

God is Holy (Part 1)

Jeff Rogers / Lamplighter Bible Study
Various Scripture

We are several weeks into our study of God's attributes, and there is a danger to each of us in this study. That danger is simple: collecting knowledge about God and not seeking to truly know God as He is revealed to us in Scripture. We are warned in Scripture about this human challenge of gathering knowledge. In **2 Timothy 3:7**, *Always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth*. Further, in **1 Corinthians 8:1**, *"knowledge" puffs up, but love builds up*.

It is not enough that we know the Scriptures and who God is, factually. The purpose of this knowledge is that we might worship, adore, follow in obedience, and praise our great God in spirit and in truth. Psalm 50 brings this danger to light for us. The commentator Christopher Ash said the following:

*"Psalm 50 declares emphatically that God may only be truly worshiped from a heart of utter dependence and a life of practical obedience. Those who fool themselves, or others, that they are worshipers in the absence of these qualities are in the gravest danger of perishing in the judgment."*¹

Unless we find ourselves in utter dependence upon God and living a life in practical obedience to His word, we are deceiving ourselves that we know God. God is not a set of facts, doctrines, attributes, and verses. He is a person to be known, loved, adored, worshiped, followed, honored, obeyed, and so much more! Knowledge of His person should impact our behavior!

I. The Precedent of Jesus Christ

A. The Life of Christ demonstrates His obedience and dependence on the Father.

1. Completely dependent on prayer.
2. Rejoicing with heartfelt thanksgiving.
 - a) **Psalm 40:6–8**, *In sacrifice and offering you have not delighted, but you have given me an open ear. Burnt offering and sin offering you have not required. 7 Then I said, "Behold, I have come; in the scroll of the book it is written of me: 8 I delight to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart."*
 - b) **Psalm 69:30–31**, *I will praise the name of God with a song; I will magnify him with thanksgiving. 31 This will please the Lord more than an ox or a bull with horns and hoofs.*

B. The Message of Christ (Matthew 5:17-48, "heart matter/not debt") declares the Psalm (Psa 50:8-13)

1. God is the Creator and holds the title deed to every square inch of the universe.
 - a) **Psalm 50:10–12**, *For every beast of the forest is mine, the cattle on a thousand hills...all that moves in the field is mine...for the world and its fullness are mine.*
2. Likewise, Paul uses this truth in Athens **Acts 17:24–25**, *The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, 25 nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything.*

C. Our lives are to model Christ's example as we come to know God. (Psalm 50:14-15, 23)

1. **Hebrews 13:15**, *Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.*
2. **Ephesians 5:18-21; esp. Ephesians 5:20**, *Giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,*
3. **Mark 12:33**, *And to love him with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices."* (See 1 Samuel 15:1-26)

D. The warning of our view of God

1. **Psalm 50:21**, *These things you have done, and I have been silent; you thought that I was one like yourself. But now I rebuke you and lay the charge before you.*

¹ Ash, Christopher. The Psalms: A Christ-Centered Commentary, Volume 2, Psalms 1-50. 2024. Crossway. Wheaton, IL. (607).

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2. **Ecclesiastes 8:11**, *Because the sentence against an evil deed is not executed speedily, the heart of the children of man is fully set to do evil.*
 - a) A grave error of theology is to allow God's actions to define His attributes. Rather, God's attributes should define His actions.
 - b) Kidner says this phrase of Psalm 50:21 "*could be the epitaph of theologians, in their sphere, as well as libertines in theirs.*"
 - c) The assumption that we can extrapolate from what we know of ourselves to what we think we can deduce about God.
 - (1) We mistake God's "silence" for his approval.
 - (2) We mistake God's patience for his permission (Romans 2:4)

II. The Declaration of Holiness (Exodus 15:11, first mention)

- A. **Exodus 15:11a**, *"Who is like you, O Lord, among the gods?"*
 1. *Among the gods* - our minds go to the idols of the heathen, but it is said that the heathen idols are never dignified with the title "strong" or "mighty," as the word translated "gods" suggests.
 2. Instead, we should understand it of the angels or other potentates of the world. It includes all that are noted for and can lay claim to the title of strength and might upon the earth or in Heaven.
 - a) **Job 1:6**, *Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them.*
 - b) God is Incomparable to any other.
 - c) God is infinitely stronger, wiser, more powerful, and more beautiful than any other.
 3. God is so great and majestic that no creature can share with Him in His praise.
 - a) **Deuteronomy 3:24**, *'O Lord God, you have only begun to show your servant your greatness and your mighty hand. For what god is there in heaven or on earth who can do such works and mighty acts as yours?'*
 - b) **1 Samuel 2:2**, *"There is none holy like the Lord: for there is none besides you; there is no rock like our God.*
 - c) **2 Samuel 7:22**, *Therefore you are great, O Lord God. For there is none like you, and there is no God besides you, according to all that we have heard with our ears.*
 - d) **1 Kings 8:23**, *And said, "O Lord, God of Israel, there is no God like you, in heaven above or on earth beneath, keeping covenant and showing steadfast love to your servants who walk before you with all their heart;*
- B. **Exodus 15:11** *"...awesome [inspiring fear, reverence, or awe] in glorious deeds, doing wonders? [fearful in praise].*
 1. God cannot be praised without amazement, awe, and fear over His great wonders and works.
 2. His deeds and His wonders. (**Exodus 15:8-10**)
 - a) The plagues upon Egypt.
 - b) Passover deliverance.
 - c) The Crossing of the Red Sea.
- C. **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. Holiness challenges His every attribute.
 2. These attributes would become weak without "Almightiness" to back them, so all would be uncomely without holiness to adorn them. If the sun lost its light, it would lose its heat, strength.
 3. **1 John 1:5**, *This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.*" There is no darkness at all; He is pure light. There is no shadow of turning or variability.
 - a) His arm of power is a "holy arm." **Psalm 98:1**, *Oh sing to the LORD a new song, for he has done marvelous things! His right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him.*
 - b) His truth or promise is a holy promise. **Psalm 105:42**, *For he remembered his holy promise, and Abraham, his servant.*
 - c) Holy and true go hand in hand. **Revelation 6:10**, *They cried out with a loud voice, "O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?"*
 - d) His name which signifies all His attributes in conjunction is "holy" **Psalm 103:1**, *Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name!*

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- e) His justice is holy.
 - f) His wisdom is holy.
 - g) Holiness is the rule of all his acts and the source of all his punishments.
 - h) “Without holiness, His patience would be an indulgence to sin, his mercy a fondness, his wrath a madness, his power a tyranny, his wisdom and unworthy subtlety.” (Charnock, 1051)