

THE STANDARD OF HOLINESS



1. In whose image and likeness was man created?

Genesis 1:26: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: . . ."

Genesis 5:1: "This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him."

If one traces back to the root meaning of the original Hebrew, the word image denotes physical form, and the word likeness denotes character. When God created Adam he not only resembled God in appearance, but also in moral character.

2. What is God's character like?

Revelation 4:8: "And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come."

[Further Study]

Exodus 34:6, 7 "And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, 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."

1 John 4:8 "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love."

There are literally hundreds of verses in the Bible that refer to God's holiness. It is God's presence that makes a place or a person holy (Exodus 3:5).

Exodus 3:5 "And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground."

3. What has God declared to man revealing His will, and the transcript (official copy) of His character?

Psalms 40:8: "I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart."

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Romans 7:12: "Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good."

4. If Adam was created with a perfect moral character, and we are his descendants, what happened?

Romans 5:12: "Wherefore, as by one man (Adam) sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."

[Further Study]

Romans 3:23 "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;"

Because of sin man's perfect character is debased, his nature fallen, he cannot make himself righteous.

5. What is the Bible definition of sin?

1 John 3:4: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law."

[Further Study]

James 2:8-12 "If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well: But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors. For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law. So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty."

6. Is there a problem with the law? Is it faulty in any way?

Romans 7:12: "Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good."

Psalms 19:7-8: "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes."

7. What is the purpose of the law?

Romans 3:20: "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin."

[Further Study]

Galatians 3:24 "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith."

8. If the purpose of the law is to show us what sin is, and to point us to the remedy for transgression, must we still keep it?

Romans 3:31: "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law."

1 John 3:6, 9: "Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. . . . Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."

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As long as Jesus is in the heart sin cannot dwell there. It is when we choose to sin that Jesus no longer abides. Thus we need to acknowledge our sin to once again be restored to God.

9. If we continue to sin, whose children are we?

1 John 3:8, 10: "He that committeth sin is of the devil for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil (in me). . . . In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother."

[Further Study]

John 8:44 "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it."

10. In our sinful condition, is it possible for unholy beings to keep a holy law?

Jeremiah 13:23: "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil."

Job 14:4: "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one."

[Further Study]

Isaiah 53:6 "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

Isaiah 64:6 "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away."

11. Must we become holy?

Matthew 5:48: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

1 Peter 1:15-16: "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy."

[Further Study]

Leviticus 11:44 "For I am the LORD your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy: neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth."

Leviticus 20:7 "Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy: for I am the LORD your God."

12. How can we become holy?

John 17:17, 19: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.... And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth."

[Further Study]

Psalms 119:9 "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word."

John 8:32 "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

To sanctify means to be holy, to be free from sin.

13. Since a holy law can only be kept by holy beings, what is God's solution to the sin problem?

Romans 8:3: "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh."

[Further Study]

Isaiah 53:6 "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

To "condemn sin in the flesh" means to live life without sin in sinful flesh. Since Jesus is our example in overcoming sin, it is highly important we understand that Jesus had the same nature as fallen humanity. We will cover this in detail in another lesson.

14. Is Jesus holy? Is He qualified to be our Saviour from the just penalty of a broken law?

Romans 5:19: "For as by one man's (Adam) disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one (Jesus) shall many be made righteous."

Hebrews 4:15: "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

2 Corinthians 5:21: "For he hath made him (Christ) to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

[Further Study]

Luke 1:35 "And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."

Mark 1:24 "Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God."

Hebrews 1:3 "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;"

15. The Bible makes it clear that Jesus was God in human flesh (John 1:1, 14), therefore He was both human and divine. Since we are born only human, what must we partake of?

2 Peter 1:4: "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust (sinful desire)."

16. How do we partake of the divine nature?

2 Peter 1:4: "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."

17. What are some of the precious promises that will help us, through faith, to become partakers of the divine nature?

John 3:16: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

John 6:37, 47: "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out . . . Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life."

2 Corinthians 5:17: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

1 John 1:9: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

[Further Study]

Jeremiah 29:13 And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart."

Ezekiel 18:21-22 "But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him: in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live."

John 3:3 "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

18. Can God empower us to live a life of victory over sin?

Romans 1:16: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; . . ."

Jude 24: "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy."

Philippians 4: 13: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

[Further Study]

1 Corinthians 10:13 "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

James 4:7-8 "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded."

2 Peter 2:9 "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished."

Revelation 12:11 "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death."

19. Will God's law or character ever change?

Malachi 3:6: "For I am the Lord, I change not;..."

Hebrews 13:8: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever."

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20. What is God's ultimate will for fallen humanity?

2 Corinthians 7:1: "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

Romans 6:22: "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life."

[Further Study]

Hebrews 12:10 "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."

"There are two errors against which the children of God—particularly those who have just come to trust in His grace—especially need to guard. The first, already dwelt upon, is that of looking to their own works, trusting to anything they can do, to bring themselves into harmony with God. He who is trying to become holy by his own works in keeping the law, is attempting an impossibility.

All that man can do without Christ is polluted with selfishness and sin. It is the grace of Christ alone, through faith, that can make us holy.

"The opposite and no less dangerous error is that belief in Christ releases men from keeping the law of God; that since by faith alone we become partakers of the grace of Christ, our works have nothing to do with our redemption.

"But notice here that obedience is not a mere outward compliance, but the service of love. The law of God is an expression of His very nature; it is an embodiment of the great principle of love, and hence is the foundation of His government in heaven and in earth. If our hearts are renewed in the likeness of God, if the divine love is implanted in the soul, will not the law of God be carried out in the life? When the principle of love is implanted in the heart, when man is renewed after the image of Him that created him, the new covenant promise is fulfilled, 'I will put my laws into their hearts and in their minds will I write them.' Hebrews 10:16. And if the law is written in the heart, will it not shape the life? Obedience—the service and allegiance of love—is the true sign of discipleship." ***Steps to Christ, pages 59, 60.***

"As the coin bears the image and superscription of the reigning power, so man at his creation bore the image and superscription of God; and though now marred and dim through the influence of sin, the traces of this inscription remain upon every soul. God desires to recover that soul and to retrace upon it His own image in righteousness and holiness."

Christ's Object Lessons, page 194.