

## Holy Is Your Name

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The meaning of holiness seems to be mostly lost in our day. We are more likely to hear the word 'holy' in a religious service or in a silly exclamation such as, "Holy Cow!" However, God is holy; we are to be holy; His name is holy. What does it mean to be holy?

In a general sense, something that is holy is '*set apart from*' or '*separated from*' common things. In a sense, museum artifacts are holy because they are separated from common. They have an important connection to our past, a unique quality, or great value. These special objects are guarded from casual contact; protected from the elements; and given a place of honor in a museum. Visitors are expected to give the artifacts proper respect.

God is holy. He is deserving of honor and respect (awe). We show our honor, not by admiring God as an artifact as in a museum, but by our devotion to his ways and our worship. He is holy because he is, by his very nature, *separate from* mankind. He is holy; man is common. He is righteous; man is unrighteous. He is eternal; man is finite. He is creator; man is created.

When Jesus taught his disciples to pray, he taught them that the name of God is holy (hallowed). It is not enough to accept that God himself is holy; his name, also, is holy. At some point in their history the ancient Jews stopped saying the *name* of God. We are told of their reasoning, that if they did not say God's *name* then they would not break the command:

"You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain." (Exodus 20:7)

The ancient Jews put God's name up on a shelf as if it were an artifact. That was not God's intent.

When God revealed his name to Moses it meant something. God told Moses to tell the Israelites that the God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob was about to deliver them from Egypt. He is *The One Who Is*: "I AM Who I AM."

God expected his *name* to be spoken, but with reverence and honor. His *name* was not to be on an equal level with the names of foreign gods. His *name* was above them, because he is real and he is supreme. His *name* is not a common name like that of any man or woman throughout history. His *name* is not to be used as the punch-line of a joke or the subject of humor. His *name* is not for meaningless exclamations of surprise. God's name to be shouted when experiencing sharp pain or anger.

God's *name* has meaning and it uniquely identifies God as deity; one who is self-sufficient, eternal in existence, and changeless. No other single descriptor is capable of encompassing his identity. His is not a "name that must not be spoken" but one that must be revered. The name of God can only be attributed to Him, for no man can make such a claim as does the *name* of God: I AM.

**"Our Father in heaven...HOLY IS YOUR NAME."**

Mark Stinnett