



Hebrews 1:1 Pt 3_The Holiness, Justice, and Wrath of God
Studying the Attributes of God as a Foundation to Hebrews
Happy Reformation Day!
October 29, 2023

Holy Text: Hebrews 1:1-3

For the last three weeks, our goal has been to remind ourselves of the beauty of “The Doctrine of God” as a foundation for studying the Book of Hebrews.

Today, we humbly approach the Holiness, Justice, and Wrath of God.

These attributes of God, although unpopular, are nevertheless critical to apprehend and embrace. They add the “fear of the LORD” element to our walk, which is necessary for our sanctification.

CRC, if God is only **Good, Merciful, and Loving**, the temptation will be for us, the creatures made in His image, to:

- Adjust God to our own image
- Think that the Bible is about us rather than Him
- Reinterpret His Word in light of our views on goodness, mercy, and love. “If God is loving, then surely He wouldn’t mind (insert favorite sin here).”
- Take His Commands lightly
- Become more prideful: “He loves us and would do anything for us!”
- Fall for Satan’s lies about goodness, mercy, and love
- Miss out on the many *Blessings of Fearing the LORD*¹

But if God is also **Holy, Just, and coming one day in Wrath**, then we would rightly fear Him, honor Him, and tremble when He speaks (Isa 66:1-2). As we have said many times:

The fear of the Lord is the love, reverence, awe and passion that prompt the believer to obey God. It is that state of mental and emotional sanctification where the believer sees God as holy and a reverent trembling results. It is the necessary characteristic of Christian discipleship where total obedience to the commands of Christ is seen as a loving response to a loving God.

It is a behavioral restraining element even in the heart of those who do not follow Christ. In other words, it is a cultural acknowledgment within man’s conscience of the Law of God (Ro 2:15). It is a necessary component of any Godly and moral society.

It is the understanding that God will one day judge the earth and all who ever lived.

Think about it:

1. When the word of God is read do you tremble?
2. When you find yourself in opposition to the Word of God, does that revelation move you at all?
3. What happens to a church when it loses the ability to Fear God?

¹ <https://calvaryreformationchurch.org/sermons/2021/5/the-blessings-of-fearing-the-lord>

4. What happens to a people who are unmoved by the precepts of the King of Kings?
5. What happens to leaders in any sphere when they are no longer able to tremble when God speaks?

Proposition Revisited: If we don't learn to tremble at His Word, we will lose the will to immediately, radically, and lovingly adjust our lives to Scripture, especially when the Scripture is contrary to our desires.

I submit that this problem, this loss of holy love, reverence, and fear, is rampant in the modern church. This is evident by our fruit, or lack thereof; the casual way in which we read, hear, and attempt to do what God has commanded; that in some cases we not only refuse to obey, but actually celebrate the refusal. Heartily embracing God's Holiness, Justice, and Wrath is the cure for such!

A Holy God

Psalms 22:3 (KJV) *But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.*

Isaiah 6:1-3 (KJV) *In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. 2 Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. 3 And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.*

In Hebrew, a common Bible word for *holy* is *qādôsh*. It means "sacred" or "set apart." In Greek, a common word is *hagios*. It means "sacred—physically *pure*, morally *blameless* or *religious*, ceremonially *consecrated*."

The Webster 1828 Dictionary - "Properly, whole, entire or perfect, in a moral sense. Hence, pure in heart, temper or dispositions; free from sin and sinful affections. Applied to the Supreme Being, holy signifies perfectly pure, immaculate and complete in moral character."

AW Pink wrote:

"Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? for thou only art holy" (Rev. 15:4). He only is independently, infinitely, immutably holy. In Scripture, He is frequently styled "The Holy One." He is so because the sum of all moral excellency is found in Him. He is absolute purity, unsullied even by the shadow of sin. "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5). Holiness is the very excellency of the divine nature; the great God is "glorious in holiness" (Ex. 15:11). Therefore we read, "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity" (Hab. 1:13).

As God's power is the opposite of the native weakness of the creature, as His wisdom is in complete contrast from the least defect of understanding or folly, so His holiness is the very antithesis of all moral blemish or defilement. Of old God appointed singers in Israel "that should praise the beauty of holiness" (2 Chron. 20:21). "Power is God's hand or arm, omniscience His eye, mercy His bowels, eternity His duration, but holiness is His beauty" (S. Charnock). It is this, supremely, which renders Him lovely to those who are delivered from sin's dominion. A chief emphasis is placed upon this perfection of God.

More Scripture:

Exodus 15:11 (KJV) *Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?*

Leviticus 19:2 (KJV) *Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy.*

Psalms 47:8 (KJV) *God reigneth over the heathen: God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness.*

Psalms 99:5 (KJV) *Exalt ye the LORD our God, and worship at his footstool; for he is holy.*

1 Peter 1:13-16 (KJV) *Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; **14** As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: **15** But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; **16** Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.*

May we proclaim His holiness like the four angelic beasts, and bow down in worship like the four and twenty elders...

Revelation 4:8-11 (KJV) *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. **9** And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, **10** The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, **11** Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.*

A Just God

Isaiah 45:21 (KJV) *Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I the LORD? and there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me.*

God's justice and judgment flow both from His innate Goodness and His perfect Holiness. God's justice denotes His divinely perfect, holy, and fair assessment of right and wrong, and His judgment is His equitable and timely distribution of discipline and punishment. A Holy God must punish sin and iniquity, and He does so perfectly:

Psalms 145:17 (KJV) *The LORD is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.*

Again from Pink:

Because God is holy He hates all sin. He loves everything which is in conformity to His laws, and loathes everything contrary to them. His Word plainly declares, "The froward is an abomination to the LORD" (Prov. 3:32). And again, "The thoughts of the wicked are

an abomination to the LORD" (Prov. 15:26). It follows, therefore, that He must necessarily punish sin. Sin can no more exist without demanding His punishment than it can without requiring His hatred of it. God has often forgiven sinners, but He never forgives sin; the sinner is only forgiven on the ground of Another having borne his punishment; for "without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. 9:22). Therefore we are told "The Lord will take vengeance on His adversaries, and He reserveth wrath for His enemies" (Nah. 1:2). For one sin God banished our first parents from Eden; for one sin all the posterity of Canaan fell under a curse which remains over them to this day; for one sin Moses was excluded from the promised land; Elisha's servant smitten with leprosy; Ananias and Sapphira were cut off from the land of the living. Here we find proof for the divine inspiration of the Scriptures. The unregenerate do not really believe in the holiness of God. Their concept of His character is altogether one-sided. They fondly hope that His mercy will override everything else. "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether as thyself" (Ps. 50:21), is God's charge against them. They think only of a god patterned after their own evil hearts, hence their continuance in a course of mad folly. Such is the holiness ascribed to the divine nature and character in Scripture that it clearly demonstrates their superhuman origin.²

Beloved, God is the Judge...

Genesis 18:25 (KJV) *That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?*

Psalms 50:6 (KJV) *And the heavens shall declare his righteousness: for God is judge himself. Selah.*

Psalms 75:7 (KJV) *But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another.*

Isaiah 33:22 (KJV) *For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; he will save us.*

And as such, He renders or meets out justice/judgment!

Psalms 99:4 (KJV) *The king's strength also loveth judgment; thou dost establish equity, thou executest judgment and righteousness in Jacob.*

Isaiah 33:5 (KJV) *The LORD is exalted; for he dwelleth on high: he hath filled Zion with judgment and righteousness.*

Isaiah 9:6-7 (KJV) *For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.*

Beloved, did you know that there is a Day of Judgment coming?

Matthew 12:36 (KJV) *But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.*

² https://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/sdg/attributes_online.html#chapter8

Romans 2:16 (KJV) *In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.*

Hebrews 9:27 (KJV) *And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:*

2 Corinthians 5:10 (KJV) *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.*

Revelation 20:11-15 (KJV) *And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. **12** And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. **13** And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. **14** And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. **15** And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.*

And on that Day, there shall be wrath...

The Wrath of God

Wrath means indignation and anger. No one likes to think of God as angry. He's just love right?

Psalms 7:11 (KJV) *God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day.*

Psalms 11:5 (KJV) *The LORD trieth the righteous: but the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth.*

Hebrews 1:9 (KJV) *Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.*

The wrath of God comes upon His creatures and creation due to His holy hatred of sin. Paul wrote to the Church at Rome:

Romans 1:18-32 (NLT) *But God shows his anger ("wrath," KJV) from heaven against all sinful, wicked people who suppress the truth by their wickedness. **19** They know the truth about God because he has made it obvious to them. **20** For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God. **21** Yes, they knew God, but they wouldn't worship him as God or even give him thanks. And they began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. As a result, their minds became dark and confused. **22** Claiming to be wise, they instead became utter fools. **23** And instead of worshiping the glorious, ever-living God, they worshiped idols made to look like mere people and birds and animals and reptiles. **24** So God abandoned them to do whatever shameful things their hearts*

desired. As a result, they did vile and degrading things with each other's bodies. **25** They traded the truth about God for a lie. So they worshiped and served the things God created instead of the Creator himself, who is worthy of eternal praise! Amen. **26** That is why God abandoned them to their shameful desires. Even the women turned against the natural way to have sex and instead indulged in sex with each other. **27** And the men, instead of having normal sexual relations with women, burned with lust for each other. Men did shameful things with other men, and as a result of this sin, they suffered within themselves the penalty they deserved. **28** Since they thought it foolish to acknowledge God, he abandoned them to their foolish thinking and let them do things that should never be done. **29** Their lives became full of every kind of wickedness, sin, greed, hate, envy, murder, quarreling, deception, malicious behavior, and gossip. **30** They are backstabbers, haters of God, insolent, proud, and boastful. They invent new ways of sinning, and they disobey their parents. **31** They refuse to understand, break their promises, are heartless, and have no mercy. **32** They know God's justice requires that those who do these things deserve to die, yet they do them anyway. Worse yet, they encourage others to do them, too.

And just as His love is preeminently manifested in the Son, so His wrath will fall upon those who reject that same Son.

John 3:35-36 (KJV) *The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand. **36** He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.*

Hebrews 10:28-31 (KJV) *He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: **29** Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? **30** For we know him that hath said, Vengeance *belongeth* unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. **31** It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

Perhaps a fitting way to close is to joyfully but soberly read the words of Jesus Christ our LORD:

John 5:21-29 (KJV) *For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. **22** For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: **23** That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him. **24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. **25** Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. **26** For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; **27** And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. **28** Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, **29** And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.*

Amen. Even so, come LORD Jesus. (Rev 22:20b) Friends, repent, believe, and live!