

# Milk & Honey

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*Spiritual Food and Encouragement for Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ*

## The Holy God

Steve Hulshizer

What comes to mind when we think of the word *holy*? Dictionaries have great difficulty attempting to define it. Usually it is associated with divinity, but never really defined. Of course the religious world makes great use of the word, but as with many Biblical words they are but part of their jargon and empty ritual.

Mr. A.W. Tozer in his book, *The Knowledge of the Holy*, makes the following comments in the chapter on the Holiness of God.

“We know nothing like divine holiness. It stands apart, unique, unapproachable, incomprehensible and unattainable. The natural man is blind to it.

“Holy is the way God is. To be holy He does not conform to a standard. He is the standard. He is absolutely holy with an infinite, incomprehensible fullness of purity that is incapable of being other than its is.”

Unger’s Bible Dictionary offers the following assistance. “Holiness is one of the essential attributes of the divine nature. It is on one hand, entire freedom from moral evil, and upon the other, absolute moral perfection.”

Another has written, “The English word *holy* is from the Anglo-Saxon word for ‘well, or whole.’ Charles Ryrie asks, ‘What does it mean to be healthy?’ It means more than not being sick. Likewise holiness is more than the absence of sin; it is a positive, healthy state of being right. This is what John meant when he said, that God is light (1 John 1:5)”

Scripture informs us that in regard to absolute holiness that only God is Holy (1 Sam. 2:2; Rev. 15:4). This is true of all the Persons of the Godhead. (Father, John 17:11; Son, Acts 3:14; Spirit, Matt. 1:18). The Hebrew and Greek words used in Scripture would convey the idea of being *separate* from impurity, sin, or moral imperfection. The word *sanctify*, which means “set apart” comes from one of the Greek words for holy.

The tabernacle is a vivid picture of this truth. When we think of the sanctity of the Holy of Holies we get some small sense of God’s holiness. For one to enter in a wrong fashion meant *instant death* (Lev. 10:1–3). On the annual

day of atonement, the high priest must not enter within the veil without first making atonement for himself, lest he die (Lev. 16:1–4).

The prophet Isaiah provides us with what the natural response to the holiness of God should be (Isa. 6:1–5). “Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.”

We see that God Himself is pure, sinless, undefiled, and as such He is the Standard. Since God never changes, the standard will always be perfection. For God to allow impurity in His presence would lower the standard and as such He would no longer be holy.

Being holy, God is not only separate from sin, He abhors sin and is *incapable of sinning*. He is opposed to sin as light is to darkness. Here we begin to fail in attempting to describe one Who cannot sin. It is suggested that Adam was innocent, but not holy as God is. Adam was without sin, but could, and did sin. God is without sin, and cannot sin. This of course is true of God manifest in the flesh.

In summary, when we think of a Holy God, think of an absolutely perfect standard, and as such, sin cannot be associated with Him. Sin cannot come into the presence of God for He is Holy. It is His nature to abhor evil and delight in what is right.

In this regard, Darby writes, “Holiness, on the other hand (in contrast to righteousness), is the abhorrence, in the nature, of what is evil, and delight in what is good and pure.”

Pink adds, “Because God is holy, acceptance with Him on the ground of creature doings is utterly impossible. A fallen creature could sooner create a world than produce that which would meet the approval of infinite Purity. The best that sinful man brings forth is defiled.”

It is remarkable then, and a tribute to the redemptive work of Christ, that we read concerning those who have believed on Him, “Having therefore, brethren, *boldness* to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus... Let us draw near with a true heart in *full assurance* of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.” (Heb. 10:19, 22)

Amazing that we can come into the very presence of a holy God with boldness and full assurance. What a Savior we have, and what a work He has done. \*

# Revive My Heart, O God!

Mark Kolchin

If ever there was a time for revival among the Lord's people, it is now. The dismal state of affairs in the Church is abysmally low and seems to be declining steadily. Though it is difficult to know what is truly occurring in the hearts of the saints, there are key indicators that lend credence to this claim. Attendance levels in many meetings are low and getting worse. There has always seemed to be a problem with many believers in the present generation adhering to this biblical priority. But in recent years the attendance level in many assemblies of God's people has dropped significantly. When fears over "Y2K" were at their highest, the question on everyone's lips was: "What will become of things?" But when the new millennium arrived and all the hype died down, so did the saints. We are in danger of becoming like Israel who had complacently "settled on their lees" (Zeph. 1:12) and were in jeopardy of judgment from the Lord. Attendance in some assemblies is so poor, that many have had to cancel some of their meetings or had to adjust their fellowship and outreach programs due to lack of participation by the saints. Sadly, many of the Lord's people do not see their responsibility and privilege to enjoy fellowship with each other and sit under the sound of God's Word in order to "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18), a knowledge that multiplies our grace and peace, 2 Peter 1:2. Nor do they realize the long-term consequences in their personal and family lives of sowing to the flesh and not to the Spirit (Gal. 6:8) – consequences such as a lack of peace, joy, victory, and confidence in the Lord.

But not only is there declining attendance and a general paring down of spiritual activity, but also a strong spiritual malaise characterizes our day. Long pauses during the prayer time belie the appearance of spiritual vitality. Less time is set aside for prayer alone – a common in many assemblies. Unfortunately career ambitions, family interests and sports programs are given a higher priority than the things of the Lord usurping the place of the prayer meeting, and undoubtedly private devotional time. Commercial Babylon has spread its long tentacles and cast its dark shadow over many in society, including believers. Spiritual defections continue at an alarming rate as many Demas-like believers join hands with the world system for temporary advantage. Casual, not spiritual conversation marks the language of the saints and worldly dress reflects the downward trend and lack of reverence. There is a growing tolerance of "gray" areas by the Lord's people -- things once avoided in

the past for its appearance of evil (1 Thess. 5:22) but which today bring about no shame of face. Simply put, there is just not the same fragrance of holiness wafting through the local assembly.

Why is this? What has changed to make conditions so desperate and the need for revival so great? Perhaps it is our busy schedules and complex lifestyles – the maddening pace to keep up with the latest trend and obtain the newest piece of technology, a snare that only entangles us further in the affairs of this life. (2 Tim. 2:4) Perhaps it is the allowance of worldly or immoral influences into the home – brought in by the Trojan horse of television or the advent of computers and the Internet. The searching spotlight of the Word of God no doubt would sadly reveal the sins of the saints – a condition similar to that which existed in Ezekiel's day. (Read Ezekiel 8!)

Whatever the reasons may be for this appalling spiritual decline, there is a desperate, immediate need to pull out of the dive. It should cause all of us to cry out:

Revive Thy work, O Lord!

Thy mighty arm make bare;

Speak with the voice that wakes the dead,

And make Thy people hear.

Indeed, it is a bleak picture and perhaps what is being stated is nothing new – indeed it has been stated many times before. But what is being said simply is this: unless there is a dramatic, deliberate, and conscientious effort by the Lord's people an every level to counter the downward slide, there will be an exponential decline as things go from bad to worse. We may soon have to reach up to touch bottom. That effort needs to start at every level -- with those in leadership as well as the entire assembly. Some assemblies have tried to counter the trend by adopting new and fanciful methods to "spice up" the menu, but unless its basis is in scripture it would be no different than if David put new wheels on the Philistine cart. (2 Sam. 6) When Jacob finally got serious about going back to Bethel—the place where he first met the Lord—God told him to arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there. The fact that God told him to "arise" indicated a call to a higher spiritual level. Jacob resolved in his own heart and then instructed those who were with him to put away the foreign gods that were among them, to be clean and to change their garments. They had allowed the world to have its way in their lives and they needed to make a radical departure from it if they were going to enjoy communion with the Lord, which they did once they reestablished an altar in the land. (Gen. 35:1-7) When the Israelites in Nehemiah's day began their revival (Neh. 8), they stood united at the Water gate, a picture of the cleansing effect of the Word, as they opened the scriptures and had it explained

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# “By the Grace of God I am What I am”

(1 Cor. 15:10)

William MacDonald

One of the self-inflicted agonies of life is trying to be someone you were never intended to be. Everyone is a unique creation of God. As someone has said, “When He made us, He threw away the pattern.” He never intended us to try to change it.

Maxwell Maltz wrote, “‘You’ as a personality are not in competition with any other personality simply because there is not another person on the face of the earth like you, or in your particular class. You are an individual. You are unique. You are not ‘like’ any other person and can never become ‘like’ any other person. You are not ‘supposed’ to be like any other person and no other person is ‘supposed’ to be like you.”

“God did not create a standard person and in some way label that person by saying ‘this is it.’ He made every human being individual and unique just as He made every snowflake individual and unique.”

Everyone of us is the product of the wisdom and love of God. In making us as we are, He knew exactly what He was doing. Our appearance, our intelligence and our talents represent His best for us. Anyone with infinite knowledge and infinite love would have done the same.

Now then, to wish we were someone else is an insult to God. It suggests that He has made a mistake or has withheld from us something that would have been for our good.

Lusting to be like someone else is futile. There is a finality about what God has made us and what He has given us. Of course we can imitate the virtues of other people, but what we are thinking about here is what we are as God’s creation.

If we go through life dissatisfied with God’s design for our lives, we will be paralyzed with feelings of inferiority. But it is not a question of inferiority. We are not inferior—just individual and unique.

The attempt to be someone else is doomed to end in failure. It is as unthinkable as a little finger trying to do the work of the heart. That was not God’s design and it simply won’t work.

The proper attitude is to say with Paul, “By the grace of God I am what I am” (1 Cor. 15:10). We should rejoice in what we are as a distinct design of God and determine to use what we are and have to the maximum for His glory. There are many things we won’t be able to do, but there are other things we can do that others cannot. \*

# Quotations on Prayer

by E.M. Bounds

*The Essentials of Prayer*

“The very essence of prayer is the spirit of devotion. Without devotion prayer is an empty form, a vain round of words. Sad to say, much of this kind of prayer prevails, today, in the Church. This is a busy age, bustling and active, and this bustling spirit has invaded the Church of God. Its religious performances are many. The Church works at religion with the order, precision and force of real machinery. But too often it works with the heartlessness of the machine. There is much of the treadmill movement in our ceaseless round and routine of religious doings. We pray without praying. We sing without singing with the Spirit and the understanding. We have music without the praise of God being in it, or near it. We go to Church by habit, and come home all too gladly when the benediction is pronounced. We read our accustomed chapter in the Bible, and feel quite relieved when the task is done. We say our prayers by rote, as a schoolboy recites his lesson, and are not sorry when the Amen is uttered.” (Written in 1925)

“Activity is not strength. Work is not zeal. Moving about is not devotion. Activity often is the unrecognized symptom of spiritual weakness. It may be hurtful to piety when made the substitute for real devotion in worship. The colt is much more active than its mother, but she is the wheel-horse of the team, pulling the load without noise or bluster or show. The child is more active than the father, who may be bearing the rule and burdens of an empire on his heart and shoulders. Enthusiasm is more active than faith, though it cannot remove mountains nor call into action any of the omnipotent forces which faith can command.” \*

**Paul’s prayers while a prisoner were prayers for someone else’s spiritual welfare.**

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## Taking a Stand

Moses did it. Joshua, Gideon, Daniel, Elijah, Jeremiah, Paul, and many others down through the ages have done it. They all have stood up in times of crisis and in times of departure. They warned the people of God. They shed tears over them. They also took a stand for the truth of the Word of God. (Acts 20:31-32)

We too live in a day of departure. The Word of God is being rationalized away, even in “Evangelical” circles, and sadly, in far too many assemblies. Discernment is rarely exercised, and many simply do what is “right in their own eyes.”

Now taking a stand is more than casting traditions in concrete, and refusing to make any changes in the way the assembly functions. It is a conviction that the Word of God is the sole and final authority in the life of the individual saint and in the assembly. It is the conviction that “obedience is better than sacrifice,” that truth comes before pragmatism and popularity. It is a conviction that goes beyond family ties and the approval of men. It is conviction that is firm, but gracious—not cold and legalistic. It is living and functioning by faith in the Word of God, regardless of what others may think and do.

Are we so convicted? Will we stand, or will we be swept along with the tide? (Eph. 6:10-18) Will appeasement, expediency, and compromise dictate our course, or will the Word of God? \* Editor

## York Bible Study Program

<b>February 13</b>	Mark Kolchin	Titus & Philemon
<b>March 12</b>	Carl Knott	1 Thessalonians
<b>April 9</b>	Mark Shelley	1 Peter
<b>May 14</b>	Craig Shakarji	2 Thessalonians

10 AM - 3PM, Lunch served.

## Continued from page 2 - *Revive My Heart, O God*

from morning to midday. There was no concern to get back in time for the ball game or anything else! As they came under divine conviction for sin, they too were revived as a people because they centered their lives around God and His Word. And the same holds true for all the other revivals in Scripture like those under Josiah, Hezekiah, Manasseh and others – there was a deliberate tearing down of those things that were contrary to the Scriptures. It took effort, it took energy and it took sacrifice, but it had to be done in order to recapture the glory of the Lord and experience His hand of blessing. And it needs to be done with us as well.

Like Joshua, we need to realize that time is moving on and there “remaineth yet very much land to be possessed.” (Josh. 13:1) Our heart cry together as a body of believers should always be now more than ever: “Revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy.” (Hab. 3:2) Oh, Lord send a revival, and let it begin with me.

O Lord, Thy work revive,  
In Zion’s gloomy hour;  
And make her dying graces live

## Internal or External

We all probably remember the account of Daniel’s friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and their deliverance from the fiery furnace. (Dan.3) It provides a good picture the Lord’s deliverance of the Jewish remnant during the tribulation. It, however, carries with it a great challenge for us today. *Are we controlled by external pressure or internal conviction?* Paul exhorted the saints in Rome, “be not conformed to this world (pressed into its likeness): but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.” (Rom. 12:2)\*