin offerings and burnt offerings and Hezekiah said “Now have we consecrated ourselves unto the Lord” (29:31). The “consecrated things” were six hundred oxen and three thousand sheep (29:33). The Levites had to help with the offerings, because not enough priests had yet sanctified themselves (29:34). Hezekiah sent posts through Israel, telling the people not to be stiffnecked but “yield yourselves unto the Lord, and enter into his sanctuary, which he hath sanctified for ever” (30:6-8). Hezekiah prayed that God would pardon the Levites who took part in the killing of the passovers, and those “that prepared his heart to seek God” (30:17-19). More sacrifices followed and a great number of the priests sanctified themselves (30:24). In the following months the people began bringing in the tithes, “the holy things which were consecrated unto the Lord” (31:6). Finally in 31:18, it says “for in their set office they sanctified themselves in holiness.” In Hebrew the last phrase is vayitqadd’shu qodesh. (both words are forms of qadash).

So to be holy is to be sanctified. A saint is a sanctified-one, or one who is holy. Sanctification is a state of being made and counted to be holy, and maintaining the purity of that consecration. A sanctuary is a holy place.

The root meaning therefore, is to be set apart, dedicated, or consecrated to God. This is true whether we are talking about people, places, physical items, dates, etc. Even the word qadesh (temple-sodomite) speaks of being consecrated or set apart – in that case it is a setting apart to uncleanness and the idolatrous worship of some false fertility god. If the root meaning was goodness, cleanness, and purity, such a usage would make no sense.

For people and physical items, it refers to being set apart or consecrated unto God for his service and praise, or because it is a place or time especially important to God. e.g., the Sabbath (Gen. 2:3), the nation of Israel, Mt. Sinai, the tabernacle, the temple, altar, laver, priestly garments, the sacrifices themselves, fast days, the firstborn, even things like a field, a house, food (1 Tim. 4:4-5), an unbelieving spouse and children (1 Cor. 7:14), gold and offerings (Mt. 23:17, 19).

For God, holiness describes how he is so completely different from and 'other than' all his creation. When he is “sanctified in the eyes of the heathen” it means that they recognize by his judgments that he is totally “other than” all their false gods. He is the true God, who exists, who moves in history and on behalf of his people.

The common idea of holiness as 'complete goodness' is because to be set apart to God means that we are to become like him in his moral attributes, such as love, mercy, purity, and goodness.

3. The NT says that we ARE sanctified.

Ac. 20:32 - ... the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified.

Ac. 26:18 - ... that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith that is in me.

1 Cor. 1:2 - ... to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints

1 Cor. 6:11 – And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

Heb. 10:10 – By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Heb. 10:14 – For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.

Jude 1 – Jude ... to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ.

4. Yet other places show that sanctification is continual, not just a one-time experience.

1 Thess. 4:3-4 – For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour

Eph. 5:25-26 - ...even as Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.

1 Thess. 5:23 – And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 P. 3:15-16 – (in times of tribulation and suffering) But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer ... Having a good conscience ... your good conversation in Christ.

5. God expects and commands us to be holy

1 P. 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. (see Lev. 11:45 and 19:2).

Heb. 12:14 - Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.

6. Holiness is to be the thing that motivates us in our every thought and action

2 Cor. 7:1 - Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

2 P. 3:10-12 - But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, ...

Terms for Holiness and Sanctification

These are the most commonly used words in the original languages for holiness and sanctification (from the Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon and Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament).

Hebrew words (OT)

qodesh (noun) – 1. apartness, sacredness, holiness of God 2. places set apart as sacred because of God's presence 3. Things consecrated at holy places 4. persons sacred by their connections with sacred places 5. times consecrated to worship 6. things and persons ceremonially cleansed

qadosh (adjective) – sacred, holy 1. God himself 2. a. places b. persons c. angels d. water e. times

qadash (verb) – 1. to set apart or consecrate (or to be set apart or consecrated) 2. to be hallowed by contact with sacred things 3. to be honored or treated as sacred 4. to be consecrated or dedicated 5. to observe as holy or treat as sacred 6. to consecrate by purification 7. to keep oneself from uncleanness

miqdash (noun) – sacred place, sanctuary

qadesh (noun) – a temple-sodomite (or prostitute if feminine) (used in the pagan religions)

Greek words (Septuagint version of OT; NT)

hagios (masculine adjective) or **hagion** (neuter) - 1. reverend, worthy of veneration 2. set apart for God, to be exclusively his 3. pure and clean by ceremonial rites 4. morally pure, sinless, upright, holy

hagiadzo (verb) – 1. to render or acknowledge to be venerable; to hallow 2. To separate from things profane, to dedicate to God, consecrate, and so render inviolable 3. to purify a. externally (in a levitical sense) b. internally from guilt of sin by expiation c. internally, by reformation of soul

Other words for sin include the Hebrew **chasisd** (from chesed, where we also get the word for Chassidic Jews) and its Greek equivalent, **hosios**. These words mean kind, pious, godly, merciful, pure, holy, undefiled by sin, free from wickedness, religiously observing every moral obligation.