**God’s Holiness**

In this is study we explore through the scriptures what it really means to fear God and give him the glory for the hour of his judgment has come. The hour of his judgment incorporates both God judging us as well as God being judged. If it is the righteousness of God that works in us to transform the character and create a people zealous of good works then it’s God’s righteousness within us and the resultant activity of that righteousness that will be subject to the judgment. How does God take a sinful human being and train him up in his ways of righteousness?

In our previous study we learned that God has become the facility of a benevolent, pitying, loving, strengthening Father to us if we promise to be separate from the world and touch not the unclean thing. But there is one other very important facility that God has afforded to us in his love for us as his children. In his role as a Father he needs to chastise and correct us so that we will be transformed into his glory. If we shrink from this correction we may never be changed from our current state but as we look to the one we long to emulate and receive his chastisement in obedience with meekness and humility, the delicate, operative, spiritual surgery of transforming the character may begin.

**Hebrews 12:5 And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: 6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. 7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? 8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. 9 Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected [us], and we gave [them] reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? 10 For they verily for a few days chastened [us] after their own pleasure; but he for [our] profit, that [we] might be partakers of his holiness.**

The facility of the first person of the Godhead is that of a Father who chastises and corrects us so that we may be transformed into His very own image.

**Psalms 141:5 Let the righteous smite me; [it shall be] a kindness: and let him reprove me; [it shall be] an excellent oil, [which] shall not break my head: for yet my prayer also [shall be] in their calamities.**

God’s chastisement will be as an excellent oil if we intelligently apply it to our lives so that we may be changed into His own likeness. When we understand that God’s corrective work is at hand to perfect the character, his chastisement will be seen in a restorative light.

**2 Corinthians 3:18 But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, [even] as by the Spirit of the Lord.**

As God chastises us we immediately have a vision of the one whom we are to emulate that we may become changed by this correction into his own glory.

**1 John 1:1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; 2 (For the life was manifested, and we have seen [it], and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) 3 That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship [is] with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.**

By having this hope in us that “we shall be like him for we shall see Him as He is,” we will be happy to make progress in purifying ourselves with His Fatherly help.

**1 John 3:3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.**

He chastises us for our benefit that we might be partakers of his holiness and purify ourselves even as he is pure.

**1 Peter 1:13 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.**

A child who is obedient to his Father will be benefited by his Fathers punishment when he has violated his Fathers will.  To become holy as he is holy and thereby in the first angels message to pass the judgment, we need to have a very clear vision of His holiness so that we are able to reflect it.

**Exodus 33:18 And he said, I beseech thee, show me thy glory. 19 And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.**

When Moses asked for the glory of God to be revealed, it was his goodness, his holiness and his wonderful character that was revealed. God’s work of chastisement is to enable us to be partakers of his goodness and holiness.

**Exodus 34:6 And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, 7 Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear [the guilty]; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children’s children, unto the third and to the fourth [generation].**

The glory in the judgment is going to be examined as to whether it really is what it is made out to be in the Bible. God’s holiness, his magnificent character, his majesty and his power are all comprehended in this concept of his glory.

**Matthew 18:1 At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? 2 And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, 3 And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.**

The question was posed, “who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” Isn’t that God the Father?  Jesus answered this question by placing a little child in the midst of them: and saying “except you be converted and become as little children.” Why did he answer in this way?

**Matthew 19:14 But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.**

The greatness of the greatest in the kingdom of heaven is demonstrated by a little child. All of heaven is made up of the basics. The basic building blocks of the greatness of heaven is the manifestation of the innocence and meekness of childlikeness.

**Isaiah 57:15 For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name [is] Holy; I dwell in the high and holy [place], with him also [that is] of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.**

God occupies the highest position in the universe and in that highest position he reveals what sort of a nature he has as he sits together with others in that position. With whom does God dwell in a high and lofty place? With those who are of a humble and contrite spirit. God’s beautiful childlike character is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Therefore we too will be heirs of God’s holiness if we posses his meek and childlike character. Consider his plan of salvation. He works with a company of people who have been proud, striving for glory, honour and greatness and then he points out to them that the only way his greatness can be attained is through an entire change of spirit.

**Psalm 33:6 By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. 7 He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses. 8 Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. 9 For he spake, and it was [done]; he commanded, and it stood fast. 10 The LORD bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought: he maketh the devices of the people of none effect. 11 The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.**

God is the only potentate the one whose word holds the powerful properties of the earth in control.

**Isaiah 2:19 And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth.**

There will be no hiding place anywhere because God’s fierceness will shake them out and there will be nothing which man finds strength and comfort in that will help him at this time.

**Nahum 1:8 But with an overrunning flood he will make an utter end of the place thereof, and darkness shall pursue his enemies. 9 What do ye imagine against the LORD? he will make an utter end: affliction shall not rise up the second time.**

God’s fierceness and his childlike innocence and meekness are both characteristics of God. Although he is so fiercesome and is so great, his personality, his character does not lose the childlike gentleness, meekness and innocence.

**Psalms 9:16 The LORD is known [by] the judgment [which] he executeth: the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands.**

When God exercises his fiercesome glory, his manifestation of punishment will be in a manner which shows that His gentleness and childlikeness are still in operation.

**Psalms 7:11 God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry [with the wicked] every day. 12 If he turn not, he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow, and made it ready. 13 He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death; he ordaineth his arrows against the persecutors. 14 Behold, he travaileth with iniquity, and hath conceived mischief, and brought forth falsehood. 15 He made a pit, and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch [which] he made. 16 His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate.**

God’s beautiful character is not going to be obliterated when he exercises his fiercesome punishment because the very instrument of his punishment is the harsh and violent activity of the wicked. God does not punish with a violent character but simply says “oops I’m sorry, you have just hurt yourself by your own violence and I have simply used your violence and your nasty personality to come back upon your head”. God in his awful majesty possesses vast extremities of character. He is childlike, meek, untouched with any harshness or violence and yet he can be identified with the punishment of the wicked. Job expresses what happened to him when he saw God’s glory;

**Job 42:5, 6 I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor [myself], and repent in dust and ashes.**

It is the discovery of God’s vast personality and his holiness that invokes the experience Job has made here. The heart melts, you abhor yourself and repent in dust and ashes. This was the experience of Elijah when surrounded by the extremes of an earthquake, a powerful windstorm and a great fire. He put his garment about him and hid his face because of the extremes of the violence that surrounded God’s presence. Amidst this experience Elijah heard God’s still, small, meek voice and became overwhelmed. Moses was in the same position when he saw the burning bush. He became humble and took off his shoes. There was a deep sense of God’s holiness because the marvel of the presentation of God in his awesomeness was revealed also with the ingredient of his gentleness. This response is also expressed by the angels.

**Isaiah 6:1 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. 4 And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. 5 Then said I, Woe [is] me! for I am undone; because I [am] a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.**

Isaiah is humbled by God’s holiness also and the angels are in awe of God as they express three times holy, holy, holy is the Lord. The manifestation of God’s meekness, gentleness and quietness and yet of his power and fiercesomeness fills a person with the kind of reverence that is due unto him. The admonition of the scripture is that we should hold God in reverence but it is not until we see God in his holiness that we can actually respond to becoming as holy as he is.

**Psalms 89:7 God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all [them that are] about him.**

This is a declaration of what we should be in God’s presence but while God may help us to come to that condition, he does not just tell us that’s how we have to be. He surrounds us with his holiness so that like the angels, Job, Elijah and Isaiah, we become overwhelmed and hold Him in reverence. God is greatly feared in the assembly of the saints when they behold his holiness.

**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.**

As we come into the presence of God and are affected by His holiness, this same holiness that causes the angels to cover their faces and their feet in front of him, we too will respond to this counsel not to be rash with our mouths or hasty in our hearts to utter anything before God.

**Leviticus 10:10 And that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean;**

The priests who are officiating in the work of the house of God are especially admonished in Leviticus 10 that because of his holiness all commonness and all earthliness is to be left aside. The priests were not permitted to partake of alcohol or intermingle with anything that was not pure and holy as God is holy. This was because their mental capacities had to be unimpaired in the presence of the Lord. The priesthood that failed to do this was seriously rebuked;

**Ezekiel 22:26 Her priests have violated My law, and have profaned Mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they showed [difference] between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from My Sabbaths, and I am profaned among them.**

God’s particular counsel to those who are upon earth, especially the leaders and the preachers of God’s word is that they not mingle anything profane with God’s holy realities. If they do this God will be profaned in the eyes of the people. Our estimation of him will be lowered.

In contemplating God’s holiness we are now corrected where we have in our ignorance and blindness of God’s holiness failed.

**I saw that God’s holy name should be used with reverence and awe. The words God Almighty are coupled together and used by some in prayer in a careless, thoughtless manner, which is displeasing to Him. Such have no realizing sense of God or the truth, or they would not speak so irreverently of the great and dreadful God, who is soon to judge them in the last day. Said the angel, “Couple them not together; for fearful is His name.” Those who realize the greatness and majesty of God, will take His name on their lips with holy awe. He dwelleth in light unapproachable; no man can see Him and live. I saw that these things will have to be understood and corrected before the church can prosper. {EW 122.1}**

How is the process of correction to take place?

The church wants to prosper and here lies the beginning of the prospering – to see God’s holiness, his meekness, his childlikeness, his loving patience and mercy and yet his awesome power and potentate control over the universe and his fiercesome activity at the time of the destruction of the wicked. These things will all cause man to shake at that time, but it is now time to permit God’s holiness to be imprinted upon us through his chastisement so that we will become holy and dwell in a high and lofty place with him. He wants to dwell with those of a meek and lowly spirit, holy as he is holy, set apart and sanctified. This instruction is not just for the ministry but to all those who follow the counsel of the Lord and are baptised in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.

**I fear that we do not believe and realize these things as we should. EW111 (1882 Supplement)**

**The Coming of the Lord in His Powerful Glory**

**Those who believe the important truths that we profess, should act out their faith. There is too much seeking after amusements and things to take the attention in this world; the mind is left to run too much upon dress, and the tongue is engaged too often in light and trifling conversation, which gives the lie to our profession, for our conversation is not in heaven, whence we look for the Saviour.  {EW 111.1}**

In heaven there is awesome joy and love to God and there is no light, trifling atmosphere because God is so high and so holy.

**Angels are watching over and guarding us; we often grieve these angels by indulging in trifling conversation, jesting, and joking, and also by sinking down into a careless, stupid state. Although we may now and then make an effort for the victory and obtain it, yet if we do not keep it, but sink down into the same careless, indifferent state, unable to endure temptations and resist the enemy, we do not endure the trial of our faith that is more precious than gold. We are not suffering for Christ’s sake, and glorying in tribulation. {EW 111.2}**

We are called upon to let the holy character that God is labouring to bring about in us take root to such an extent that we will cease from making a lie of our profession by light, trifling conversation, jesting and joking and also by sinking down into a careless and stupid state. Therefore let us not sink down to the same careless indifferent state again and again but move up instead to the lofty condition of heaven’s nature and holiness. Only as we see God’s holiness and experience his correction may we appreciate the condition of holiness that we must attain to.

**1 Peter 2:1 Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, 2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: 3 If so be ye have tasted that the Lord [is] gracious. 4 To whom coming, [as unto] a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, [and] precious, 5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.**

This is our privilege as newborn babes to desire the sincere milk of the word so that we will grow into the same meek, humble, contrite and holy spirit as our Father. Then we may dwell with him on his throne in a high and lofty place and behold the beautiful manner in which he deals with those who are rebellious against him and behold his wonderful power in controlling the weights and enormities of the things of nature upon the earth and in the universe. This is our privilege if we will learn it here on earth now – to give God the glory and by beholding his glory to be changed into the same image from glory to glory into that holy, respectful, joyful, yet not careless and trivialising way of life.

May God help us to submit to his correction until we will manifest that holiness which we have just contemplated.  We look at one more characteristic of God’s goodness and holiness and that is God’s grace. This will be our next study as we seek to understand and to worship God in spirit and in truth and receive the benefit of this facility of the Father to bring about the holiness and the character that we are to have under the direction of the first angel’s message. May we continue to keep our minds influenced by the manifestation of the heavenly Father, his personality and his holiness.

Amen.