

THE HOLINESS OF GOD

Do some thinking while we wait to begin: please discuss...

Read this quote:

“God is now weightless... he has become unimportant... [we] consider him less interesting than television, his commands less authoritative than their appetites for affluence and influence, his judgement no more awe inspiring than the evening news, his truth less compelling than the advertisers sweet fog of flattery and lies. That is weightlessness.” (David Wells, *God in the wasteland*, p.88)

Now think about our mainly non-Christian society:

Pollsters say that (something like) 76% of people in Britain “believe in God.” Do they?

Think about yourself and the Church:

Do David Wells’ words ring true with you? How? Why?

Consider these Bible texts. Each speaks, in a different way, about our knowledge of God
Isaiah 6:1-6, Jeremiah 9:23-24, Daniel 11:32

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED READING

- J.I. Packer, “Knowing God”

INTRODUCTION: GOD IS HOLY

- He is “holy” – say the prophets, apostles, angels, Bible...

Isaiah 6:1-6, Revelation 4:8

- He is “holy, holy, holy” (x3 = very...infinitely... totally...)

- Defining “holy”: what it’s NOT... what it IS

NO!

YES! “Holy” = “separate”

1. Unapproachable in majesty – He is WHOLLY other
2. Unapproachable in purity – He is HOLY other
3. Unlike us in all his attributes – including holy love

1. HE IS UNAPPROACHABLE IN MAJESTY

- Isaiah 6:1-3 – king... exalted... uncontainable... almighty... terrifying...

- Exodus 15:11, 1 Samuel 2:2, Isaiah 57:15

Exodus 15:11, "Who is like you, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders?"

1 Samuel 2:2, "There is none holy like the LORD; there is none besides you; there is no rock like our God."

Isa 57:15, "For this is what the high and lofty One says—he who lives forever, whose name is holy: "I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite."

- And us? (Ever feel like God should answer to us... or owes us... or is our mate?)

2. HE IS UNAPPROACHABLE IN PURITY

- Isaiah 6:4-5 – unclean... have seen... woe

- Psalm 5:4-6, Psalm 11:5-7, Habakkuk 1:13, 1 John 1:5

Psalm 5:4-6, "You are not a God who takes pleasure in evil; with you the wicked cannot dwell. The arrogant cannot stand in your presence; you hate all who do wrong. You destroy those who tell lies; bloodthirsty and deceitful men the LORD abhors."

Psalm 11:5-7, "The LORD examines the righteous, the wicked and those who love violence soul hates. On the wicked he will rain fiery coals and burning sulphur; a scorching wind will be their lot. For the LORD is righteous, he loves justice; upright men will see his face."

Habakkuk 1:13, "Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrong. Why then do you tolerate the treacherous? Why are you silent while the wicked up those more righteous than themselves?"

1 John 1:5, "This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all."

- And us? “This is a bit O.T.T.” vs. The introduction to “Morning prayer” in *The Book of Common Prayer*

3. HE IS UNAPPROACHABLE IN ALL HIS ATTRIBUTES – INCLUDING HIS HOLY LOVE¹

- He loves with Holy love (e.g. Hosea 11:6-9)

- To the Christian, God’s holiness is beautiful (Pss. 27:4, 42:2, 1 John 3:2)

- Through the Gospel God makes us holy (1 Peter 1:9, Romans 1:7, 1 Cor. 1:2, 1 Cor. 6:11)

¹ In a few weeks’ time we’ll think specifically about the goodness and love of God. Recommended reading – D.A. Carson, *The difficult doctrine of the love of God*