

# “Be Ye Holy; For I Am Holy”

by Casey Head

The Lord Jesus Christ, as He entered the a synagogue in the city of Capernaum, was approached by a man with an unclean spirit. In Mark 1:24, this possessed man said to Jesus, “Let us alone; what have we to do with Thee, Thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us? I know who Thou art, the *Holy One of God*.” This is such an impressive scene, because we see that even an unclean spirit acknowledged who Jesus was. Not only is He the Son of God, but He is referred to here as being holy. And again, in Acts 4:27, Peter and John prayed, saying, “For of a truth against Thy *holy* child Jesus.” Clearly, we can see that Jesus is holy, and most people in this society will acknowledge this. But did you know that we are also commanded to be holy?

The children of God are commanded in 1 Peter 1:16, “Be ye holy; for I am holy.” This is just one of many passages that require holiness on the part of Christians (1 Cor. 3:17; Eph 1:4; Col 1:22). Now some people, while they have to acknowledge that holiness is commanded, will say that Christians cannot be holy, but we see in Colossians 3:12 that it is possible for God’s people to be holy, “Put on therefore, as the elect of God, *holy and beloved...*” and again in 1 Thessalonians 5:27, “I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the *holy brethren*.” Not only is holiness commanded, but it is possible for Christians to be holy.

Before we go any further, it is necessary that we define what the word “holy” means. According to *Vine’s* expository dictionary of New Testament words, “holy” comes from the Greek word “hagios,” which means, “Fundamentally signifies separated (among the Greeks, dedicated to the gods), and hence, in Scripture in its moral and spiritual significance, *separated from sin and therefore consecrated to God, sacred*.” Based on this simple definition, we can see that holiness requires two things; (1) that we are separated from the world and from sin, and (2) that we dedicate ourselves to God. Let us discuss these two points as they relate to holiness.

At what point does a person become separated from the world and from sin, and how does that take place? We are instructed in 2 Corinthians 6:17, “Therefore Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you.” We have to separate ourselves from that which is unclean- from that which is sinful. And just as Christ was separate from sinners, so must we be (Heb. 7:26). To be separated from the world, we must make the choice to leave the world. As seen in John 17:17, we are sanctified, or set apart from the world, through the word of God. Furthermore, to be separated from the world, we must be made free from sin by putting on Christ (Rom. 6:18; Gal. 3:27). Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 5:17, “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.” In order to be made holy, it is obvious that we must first become a Christian, and that occurs when we obey the truth of God and put on Christ. This is a choice that we make, and not something that is forced upon us.

Once we enter Christ, we are consecrated, or made sacred; not because of any great thing that we have done, but rather because we have put on Christ, who is holy and sinless. No longer are we part of the world; no longer are we in bondage to sin. But our path to holiness is not yet complete, for holiness requires not only our consecration, but our dedication also. Dedication is a continual process, and we must be diligent to maintain that zeal for God! This involves our persistent faith and obedience to the Son of God, and our refusal of sinful things (Rom. 6:1-2; Rev 2:10). A person who is holy cannot continue in sin and still be considered holy. When sin is committed by a Christian, they are no longer holy, because again, holiness involves a separation from sin (Heb. 7:26). But is all hope lost? Of course not! Our merciful and loving God has made a way for Christians to obtain forgiveness for their own sins (1 Jn. 1:7-9). Finally, dedication involves growth and maturity (2 Cor. 13:11; Heb. 6:1; Jm. 1:4). Christians must continue to grow closer to Christ, and that necessitates a sacrificial lifestyle (Rom. 12:1-2) and daily renewal (2 Cor. 4:16).

What motivates us to be holy? Notice again 1 Peter 1:16, “Be ye holy; *for I am holy*.” The Son Of God gave His life for sinners that we might be saved, and His vast holiness and perfection should motivate us to give our lives to Him, to be consecrated and dedicated! How are you doing?