

Divine Holiness & Sanctifying God: A Proposal

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When God is termed holy, it denotes that excellence which is altogether peculiar to himself; and the glory flowing from all his attributes conjoined, ... whereby he is, and eternally remains, in an incomprehensible manner, separate and at a distance, not only from all that is impure, but likewise from all that is created. ~John Wesley¹

This lecture had its genesis nearly fifteen year ago, when as a second year grad student I set out to study all 832 occurrences of the Hebrew words for holy (קָדַשׁ קְדוּשָׁה קִדְּוֹשׁ קִדְּוֹשׁ) in the OT. I bogged down somewhere in Leviticus or Numbers. Although I worked on the topic during my dissertation, I didn't complete my journey through all those texts until the summer of 2008. During the fall of 2008 I made a similar, though much less intensive trek through all the NT texts that use the key Greek word family for holy (ἅγια ἁγιαζω ἅγιος ἁγιωσύνη ἁγιότης ἁγιασμός).

In the process, I found a lot of interesting texts that garner little attention in discussions on holiness (e.g., Isa. 8:13; 29:23; Ezek. 28:22, 25; 38:23). However, two things stand out from the mass of data I compiled. First, God reveals the nature and meaning of His holiness through impersonal objects and then through ethical requirements. Second, the texts in which God speaks of sanctifying Himself and His name grabbed my attention. This lecture seeks to offer a definition of holiness derived inductively from the data of Scripture and relate that definition to God's stated purpose to sanctify Himself in various OT texts. I will first survey a representative sampling of Methodist and non-Methodist theologians' definitions of divine holiness. Second, I will propose a definition of holiness, apply it to God, and consider a few of its theological implications. Third, I will discuss what it means for God to sanctify himself and what it means for us to sanctify God.

Definitions of Divine Holiness in Systematic Theologies

What is interesting about perusing systematic theologies is the wide variety of definitions given to God's holiness. Here is a representative sampling of Methodist theologians:

Ralston: Holiness is spotless purity or moral purity (1851); holiness is rectitude or righteousness (1924).²

¹ John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament* (New York: Lane & Scott, 1850), 667, s.v., Rev. 4:8.

² Thomas N. Ralston, *Elements of Divinity: or, A course of lectures* (E. Stevenson, 1851), 25; *Elements of Divinity*, ed. Thomas Osmund Summers (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1924), 31.

Lee: Holiness is absolute purity from all moral evil and the presence of all moral goodness.³

Wakefield: “Holiness, considered as an attribute of God, is his perfect moral purity. ... Holiness is a complex term, and denotes, not so much a particular attribute, as that *general character* of God which results from all his moral perfections.”

Raymond: “The term holiness, in its generic sense, means conformity to law. In thought we remove all limitations and imperfections from the idea of virtue as we find it in men, and this is our best idea of holiness in God.”⁴

Pope: Holiness is “that absolute perfection that belongs to God in his eternal essence.”⁵

Miley: Holiness is righteousness.⁶

Wiley: “Holiness in God is the perfection of moral excellence.”⁷

Purkiser: Holiness has three meanings: transcendence, glory, and purity.⁸

Taylor: Holiness is “the moral quality of all God’s attributes. ... [It is] radiant goodness, separate from evil, and pure in absolute righteousness.”⁹

Coppedge: “The meaning of holiness has six major components. They [are] the concepts of separation, brilliance, righteousness, love, power and goodness.”¹⁰

In sum, the surveyed Methodist theologians defined divine holiness primarily in terms of moral purity (5x), righteousness (3x), and goodness (3x).

The following definitions are derived from non-Methodist theologians:

Charnock: “Holiness is a glorious perfection belonging to the nature of God. ... Negatively, [it] is a perfect and unpolluted freedom from all evil. ... Positively, it is the rectitude or integrity of the Divine nature.”¹¹

³ Luther Lee, *Elements of Theology*, 4th ed. (Syracuse, NY: Wesleyan Book Room, 1865), 76-77.

⁴ Miner Raymond, *Systematic Theology*. vol. 1 (Cincinnati: Walden and Stowe, 1877), 360.

⁵ William Burt Pope, *A Compendium of Christian Theology* (New York: Hunt & Eaton, 1889), 331. In his 1883, *A High Catechism of Theology*, Pope writes, “[God’s] holiness [is] separation from evil” (p. 82).

⁶ John Miley, *Systematic Theology*. vol. 1 (1893, repr. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1989), 199.

⁷ H. Orton Wiley and Paul T. Culbertson, *Introduction to Christian Theology* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press, 1963), 102-103.

⁸ W. T. Purkiser, *The Biblical Foundations*, vol. 1 in *Exploring Christian Holiness* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press, 1983), 23.

⁹ Richard S. Taylor, *The Theological Formulation*, vol 3 in *Exploring Christian Holiness* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press, 1985), 15.

¹⁰ Allan Coppedge, *Portraits of God: A Biblical Theology of Holiness* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2001), 51.

Strong: Holiness designates “self-affirming purity by which he maintains his moral excellence.”¹²

Hodge: Holiness is “a general term for the moral excellence of God.”¹³

Berkhof: Holiness is “unapproachableness,” and is “not an attribute to be coordinated with others,” but is “predicable about everything that is found in God.”¹⁴

Erickson: God’s holiness is (1) his uniqueness. He is totally separate from all creation. (2) his absolute purity or goodness.¹⁵

Grudem: “God’s holiness means that he is separated from sin and devoted to seeking his own honor.”¹⁶

Reymond: Holiness is God’s “intrinsic ‘unapproachableness,’ that is, his majestic transcendence as the Deity over the creature.”¹⁷

In sum, the surveyed non-Methodist theologians exhibited less unanimity and defined divine holiness in terms of freedom/separation from sin (2x), unapproachableness (2x), absolute purity/goodness (2x), rectitude, uniqueness, and moral excellence.

What I found striking as I read through these theologians, and particularly the Methodist theologians, is how very little attention was given to developing an exegetical understanding of holiness. The typical procedure was to provide a definition of holiness and then discuss its significance within theology without offering an argument for the definition. In some cases, mention was made of the conjectured etymology of the Hebrew or Greek terms for holiness.¹⁸ In cases where theologians offered a set of texts as the basis of their definition, they normally start with texts that talk about God’s holiness and read their definition out of the text.

While it may seem reasonable enough to begin one’s definition of divine holiness with God, two considerations weigh against it. First, both the concept and the terminology of holiness

¹¹ Stephen Charnock, *Discourses upon the Existence and Attributes of God*, vol. 1 (New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1874), 110.

¹² Augustus Hopkins Strong, *Systematic Theology* (Press of E. R. Andrews, 1886), 128.

¹³ Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1 (New York: Scribner, Armstrong, and Co., 1873), 413.

¹⁴ Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (1932, 1938; repr. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1996), 513. So also, Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology*, 266.

¹⁵ Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985), 284-85.

¹⁶ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 202.

¹⁷ Robert L. Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith*. 2nd Edition - Revised And Updated (Thomas Nelson, 1998), 194.

¹⁸ For a term with over 830 occurrences, any appeal to etymology for help in defining it is unwarranted. As James Barr and many since have argued, context and usage determines the semantic content of words. See especially Barr’s “Etymology and the Old Testament,” in *Language and Meaning: Studies in Hebrew Language and Biblical Exegesis*, Oudtestamentische studiën 19 (Leiden: Brill, 1974), 1-28. Similarly, Moisés Silva, *Biblical Words and Their Meanings: An Introduction to Lexical Semantics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983).

already existed prior to God's revelation of His holiness to Israel. Thus God was not revealing a new concept, but working with existing language and investing it with additional significance. This argues for a methodology that examines the usages of holiness with non-divine referents before moving to the usages where God is the referent. Second, I find it interesting that God does not start *our* understanding of holiness with an explanation of His holiness. If we take the canonical order of the Torah as His chosen starting point for preserving His revelation for His post-Mosaic audience,¹⁹ then God starts teaching us about holiness with non-personal items: a day, some dirt, an assembly, and first-born children and animals.²⁰ What follows is an analysis of the first four occurrences of the holiness word group in the Pentateuch.

A Holy Day

In Gen. 2:3 God makes the seventh day holy. This is the first canonical occurrence of the concept of holiness. Several things are noteworthy here:

- “To sanctify” here denotes God’s action in setting the seventh day apart *from* the other six days on which He worked (cf. Exod. 20:11; 31:16-17).
- Although this text does not develop the implications of God’s sanctification of the seventh day, other texts do.
 1. The seventh day’s sanctified status meant it must not be regarded or treated as common (קדש; Exod. 31:14).
 2. Because God sanctified it, it is holy to Him (Exod. 16:23; 31:15; cf. Isa. 53:13).
 3. God sanctified it by resting, and He required Israel to sanctify it by resting (Exod. 20:11; Exod. 31:14-15; cf. Jer. 17:22, 24, 27).

In other words, God’s activity of resting on the seventh day set it apart from the other six days in which He worked. As a consequence of its separation, it is a special day and must be treated as special by imitating God’s activity that sanctified it.

Holy Dirt²¹

In Exod. 3:5 God tells Moses that the dirt he is standing on is holy. What made the dirt

¹⁹ The chronological sequence of the Pentateuch’s inscripturation was likely something along the lines of Exod. 15 Song of Moses > Exod. 20 Ten Commandments > Exod. 22-24 Book of the Covenant > Exod. 25-30 Instructions for Tabernacle > Parts or all of Leviticus > Narrative sections of Gen.-Num. > Deuteronomy. The generations that came of Egypt in the Exodus and those born in the Wilderness Wanderings were the only generations to receive the Pentateuchal revelation in its chronological sequence. As far as we know, all subsequent generations received the Pentateuch in the final canonical sequence that we possess. This suggests that the canonical sequence reflects God’s design for the sequencing of this segment of inscripturated revelation.

²⁰ For a valuable discussion of the hermeneutical implications of doing theology from narratives, see Pratt, Richard L. Jr. “Pictures, Windows, and Mirrors in Old Testament Exegesis,” *WTJ* 45 (1983): 156-167. Pratt’s ideas are fleshed out in his book, *He Gave Us Stories* (Presbyterian & Reformed, 1993).

²¹ Technically, the second occurrence of holiness terminology in the Pentateuch is Gen. 38:21-22 where Tamar is called a *qedashah* (“temple prostitute”) by Judah’s friend the Adullamite. Although this text provides valuable background information for understanding the contemporary Canaanite conception of holiness against which God was revealing His holiness, it is not a text that reveals God’s perspective on holiness. For this reason, it is excluded from this survey of the first occurrences of the term.

holy? I take it that God's manifest presence or glory made the ground holy.²² I infer here that the fact that it was "holy" meant it had been separated from ordinary dirt. As a result of its separation or set apartness, it required special treatment: Moses had to take off his sandals.

A Holy Assembly

In Exod. 12:16 God designates the first and seventh day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread as days on which a "holy assembly" was to be held. The text does not specify the purpose of the assembly, but Ezek. 46:3, 9 indicate it was for the purpose of worshiping Yahweh.

What is "holy" about this assembly? The text reveals that no work was to be done on these days, except for the work needed to cook. God separated these days from ordinary days by prohibiting work and separated them unto a special purpose: assembly for worship. Holy in this context has the sense of "separated, set apart," and as a consequence special.

Holy First-born Men and Animals

In Exod. 13:2, 11-12 God requires Israel to sanctify every first-born, male child or animal to Him. Numbers 8:16-18 tells us that God apparently intended for the first-born children to have a priestly function, but He later chose the Levites because of their faithfulness to Him during the Golden Calf incident. The sanctification of the first-born animals set them apart to God for a special purpose: sacrificial use. The sanctification of the first-born sons set them apart to God for a special purpose, in this case, divine service, though later they were required to be redeemed.

Holiness is Separation

In each of the first four Pentateuchal texts where God calls something holy, the meaning of the word *holy* involves the idea of "separation." In all its non-divine uses, in addition to its basic idea of separation, it also denotes "not common"²³ and "belonging to God," or more smoothly, "separated from the common or ordinary unto God." My analysis of all the texts where the holiness word group occurs reveals no exceptions to this conclusion.²⁴

²² This inference is supported by the fact that every other place associated with the manifest presence of Yahweh is holy. See Exod. 29:43 where God says the tabernacle will be sanctified (*Nif.* of קִדְּשׁ) by His glory (*kabod*). Appendices 1 & 2 provide lists of the referents of holiness in the OT and NT.

²³ The consistent juxtaposition of holy with its opposite, "common, ordinary," supports this conclusion (cf. Lev. 10:10; 1 Sam. 21:5, 6; Ezek. 22:26; 42:20; 44:23). Holiness, in ceremonial and ethical contexts, also excludes uncleanness (Lev. 11:44; 20:3). However, although one must be ceremonially clean to be holy, being ceremonially clean does not make one holy. Paul validates the inference that the language, requirements, and rites of ceremonial cleanness were intended to teach us about ethical cleanness in 1 Thess. 4:7 where he applies the same language to God's call to sexual purity.

²⁴ Although I am not using the technical language of componential analysis, that is the essential nature of my analytical method. Regardless of componential analysis's status as a theoretical model, its value as a heuristic tool has been recognized at least since the 1950s. Eugene Nida and Charles R. Tabor, *The Theory and Practice of Translation* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1969); John Beekman and John Callow, *Translating the Word of God* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974); Francesco Zanella, "The Contribution of Componential Analysis to the Semantic Analysis of a Lexical Field of Ancient Hebrew: Some Concrete Examples from the Lexical Field of the Substantives of Gift," *European Journal of Jewish Studies* 2, no. 2 (2008): 189-212. See the associated bibliography in Zanella's article for contemporary discussions of componential analysis.

The use of *badal* בָּדַל “to separate or distinguish” in key holiness texts (cf. Lev. 10:10; 11:45-47; 20:26; 1 Chron. 23:13; Ezek. 22:26) confirms the inference from the previous texts that separation is at the heart of holiness. In Leviticus 20:26, Yahweh delineates the dual nature of the separation inherent in holiness: “And you shall be holy to me, for I, Yahweh, am holy, and I have separated [בָּדַל] you from the peoples to be mine.” Negatively, Yahweh had separated Israel from the defilement of Egypt and the surrounding Canaanites. Positively, He had separated them unto Himself as His prized possession (Exod. 19:5-6).

If separation or set apartness is the basic meaning of holiness in all its non-divine uses, it is reasonable to assume that separation is the basic meaning of holiness when it refers to God. The question regarding God, then, is in what sense is God separate?

Divine Holiness: A Proposal

My study of the things and persons God calls holy, *before* He introduces His own holiness has led me to the conclusion that God’s holiness, in Scripture, is primarily His *transcendent separateness from all things due to the unique excellence of His being and character*.

I couldn’t help but be pleased to find during the course of researching this topic that John Wesley offered, in his inimitable 18th century prose, virtually the same definition that I am offering here: “When God is termed holy, it denotes that excellence which is altogether peculiar to himself; and the glory flowing from all his attributes conjoined, . . . whereby he is, and eternally remains, in an incomprehensible manner, separate and at a distance, not only from all that is impure, but likewise from all that is created.”²⁵

God’s holiness, secondarily and only as a consequence of the primary sense, is his separateness unto all that is good and thus his separation from all that is evil. This definition seems to accord well with the all the Scriptural data on holiness both as it relates to things and to persons. It captures the essential idea of holiness: separateness. It easily makes sense of the repeated claim in Isaiah that there is no one who can compare with God—His unique excellence separates Him infinitely from any other claimants to divinity.

On the other hand, this definition does not fall into the trap of Rudolph Otto’s “wholly other” definition of divine holiness. I propose that Otto’s definition should be rejected for two reasons. First, it fails to reflect God’s consistent ethical expectation that His people share his character (“partakers of his holiness”; Heb. 12:10) and his nature (“partakers of the divine nature”; 2 Pet. 1:4). Second, it unintentionally denies the real continuity that man has with God as a consequence of his creation as the image of God. God is “other” in the sense of different from us, but He is not “wholly other,” for we bear His image in all the dimensions of our being. Our grace-enabled capacity to be holy is possible only because we are *not* wholly other than He is.

In a study of God’s glory in the OT, prior to this study of holiness, I concluded that God’s

²⁵ *Explanatory Notes*, 667, s.v., Rev. 4:8.

glory is “the unique excellence of His being and character.” When I began to ask “what is it that separates God from all other beings,” the natural answer seemed to be his glory, that is, his unique excellence. This interrelationship of divine holiness and divine glory seems to fit Isaiah 6:3 very nicely. The seraphic trisagion—“holy, holy, holy”—is their response to the observation of divine glory filling all the earth. Their vision of the manifold unique excellencies of God elicits their affirmation that Yahweh is supremely holy, that is, He is transcendently separate from all things due to the unique excellence of his being and character.²⁶

The consequences of this definition for our understanding of God are several. First, holiness is not, as recognized by multiple theologians, one among many other of God’s attributes. Holiness is a statement about the entirety of who God is. In support of this, it is noteworthy that “holy” never occurs in a list of divine attributes, e.g., the Lord is compassionate, gracious, slow to anger, abounding in lovingkindness and faithfulness (Exod. 34:6).²⁷ Second, holiness is not a primary essence from which all other divine attributes spring, nor is it a principle which pervades all other attributes. Rather, holiness is the consequence of all that God is. We might say it is the result of the totality of God’s character and being. Third, this understanding would end the dispute about the relationship between divine love and divine holiness. If divine holiness is his transcendent separateness due to the unique excellence of his character and being, then it is not holiness which checks or conditions divine love, but rather divine righteousness or perhaps purity. In other words, the unique excellence of God’s love is one of the aspects of his character that makes him holy.

This definition also illumines the various commands that are given to people in relation to God’s holiness. Consider just two examples. First, Psalm 105:3 which reads, “Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice!” The verb translated “glory” is *hithalelu* (הִתְהַלְּלוּ). The *hitpael* form of הָלַל normally means “to boast,” as in 1 Kings 20:11 where Ahab tells Ben-Hadad, “Let not him that girds on his armor boast himself as he that puts it off.”²⁸ We “glory” in Yahweh’s holy name by boasting about His uniquely excellence character, being, and works that separate Him transcendently from all other rival claimants. God invites us, no, He commands us to boast in Him!

Consider second, Psalm 97’s concluding line. The psalmist wraps up his poetic description of God’s sovereignty (97:1), righteousness (97:2, 6), justice (97:2), power (97:3-5), glory (97:6), transcendence (97:9), and purity (97:10), with, “Be glad in Yahweh, you righteous ones, give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness” (97:13).²⁹ As we recall how God has

²⁶ Although space will not permit me to work through each of the texts that attribute holiness to God, my personal examination of them suggests that this definition fits all of them.

²⁷ Key terms that are collocated with divine holiness include *glory* 5/6x (כָּבוֹד/כְּבוֹדָה; Exod. 29:43; Lev. 10:3; 1 Chr. 16:29; Ps. 29:2; Isa. 6:3; Ezek. 28:22), *great* 5x (גָּדוֹל; Ps. 77:13; 99:3; Isa. 12:6; Ezek. 36:23; [גָּדַל] Ezek. 38:23), *awesome* 4x (אֲוָרָה; Exod. 15:11; Ps. 89:8; 99:3; 111:9), *jealous* 2x (קַנָּא/קַנּוּא; Josh. 24:19; Ezek. 39:25), *righteousness* 1x (צְדָקָה; Isa. 5:16), *majestic* 1x (מְאֹדָר; Exod. 15:11).

²⁸ For other occurrences of הִתְהַלְּלוּ with the sense of “boast,” see Psa. 34:2; 49:6; 52:1; Pro. 20:14; 25:14; Jer. 49:4.

²⁹ The common translation of Psalm 97:12b, “give thanks to his holy name,” in my estimation, wrongly equates זָכַר ‘remembrance, memorial’ with שֵׁם ‘name, reputation.’ The occurrence of these two words in parallel

manifested on our behalf the unique excellencies that set Him transcendentally above both the created universe and all other created beings, our gladness in Him should indeed overflow in expressions of thanksgiving!

How does this understanding of divine holiness relate to His command that we be holy as He is holy? 1 Peter 1:16 echoes God's call to holiness found in Leviticus 19:2. If we understand divine holiness as the consequence of all of God's uniquely excellent character, Lev. 19:3ff make a whole lot more sense. The call to honor one's parents (v. 3), keep the Sabbaths (v. 3), avoid idolatry (v. 4), follow the rules for fellowship offerings carefully (vv. 5-8), care for the poor (vv. 9-10), to respect personal property and tell the truth (v. 11-12), to treat others with the same consideration you would desire (vv. 13-14), to care about justice (vv. 15-16), and to love others as yourself (vv. 17-18)—all of these ceremonial and ethical demands reflect aspects of the unique excellence of God's character and being. We are holy as He is holy by thinking, acting, and feeling as He feels. The consequence of being like God is that we too are separated from all that is evil unto all that is God. In other words, when the primary sense of divine holiness is mirrored in us, the secondary sense is its necessary consequence. When we are separate due to emulating the unique excellence of His character, we will necessarily be pure, good, and righteousness.

God's Sanctification of Himself

The second element of my study of God's holiness that intrigued me was the texts in which God says He will sanctify himself (Ezek. 38:23), He will be sanctified (Isa. 5:16; Ezek. 20:41; 28:22, 25; 36:23, 38:16; 39:27), or He commands men to sanctify Him (Isa. 8:13)

Ezekiel 38:23 is the key text in which God explicitly says he will sanctify himself: "I will magnify Myself [וְהִתְנַדְּרֹתִי], and I will sanctify Myself [וְהִתְקַדְּשִׁיתִי], and I will make Myself known in the sight of many nations; and they will know that I am the LORD." The context of this statement is God's foretelling of the time when He will bring Gog upon his people Israel so that the nations may know Yahweh when He is sanctified [בְּהִתְקַדְּשִׁי] through His destruction of Gog before their eyes (Ezek. 38:16).³⁰ Yahweh's wrath will be manifested in a great earthquake (v. 19), mountains collapsing with the entire earth and everything in it shaking (v. 20), and a torrential rain, with hailstones, fire, and brimstone (v. 22) that results in the total destruction of Gog. Through these fantastic displays of power, Yahweh will sanctify himself *in the sight of many nations*.

The phrase "in the sight of" occurs in most of the texts which speak of God sanctifying

(Exod. 3:15; Psa. 135:13; Isa. 26:8), while indicating semantic similarity, also suggests that there is semantic distinction.

³⁰ The connection between God's self-sanctification in v. 23 and his statement that he will be sanctified in v. 16 should not be missed. This provides a contextual basis for understanding that the *hitpa'el* and the *niphal* forms of *qadash* [קדש] do not have essentially different senses. The *hitpa'el* is a reflexive and the *niphal* a passive expression of the same idea. On this basis then, we can identify other texts in which it is clear that the *niphal* forms of *qadash* [קדש] indicate that Yahweh is sanctifying himself: Ezek. 20:41; 28:22, 25.

himself or of God being sanctified,³¹ and it identifies the domain where the setting apart of God takes place: in the “eyes” or minds of a watching world. When God sanctifies himself, He is not altering something about himself. He is altering people’s perception of him. To those who do not know Yahweh, or have little regard for him, He is not transcendentally separate from all other beings due to the unique excellence of his character and being. By acting in a way that clearly demonstrates the unique excellence of his righteousness, his wisdom, or his wrath, He elevates himself in their estimation, setting himself apart, i.e., sanctifying Himself.

Sanctifying God

Not only does God sanctify Himself, but He requires us to sanctify him. This idea appears in the NT in 1 Peter 3:15, “but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts,” as well as the OT. Isaiah 8:13 is the text that most directly expresses a command to sanctify God: “Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself . . .” Since God’s self-sanctification is his setting himself apart in the realm of people’s perception and estimation, it makes sense that our sanctification of God similarly involves setting him apart both in ours and others’ estimation.³²

The OT explicitly identifies three ways in which people sanctify God: by obeying Him in all things (Lev. 10:3; 22:31-33),³³ by believing Him (Num. 20:12; 27:14),³⁴ and by fearing Him instead of the things the nations fear (Isa. 8:13; 29:23). We sanctify God, again, not by changing something about him, but by setting Him apart in our own minds as the uniquely excellent One who alone deserves our obedience, unwavering trust, and fear. When we live out our obedience, faith, and godly fear, we sanctify God in the eyes of those who observe us as well. The practical ramifications of these texts for holy living are profound and worthy of sermonic exploration.

By way of conclusion, allow me to suggest that the foregoing material helps explain the first petition in the Lord’s model prayer: “Hallowed be thy name.” “Hallowed” is Elizabethan English for “Let it be sanctified” (ἀγιασθήτω; Matt. 6:9). When we pray, “hallowed be thy

³¹ Num. 20:12; 27:14; Ezek. 20:41; 28:25; 36:23; 38:16, 23; 39:27.

³² Modern versions translate *sanctify* [שׁקד] in Isaiah 8:13 in the following ways: “regard as holy” (NASB, NIV, HCSB, RSV, NRSV), “account holy” (TNK), “honor as holy” (ESV), “recognize the authority of” (NET), and “make holy in your life” (NLT). These translations appear to reflect the conclusion that the *Hiphil* form of שׁקד has an estimative sense when God is the object (see also Num. 20:12; 27:14; Isa. 29:23). Although none of the six occurrences where non-divine persons are the object of the *Hiphil* form of שׁקד (Num. 3:13; 8:17; 1 Chron. 23:13; Jer. 1:5; 12:3; Zeph. 1:7) fit the profile of the declarative-estimative use of the *Hiphil*, the fact that God is already transcendentally separate due to His unique excellence argues for an estimative sense of the verb.

³³ With regard to the Niphal forms of שׁקד, the Net Bible offers the following comment at Lev. 10:3, “The Niphal verb of the Hebrew root שׁקד (*qadash*) can mean either “to be treated as holy” (so here, e.g., BDB 873 s.v. שׁקד, LXX, NASB, and NEB) or “to show oneself holy” (so here, e.g., HALOT 1073 s.v. שׁקד nif.1, NIV, NRSV, NLT; J. Milgrom, *Leviticus* [AB], 1:595, 601–3; and J. E. Hartley, *Leviticus* [WBC], 133–34).” However, an inductive survey of simple *niphal* forms of שׁקד (*niqdash*) as well as *niqdash* + כּ does not substantiate this claim. For example, *niqdash* + כּ has the senses of “sanctified by” (Exo. 29:43; Isa. 5:16), “sanctified in” (Lev. 22:32; Num. 20:13; Ezek. 20:41; 28:22, 25; 36:23; 38:16; 39:27). Milgrom’s assertion (601–603) that *niqdash be-* must be reflexive when God is the subject (sanctify himself through) is certainly not a necessary conclusion from the data. A simple passive sense is possible and is attested in all instances by the LXX (except Isa. 5:16 where *niqdash* is translated by *δοξασθήσεται* “shall be glorified”).

³⁴ Note that whereas Num. 20:12 uses the *hiphil*, Deut. 32:51 uses the *piel* to refer to the exact same action.

name,” we are asking God to act in us and in the world in a way that displays his transcendent separateness due to the unique excellence of his character and being. We are also asking him to help us live so as to sanctify His name (reputation) before a watching world.

May His name be sanctified in us!

Appendix 1 Holiness and its Referents in the OT

Objects	Places	People	Times	Related Actions
<p>ground Ex. 3:5; Josh. 5:15</p> <p>garments Ex 28:2 - for priests; 28:3 - implication that the garment hallowed the priest (?) - or "for his consecration" (?) - necessary for ministry to God Ex 28:4</p> <p>sacrificial gifts Ex 28:38</p> <p>breast of wave offering was to be sanctified/consecrated Ex 29:27</p> <p>ram of atonement - not to be eaten by the זָר (stranger/layman?) Ex 29:33</p> <p>bread/flesh of consecration Ex 29:34 - □ not to be eaten the day after (1 Sam. 21:5)</p> <p>meat offering Lv 2:3</p> <p>sin & trespass offering Lv 6:17</p> <p>peace offering Lv 19:8</p> <p>bread of first fruits & the two lambs Lv 23:20</p> <p>heave offering Num. 18:19</p> <p>crown/diadem on priest's turban Ex 29:6; 39:30</p> <p>everything associated with the tabernacle Ex 40:9</p> <p>temple 1 Kgs 9:3</p> <p>showbread 1 Sam. 21:5</p> <p>sacrificial altar Ex 29:36-37; 40:10</p> <p>altar of incense = most holy Ex 30:10</p> <p>anointing oil Ex 30:25; □ can't make anything like it Ex 30:32</p> <p>the laver & the priest's foot Ex 40:11</p> <p>anything set apart for the Lord Lv 27:9; house 27:14; portion of a field 27:16; to הָרָם Lv 27:21</p> <p>tabernacle vessels Num. 31:6</p> <p>censers of Korah <i>et al.</i> Num. 16:37</p> <p>tithe of the land/herd Lv 27:30, 32</p> <p>fruit of the land in the fourth year - implies that what is holy is set aside for God & off limits to men Lv 19:24</p> <p>produce Dt. 22:9</p> <p>military camp Dt. 23:15</p> <p>silver and gold, bronze and iron Josh. 6:19; 2 Sam. 8:11</p> <p>seed (genetic material) Ezra 9:2</p> <p>the sheep gate Neh. 3:1</p> <p>throne Psa 47:9</p> <p>mountains Psa 87:1</p> <p>covenant Dan. 11:28</p> <p>meat Hag. 2:12</p> <p>horse bells Zech. 14:20</p> <p>pots Zech. 14:21</p>	<p>assembly Ex 12:16</p> <p>God's dwelling place Ex 15:13</p> <p>Mt. Sinai - set boundaries & sanctified it - Ex 19:23</p> <p>Holy place Ex 26:33</p> <p>Holiest place - note grades of holiness in approaching God Ex 26:33</p> <p>Sanctuary - by God's glory - Ex 29:43</p> <p>cities of refuge - Jos. 20:7</p> <p>city of Jerusalem - Neh. 11:1</p> <p>Mt. Zion - Psa 2:6</p> <p>Heaven - Psa 20:7</p> <p>valley - Jer. 31:40</p> <p>land - Zech. 2:16</p>	<p>firstborn Ex 13:2; Nu 3:13</p> <p>God - "glorious in holiness" Ex 15:11</p> <p>God's name is holy Lv 20:3</p> <p>Israelites - associated with washing themselves Ex 19:10,14; not to eat 'road kill'</p> <p>the congregation Joel 2:16</p> <p>Priests - washing Ex 19:22</p> <p>Priests - so that they may minister to God Ex 28:41; not to be holy was a sin punishable by death Ex 28:43</p> <p>Priests - separated from the practices of heathen priests Lv 21.5-6</p> <p>A priest who had a physical impairment could not offer sacrifice before the Lord -- because Yahweh is holy Lv 21.23</p> <p>A nazirite's head Nu 6.11</p> <p>Eliezar - 1 Sam. 7:1</p> <p>Jesse and sons 1 Sam. 16:5</p> <p>Job's children - Job 1:5</p> <p>Aaron - Psa 106:16</p> <p>Christ - Isa. 6:3</p> <p>Jeremiah - Jer. 1:5</p>	<p>Sabbath Gn 2.3 no work Ex 16.23; keep it holy Ex 20.8; sign that "I am the Lord that sanctifies you" Ex 31.13; holy to you Ex 31.14; holy to the Lord Ex 31.15</p> <p>Feasts are a holy convocation Lv 23.2, 3, 4, 7ff --no work was to be done on a day of holy assemblage</p> <p>Year of Jubilee - no work of harvesting, they ate out of the field</p> <p>Day of reading Scripture Neh. 8:9</p>	<p>Holiness imparted by sprinkling of the blood Ex 29.21; Lv 8.15</p> <p>Whatever touched the altar was made holy Ex 29.37; anything touching the consecrated altar implements was holy. Ex 30.29</p> <p>Anointing oil used to sanctify/ consecrate items as holy Ex 40.9-13 (oil = Spirit ?)</p> <p>The use of strange fire did not treat God as holy. God demands that he be sanctified & honored (note the parallel) by those who approach him Lv 10.3</p> <p>God's people are to distinguish between the holy and unholy Lv 10.10</p> <p>Sanctifying of people contrasted with defiling themselves with unclean things Lv 11.44</p> <p>Eating the peace offering on the third day profanes the holy thing Lv 19.8</p> <p>Offering human sacrifice to idols profanes God's holy name Lv 20.3</p> <p>Turning to mediums & spiritists is the opp. of consecrating oneself to God and being holy (?) Lv 20.7</p> <p>Yahweh is the one who sanctifies his people Lv 20:8</p> <p>Marriage by a priest had to be to a virgin, not a widow, harlot, divorced woman -- he was to be holy Lv 21.15</p> <p>If a priest touched the holy things while unclean he was to be cut off from his people Lv 22.3-4</p> <p>Redemption of something given to the Lord demanded full price + 1/5th Lv 27.15</p> <p>Faith in God's word treats God as holy; unbelief does not treat God as holy Nu 20.12</p> <p>God showed himself as holy at Meribah Nu 20.13</p> <p>Sanctify a fast Joel 2:15</p> <p>Sanctify war Joel 4:9 (Jer. 6:4; Mic. 3:5)</p> <p>Yahweh swears by his holiness (Psa. 89:36; Amos 4:2)</p>

Appendix 2
Holiness and its Referents in the NT

Objects	Places	People	Related Actions
<p><i>Tangible</i></p> <p>Temple's gold – Matt. 23:17 Temple altar – Matt. 23:19 A sacrifice – Matt. 23:19; Rom. 12:1 Scriptures – Rom. 1:2 Bread dough & bread – Rom. 11:16 Tree roots & branches – Rom. 11:16 Human body – 1 Cor. 7:34 (non-ethical) Food – 1 Tim. 4:5</p> <p><i>Intangible</i></p> <p>Truth – Matt. 7:6 God's name/reputation Matt. 6:9 Covenant – Luk. 1:72 God's law/commandment – Rom. 7:12; 2 Pet. 2:21 Faith – Jude 1:20</p>	<p>City (Jerusalem) – Matt. 4:5; 27:53; Rev. 11:2 City (New Jerusalem) – Rev. 21:2; 22:11 The temple – Matt. 23:17 Ground – Acts 7:33 Holy place – Heb. 9:1, 24 Holy of holies – Heb. 9:3 Mountain – 2 Pet. 1:18</p>	<p>God's Spirit (90+) – Matt. 1:18 God's people (saints; 60x) – Matt. 27:52 Jesus – Mk 1:24 - holy child – Luk. 1:35 - holy servant – Acts 4:27 John the Baptist – Mk 6:20 Angels – Mk 8:38; Luk. 9:26; Rev. 14:10 Prophets – Luk. 1:70; Eph. 3:5; 2 Pet. 3:2 Firstborn males – Luk. 2:23 God the Father – John 17:11 All believers as God's temple – 1 Cor. 3:17; Eph. 2:20 Unbelieving husband & children of believing wife – 1 Cor. 7:14 Human spirit – 1 Cor. 7:34x Apostles – Eph. 3:5 The church (all believers) – Eph. 5:27 Brothers – Heb. 3:1 Women – 1 Tim. 2:15; 1 Pet. 3:5 Priesthood (God's people) – 1 Pet. 2:5 Nation (God's people) – 1 Pet. 2:9 Participants in the first resurrection – Rev. 20:6</p>	<p>Kiss – Rom. 16:16; 1 Cor. 16:20; 2 Cor. 13:20; 1 Thess. 5:26 Conduct – 1 Thess. 4:4; 1 Pet. 1:15; 2 Pet. 3:11</p>