

What Does It Mean to Be Holy?

Rick Railston

Recorded on January 28, 2023

Today I want to talk about a subject that is not often addressed. Especially for those who have a history of the Worldwide Church of God. Back then, this subject was viewed as too syrupy or too Protestant or too Catholic so it often wasn't talked about. That is the world "holy". The word holy occurs 544 times in the Bible. Holiness occurs another 43 times. So we have a subject that appears almost 600 times in the Bible and yet I look back over my Worldwide days and I can't remember a sermon on being holy or holiness because it was just a little too Protestant for those days and that time.

By way of introduction, the word holy can refer to many things. Let's look at a few. In the New Testament it refers to the Father. Let's go to John 17:11. Christ is praying in front of the disciples, to His Father on His last night on earth.

John 17:11 *And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. (KJV)*

We know that there is only one Holy Father and that term does not refer to the Pope. No human can take that title away from God Almighty. In the Old Testament, holy refers to Yehovah and Yehovah's name. Both who He is and His name. Let's go to Ezekiel 39:7 because this one verse addresses both issues of Yehovah being holy and His name being holy.

Ezekiel 39:7 *So will I make my holy name known in the midst of my people Israel; and I will not let them pollute my holy name any more: and the heathen shall know that I am the LORD, the Holy One in Israel. (KJV)*

We see that Yehovah is the Holy one and His name is Holy. We also can see in God's word that His throne is holy. Let's go to Deuteronomy 26:15. Moses is speaking before the children of Israel but he's also making an appeal to Yehovah, God Almighty, the most high God.

Deuteronomy 26:15 *Look down from thy holy habitation [from where you live—your throne], from heaven, and bless thy people Israel, and the land which thou hast given us, as thou swarest unto our fathers, a land that floweth with milk and honey. (KJV)*

So we see that Yehovah's habitation, where He lives, is holy. The reason it's holy is because He is there. He is holy and wherever He is becomes holy. Of course we have the Holy Spirit. Notice what Christ said on the night He was betrayed in John 14:26. We will be reading this on Passover night which isn't that far away. Christ is speaking to the disciples and trying to comfort them with His loss—His leaving.

John 14:26 *But the Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. (KJV)*

We understand that the Holy Spirit is holy because it is the very spirit of our Father. The very spirit of Yehovah, of God Almighty. It is the very spirit that is of His Son. Now holy can also refer to angels. Let's go to Matthew 25:31. We're going through these scriptures that holy has various applications in God's word.

Matthew 25:31 *When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: (KJV)*

Angels are considered holy by Christ and by His Father. Someday we'll find out how that happened. Are they considered holy because they remained loyal after Satan's rebellion? Was that the lynch pin that they had their test and they passed that test? And now they are referred to as holy angels? Someday we'll find out. This very day—the Sabbath day—the time, this roughly twenty-four-hour period, is called holy. Let's go to Exodus 16:23. Moses is talking to Israel.

Exodus 16:23 *And he [Moses] said unto them [Israel], This is that which the LORD hath said, To morrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the LORD: bake that which ye will bake to day [meaning the preparation day], and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning. (KJV)*

The Sabbath becomes holy time because it is dedicated to the worship of Yehovah, who is holy. Our gatherings, like we are gathered today, become holy on the Sabbath days and holy days. Let's go to Leviticus 23:37, the beginning. I'll read this out of the New Living Translation.

Leviticus 23:37 (*These are the Lord s appointed festivals. Celebrate them each year as official days for holy assembly by presenting special gifts to the Lord ... (NLT)*

So our gatherings, our coming together, are holy because we assemble to worship the Holy one, God Almighty.

Let's stop and pause and think about this next scripture because this is often something we don't think about. Let's go to 1 Thessalonians 5:27. Paul is closing his letter to the church at Thessalonica and notice the instruction he gives. This is a concept that we often ignore or just read right over; it doesn't set well with us.

1 Thessalonians 5:27 *I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren. (KJV)*

We as the first fruits are considered holy; we are called holy. What a concept that we're called holy. That leads to the title today.

What Does It Mean to Be Holy?

We're called holy, the Sabbath is holy, God Almighty is holy, Christ is holy, the Spirit of them is holy. So what does it mean to be holy, especially for us. We'll cover that in five points today. First we need to define our terms which leads to point 1.

1. What does the word holy mean?

If we took a poll on what holy meant and went around the room, we would probably have a bunch of different definitions. Let's look at three Hebrew words that mean holy. They are all related because they come from the same root. One is the root. The first is Strong's #6944 and translated holy. It's the Hebrew word qodesh and it is from—the root is #6942, just two digits away. We'll get to #6942 in just a second. This qodesh means a sacred place or thing; dedicated thing or hallowed thing. We can see that some of the utensils used in the worship service in the tabernacle and the temple were qodesh; they were holy, they were dedicated, they were sacred.

A second Hebrew word holy is Strong's #6918 and this is used more often. It is qadowsh and also from #6942 and it means sacred—ceremonially or morally sacred. As a noun it refers to God Almighty, by His imminence. It can refer to an angel, a saint or a sanctuary. Both of these words come from #6942. That is from the Hebrew word qadash. It's a very primitive root and it has just a singular meaning; it means to be clean. Just to be clean. It can be ceremonially or morally clean.

In the New Testament, the Greek word for holy is Strong's #40 and is the Greek word hagios. It means pure; morally blameless. I thought it would be interesting to go back to 1828 and read the definition of holy from Webster's Dictionary. I think you're going to be amazed at what you would find in a dictionary back then because the American people were a lot more religious than they are now. When you read this definition you have to scratch your head in wonderment and ask why couldn't we have that definition now? It wouldn't be allowed now. "Perfect in a moral sense; free from sin and sinful affections; applied to the Supreme Being holy signifies perfectly pure; the man is more or less holy as his heart is more or less purified from evil disposition. We call a man holy when his heart is conformed to some degree to the image of God...". There's a lot of truth in this definition by Webster. "...and his life regulated by the divine precepts. Hence holy is used a nearly synonymous with good, pious or Godly". Can you imagine this definition being read or put in Webster's Dictionary today? It wouldn't happen.

In summarizing the Hebrew and Greek and even Webster's, the meaning of holy is pure, clean, morally blameless or Godly. Keep that in mind as we go forward.

2. Why are we considered holy by our Father?

I think if we're honest with ourselves, most of us do not consider ourselves holy. We just don't. Why is that? When we were called we were anything but holy. Remember we were called not according to our works. We were anything but holy. Let's go to Ephesians 2:2 and see that. Paul is reminding us of that fact. Everything out of the King James unless otherwise noted. Paul is writing and saying an obvious truth.

Ephesians 2:2 *Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:*

3) Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. (KJV)

We know that and realize that and why we have a hard time considering ourselves holy in God's eyes. So we should ask the question, why is anything considered holy? A human being or anything else. We saw the sanctuary is holy, we've seen the Sabbath time can be holy—why is anything considered holy? Let's go to the answer in John 14:23, we read this on Passover night. I'm going to read this out of the International Standard Version.

John 14:23 *Jesus answered him [He's answering not the Judas that betrayed Christ but the other Judas], "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word. Then my Father will love him, and we will go to him and make our home within him. (ISV)*

We see that once we are baptized—putting all the scriptures together—we repent, we are baptized, we have the laying on of hands and receive the Holy Spirit, the Father and His Son come to dwell inside us. It is Their presence that makes anything holy. If They are living inside of us, then we become holy. Any place where They reside is holy. Anything that is used to their worship—the temple or tabernacle—becomes holy. Or any human is holy when They reside inside.

Remember a good example of that—we won't turn there—when Moses stood before the burning bush in Exodus 3, what did Yehovah say to him? He said, "Put off your shoes from all your feet because the place where you're standing is holy". The very ground is holy, the air is holy, because Yehovah was there. His presence was there. The Most Holy place in the temple or tabernacle has that moniker because that is where Yehovah's residence was. Those who have the presence of the Holy Spirit are considered holy because the Father and the Son dwell in them.

Now let's go to the third point. Yes, we have the Father and the Son residing in us in that seed that was planted at baptism.

3. We are to become holy as our Father is holy and as His Son is holy.

At baptism we were given a very small amount of the Holy Spirit. Let's go to 2 Corinthians 1:22 to see that. This is also repeated in chapter 5:5 for emphasis.

2 Corinthians 1:22 *Who [referring to the Father] hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts. (KJV)*

Help's Word Study says this about the word earnest: An installment; an advanced payment; a deposit. The New Revised Standard Version says the first installment we were given. As we know, if we're honest with ourselves, the day of our baptism and the following days, we all know that first installment does not immediately transform us to the spiritual level of the Father and the Son. We just don't have a snapping of the finger and that happens. I've had situations where people kind of expected that to happen. That they would levitate or something after being baptized and hands laid on them and it just didn't happen. We know that that first installment does not immediately transform us to be at the level, spiritually, of the Father and the Son.

Notice what Peter says about this process. 1 Peter 1:15, I'm going to read this out of the Literal Standard Version.

1 Peter 1:15 *... but according as He who did call you [is] holy, ye also, become holy in all behaviour,
16) because it hath been written, 'Become ye holy, because I am holy;'* (YLT)

That is quoting Leviticus 11:45. Becoming holy like our Father is our holy and like His Son is holy is a process. It takes time, it takes years. In my case it takes decades to even approach the Father and the Son and Their holiness. Notice that our calling—the fact that we were called—we were called with a holy calling. Look at 2 Timothy 1:9. We're called with a holy calling because we are called to a holy purpose. That holy purpose is to become holy like the Father and His Son. We see here that the Father is also our Savior, as Jesus is too.

2 Timothy 1:9 *Who [referring to the Father in context] hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works [that's why we feel unclean and unholy as we look back on our previous life], but according to his own purpose [for us to become holy] and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began ... (KJV)*

Our calling is holy because the One who called us is holy because the One who called us wants us to be holy like Him. In order to make that happen, He and His Son reside in us which makes us holy.

Males are to become holy men. Let's go to Titus 1:7. Paul is outlining for Titus the qualifications for a bishop. The definition of a bishop in the Greek is an overseer. This applies to all of us because we're going to be overseers in the Kingdom of God, whether we're overseers in this life or not.

Titus 1:7 *For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money,*

8) *but hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled ... (NKJV)*

Here the Greek word for holy is not Strong's #40, it's Strong's #3741. Instead of *hagios* it's *hosios*. It means—quoting from Strong's—*properly right by divine character*. It is from #40, which relates to purity from defilement. So that means holy men are pure from defilement. They keep themselves pure from defilement. So men are to become holy. But women are also to become holy women. Notice 1 Peter 3:5. Women in God's church are to become holy and it is a process, it takes time.

1 Peter 3:5 *For after this manner in the old time the holy women also [this is Strong's #40], who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: (KJV)*

The point is, women are holy in God's eyes too, when they are called and when they are converted. Becoming truly holy as our Father is holy, is a lifelong process. It doesn't happen overnight. We can have ups and downs in that process and we can stray from being holy and then come back. Where some people stray from being holy and never come back. Our job is to become holy as our Father and His Son are holy.

That leads to the fourth point.

4. How do we grow in holiness and remain holy?

It's really very simple when you look at it. Romans 6:22 tells us. Paul is saying—talk to the church at Rome—you've been baptized, had hands laid on you and repented, so therefore:

Romans 6:22 *But now being made free from sin [because of repentance, baptism and laying on of hands], and become servants [that Greek word literally means slaves] to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. (KJV)*

We see that once we have received the Holy Spirit, we have to develop and bear fruit—holy fruit. We have to bear holy fruit in our lives. Unlike ancient Israel, they didn't have the heart but we do have the heart because we have the Father and the Son living in us. Deuteronomy 5:29 says Israel didn't have the heart. God wanted them to be holy but God knew they didn't have the ability to do that. Their example shows that apart from God's Holy Spirit in us, no one can truly be holy. We, unlike ancient Israel, are to keep the law in a new way—unlike them. We have this new heart. Paul told us that the law, referring to how we view it in the New Testament and as we must perceive it in the New Testament, that the law is holy and spiritual. Let's go to Romans 7:12 and see that. To ancient Israel the law was physical. If they did this or did not do that, the law was purely physical.

Romans 7:12 *Wherefore the law is holy [that's hagios, Strong's #40], and the commandment holy [also #40], and just, and good. (KJV)*

Look at verse 14.

14) For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. (KJV)

Once we have the Holy Spirit residing in us, then we can keep the law in a new way—a spiritual way. A way that involves our mind and our heart—our conscience. We know that when Christ, in His very first sermon, amplified the law by adding a spiritual component to the law. Matthew 5, 6 and 7—the sermon on the Mount. He added entirely new dimension to the keeping of the law. Christ emphasized in that sermon, what we think and what our motives are—what propels us to do something or say something. What we think, what comes out of our mind, what comes out of our mouth, what our motives are. Therefore, in the New Testament, having access to the Holy Spirit residing in us, it's not just keeping the law with our physical deeds but with our hearts and minds. That is only possible through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. That's something we should be so grateful for as we look forward to the Passover time. Let's go to Colossians 1:21 and see that. Keeping the law spiritually is only possible through Christ's sacrifice. I'll read this out of the NIV.

Colossians 1:21 *Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior.*

22) But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation — (NIV)

Christ's blood washes us from sin and we are then holy in our Father's sight; clean, pure, morally blameless—all definitions of the word holy. We've become holy when we're free from sin by having our sins forgiven through the blood of Jesus Christ. We, by keeping God's law in a spiritual way—more fully and completely—then we grow in holiness. We grow in being more like the Father and His Son. As I said, becoming holy is a process. Let's go to 2 Corinthians 7:1; it does not happen overnight.

2 Corinthians 7:1 *Therefore, since we have these promises [notice what he says], dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God. (KJV)*

Making holiness more complete. To become holy is to become clean and pure, but it doesn't happen over night. We must bear fruits of holiness over time.

The last point—we'll spend the rest of the time on this point:

5. Let's look at some areas we need to pay particularly attention to if we want to be like our Father and our Son, thereby becoming more holy.

If you like to outline, this would be point A.

5A. We have to become holy in our thoughts.

Let's go to Colossians 3:12. Paul is addressing this and he is calling the church there holy. I'm going to read this out of the New King James.

Colossians 3:12 *Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved ...* (NKJV)

Think about that and let it sink in and settle in for a minute; we are elect, we are holy we are beloved. That's Colossians 3:12, the first part, now we'll go to the second part of that verse. If we are elect, beloved and holy, what do we need to be doing.

12 continued) ... put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; (NKJV)

All fruits of the Holy Spirit.

13) bearing with one another, and forgiving one another ... (NKJV)

We must forgive, we must put up with one another, with our faults and foibles and weaknesses.

13 continued) ... if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. (NKJV)

It's not an option. We must forgive.

14) But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. (NKJV)

We're looking to be completely holy; perfectly holy—that's our goal.

15) And let the peace of God rule in your hearts [our inner most being and thoughts], to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. (NKJV)

Paul gives us an indication of the fruits we have to bear to become holy. All of these fruits begin in the mind, coming from the heart. As a result—and this is a good exercise as we look forward to Passover—we need to be constantly aware of where our mind is. Is my mind on holy things or unholy things? Is my mind on spiritual things or carnal things? Is my mind on outgoing—mind on other people or is my mind on incoming—taking for the self? We need to constantly monitor our mind. I think we are honest with ourselves, we'll sometimes wake up and say, where did I get on that subject? We realize that the thought in our head is not very good and ask, how did I get here? We want to back track and get rid of that.

During any given day, how much time do I spend thinking holy thoughts, verses carnal thoughts? That's different—I don't mean to give the young people a pass—that is different when you're young verses when you're old There is a definite spiritual advantage in this area when you are older, because when you're young you rely on yourself. You're young, strong, healthy, mind works fast—I can do this, I don't need help, I don't need God's help, I can do this, I can handle that, I can change this and fix that. But as we age, we come to rely more and more on our Father because we don't have the strength, we don't have the stamina, the health, the ability and we have to rely more and more on our Father and as a result our thoughts increasingly turn to Him, as we get older. We realize that without Him, we are nothing. When we are young, that doesn't apply so much because we don't need God as much then—but we do now.

We have to become holy in our thoughts and our thoughts turn to Him as we get more experienced and as we grow older.

5B. We must become holy in our words.

What comes out of our mouth. That's kind of a litmus test for all of us. Let's go to Luke 6:45; Christ hits the nail on the head and gets right to the subject. He was concerned about what comes out of people's mouths as He is today with us.

Luke 6:45 *A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh. (KJV)*

In our heart and therefore out of our mouth, should come holiness—not evil. Now let's go to the Apostle James, James 1:26. As we know, James had a lot to say about the tongue. I'll read this out of the New Living Translation. James is pretty blunt and just lays it all out.

James 1:26 *If you claim to be religious but don't control your tongue, you are fooling yourself, and your religion is worthless. (NLT)*

If you can't control the tongue, it's worthless. Now go to chapter 3:1.

James 3:1 *My brethren, be not many masters [the Greek means teacher], knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation. (KJV)*

Those who teach, because you're responsible for what comes out of your mouth.

*2) For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man [the Greek means complete], and able also to bridle the whole body.
3) Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body.*

4) Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth.

5) Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! (KJV)

We've all been there and done that and you wish that as the words are coming out of your mouth, you could reach out and pull them back in because you just kindled a big fire.

6) And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell. (KJV)

Tough words.

7) For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind:

8) But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.

9) Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God.

10) Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. (KJV)

We praise God out of our mouth yet out of our mouth we judge others and condemn others. We respect God yet out of our mouth we use His name in vain. We say we are Christians yet we blaspheme sometimes. So we need to analyze our words. Would Christ say this? Would Christ say it in this way that I just said it? Is my mind and heart constantly on God? Is my mind on His plan of salvation, on His blessings for all of us, on His guidance? Analyzing all by His word? If our mind is on God, then our heart will speak accordingly. If our mind is off of God and on to other things, our words will come out accordingly. So how much more should we do so during this holy time? This very day? It should be even more so because the time is holy, the gathering is holy and we are all here together with God's holy people.

5C. We have to become holy in our deeds.

We won't turn back there but we already read Numbers 15:40 where Yehovah said, "Do all my commandments and be holy unto your God". We need to be holy in our deeds, in our prayer life and our study life. Our prayer life should be focused, concentrated and respectful. It shouldn't come at the end of the day when we are so tired and our eyelids are drooping and we read a Psalm for five minutes and call it good. Or we falls asleep while we're praying and just go to bed. God understands we are weak at certain times but if that is our day to day practice then we aren't making much progress. We need to be holy in our tithing. Like the Sabbath, regardless of what people say to day—some are trying to do away with tithing—it a test command. Let's go to Matthew 23:1; this is

more appropriate for people that are relatively new in the church but even people who were in the church in the Worldwide days are trying to say that tithing is done away with. An offering is just as good. We want to set the context.

Matthew 23:1 *Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples ... (KJV)*

We know Matthew 23 is Christ's rant on the Pharisees and the Sadducees and the religious rulers. So let's go down to verse 23—he's also talking to the disciples and says to learn the lesson.

23) Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. (KJV)

Paying tithe on mint, anise and cumin; He said you have to do both. You're not doing both Pharisees, but He is saying to His disciples, in verse 1, you have to do both—the weightier matters of the law and you have to tithe on everything. We have to be holy in our conduct, in our deeds, especially when no one is looking. It's easy when a human being is watching you—then we shape up a bit and do what is expected of us or what wouldn't offend, but the fact is, our Father is always looking and He knows the heart and the words that come out of the mouth and the deeds that follow. We need to be holy in our deeds.

5D. We must become holy in our worship of the Father and His Son.

As we saw in the introduction, the Sabbath day is considered holy time. It's the fourth commandment—remember the Sabbath to keep it holy; Exodus 20:8. Keep the Sabbath holy. We are here today, a joyous time with a full house, very happy to be here and we are judged by how we keep this time on the Sabbath. Do we keep it holy or do we keep it not? The time is holy. We're going to see the place is holy, but how do we contribute to making the time and the place holy? We're judged by how we keep the time.

Let's look at how God Almighty viewed the time on the Sabbath by going to Numbers 15:32. This is an example of a man who broke the Sabbath. This very graphically illustrates how Yehovah views a human being keeping the Sabbath or not keeping the Sabbath in this case.

Numbers 15:32 *And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man that gathered sticks upon the sabbath day.*

33) And they that found him gathering sticks brought him unto Moses and Aaron, and unto all the congregation.

34) And they put him in ward [they kept him captive so he couldn't run away], because it was not declared what should be done to him. (KJV)

Notice verse 35. Moses didn't even have to ask Yehovah. He didn't even have time to go to Yehovah.

35) And the LORD said unto Moses, The man shall be surely put to death: all the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp.

36) And all the congregation brought him without the camp, and stoned him with stones, and he died; as the LORD commanded Moses. (KJV)

Today, we condemn Muslims for stoning people or hanging people or doing whatever they do, but the fact is, Ancient Israel did exactly that here by somebody who violated the Sabbath. The whole congregation was involved. Kids, adults, elderly, as part of that stoning as an example of how Yehovah looks at conduct on the Sabbath day. This is how seriously He takes holy time.

In the New Testament we don't do this but it's still an example of how our Father looks at holy time. Do we honor our Father by keeping the time holy? I've got a hunch Laodiceans do not and we don't want to go there. As seen in the introduction, our gatherings on the Sabbath day become holy. Let's go to Leviticus 23:1 and see that the gathering itself—we covered that in the introduction but let's add to it—the gathering itself is holy.

Leviticus 23:1 *And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,*

2) Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, Concerning the feasts of the LORD, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations [the Hebrew means something called out; a public meeting], even these are my feasts.

3) Six days shall work be done: but the seventh day is the sabbath of rest, an holy convocation; (KJV)

Here the word holy is [Strong's #6944](#) and it means set apart for a sacred use. The time, the place, is set apart for a sacred use, therefore it is holy. Therefore, when we meet, we come to a holy place. Just like when Moses stood in front of the burning bush. He was coming to a holy place and he was told to take his shoes off. We come here or it could be in your home or wherever you meet—it becomes a holy place just like the ground in front of the burning bush was a holy ground or a holy place, because Yehovah was present in it. So this humble building here is the same, because God and Christ are here with us. Therefore, this place, this time, becomes holy. Not only the place but as I just said, the time. Remember what Christ said—we won't turn, in Matthew 18:20, when two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them. How much more to keep holy time together in a holy place together and they are here with us and that is why this place and this time is holy. The Father and His Son are present when we gather together to worship on the Sabbath day. Because of that presence, the place and the time is holy.

In many cases it occurs in a home and you're home or my home—wherever people gather to worship on the Sabbath—that place becomes a holy place. We are judged by

how we reverence the sanctuary. Let's go back to Leviticus 19:30; it is also repeated in Leviticus 26:2—so it appears twice for emphasis. This is something we need to keep in mind on the Sabbath day if we want to be holy people.

Leviticus 19:30 *Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary: I am the LORD.* (KJV)

The Hebrew word for sanctuary is Strong's #4720, it's the Hebrew word miqdash and it means a holy thing or holy place. So we are to reverence the holy place. Today, where we meet to worship become a holy place. It could be a house—that was frankly more common in the first century church; people met in homes all through the Middle East and they became holy places. Like it is really common today. We reverence the sanctuary by our words on the Sabbath. Solomon had a lot to say about that—let's go to Ecclesiastes 5:1. We're just going to read the first two verses. Solomon is giving advice going into the house of God and of course where we are today is a house of God, because His presence is here.

Ecclesiastes 5:1 *Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil.*

2) Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few. (KJV)

So this is advice on how to revere the sanctuary. We don't want what Solomon said in a multitude of words—there's evil or something to that effect—we have to measure ourselves and put a filter between our mind and mouth. Sometimes we have to put a filter in our mind too. Everything that comes to our mind doesn't need to be said. Sometimes we just blow by the filter and we say things that we shouldn't be saying and people get offended of course.

We reverence the sanctuary by our words on the Sabbath, by our conduct on the Sabbath, by our dress on the Sabbath. We had a time in the church back in the late '70's, maybe early '80's where people came to church dressed like slobs. I've seen brethren come to church in sweats and flip flops. We wouldn't even think about that certainly in Pacific Church of God but it's happened in the past. It was part of a reflection of society because society compared to years ago is becoming slob like in our dress. You see things out in public you never thought you would see in your life and we are influenced by that—by the ugly American. If you go back and look at news reels or documentaries and look at say, ball games in American in the 1920's and 1930's and they scan the crowd; the men are in coats and ties and the women are in dresses. I can remember getting on a train or an airplane in the '50's and people wore coats and ties to get on the airplane and train. You didn't come in as a slob. Now on planes and trains, they fight and throw things at each other. It just shows how far we've come down.

Some brethren were dressing down on the Sabbath because they were making a statement saying, we aren't here to worship a man so we can just come as we are. Kind of like the Protestant mantra of, God, take me as I am, so they walk in in sweats and flip flops. They were making a statement about not honoring a man but the fact is, they forgot that on the Sabbath we come before God Almighty. For example, when Queen Elizabeth was alive, if we were invited to the Palace to see her, would we go in sweats and flip flops? I don't think so. Would we wear the very best we have or spend some money we didn't have and buy a dress or a coat and tie? How much more should we show respect in coming before the Almighty on the Sabbath? Those people who did that just got their mind off the purpose of the Sabbath. We're not here before people or to impress a man or to show a man that we're not respecting him, we are here to worship God Almighty.

Remember the Sabbath day, like tithing, is a test command. Let's go Exodus 31:16. Yes, this was stated a long time ago, yet this was stated under the Old Covenant but it's true today because our Father and His Son don't change.

Exodus 31:16 *Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant.*
(KJV)

We, in the New Covenant, are spiritual Israel.

17) It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever [the Sabbath isn't going away]: for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed. (KJV)

As then, today the Sabbath identifies us as Yehovah's people. By worshipping our Father on this day, on this Sabbath, what we are showing Him is, we want to be like You. We want to be holy like You. We want to learn about You. One of the most prescient things Mr. Armstrong ever said was, keeping the Sabbath keeps us in the worship of the true God. And certainly it does.

Let's summarize. We've seen from scripture that holy can refer to many things. Our Father in the New Testament, Yehovah and his name in the Old Testament, Jehovah's throne, the Holy Spirit, the holy angels, the holy Sabbath day, our assemblies—coming together on the Sabbath day—and especially those chosen as first fruits, are considered holy by our Father. We've seen holy means clean, pure, morally blameless and Godly.

Then we talked about why we are considered holy. Mainly because our Father and Son reside in us and wherever they are, that is holy. Yet we are to become more holy over time to approach the level, our goal—being to approach the level of holiness of the Father and His Son. Then the Bible tells us how to grow in holiness and how to remain holy. We need to watch our thoughts and deeds and our words and how we worship God Almighty. Holiness—becoming holy—is a process. It doesn't happen in an instant

but over time we should bear fruits unto holiness as the scripture says, becoming more and more like our Father and His Son. We need to continually ask the question—and it becomes more relevant and pertinent as we approach the Passover—would a holy person say this? Or would a holy person think this? Or would a holy person do this?

With that in mind let's go to one final scripture, 1 Thessalonians 3:12. Paul is writing to the church there.

1 Thessalonians 3:12 *And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all [meaning outside the church] men, even as we do toward you:*

13) To the end [this is the goal] he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints. (KJV)

When that day comes, we want to be in a state where we are unblameable in holiness before our Father. So let's recognize that yes, we are indeed holy in our Father's eyes because the Father and His Son reside in us, therefore we have to think and act and do accordingly.