

“...BE YE HOLY; FOR I AM HOLY”

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At this time in the United States, “Pope John Paul” is visiting in St. Louis. His arrival has caused quite a stir in St. Louis, especially since it is heavily populated by Catholics. People are purchasing tickets, standing in lines and even kissing his hand. One young lady made a remark concerning the pope -- “Why, he is such a holy man.” It is a shame to see a young lady, who perhaps is sincere about her religion, be so wrong concerning the Bible. The office of the pope is one without Scriptural authority. In fact, the Catholic Church in general is without authority from Scripture. What constitutes holiness? Are we to be holy people today?

The liberal media and the denominational world has downplayed the word “holy” as well as attacking those who would claim to be holy. Those who claim to be holy are labeled as “self-righteous” and “judgmental.” They are projected as modern-day Pharisees. What does the Bible say about being holy?

The title of the article comes from a verse of Scripture written by the apostle Peter as he was directed by the Holy Spirit. Peter writes: ***“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.” -- 1 Pet 1:15-16.*** Peter is quoting from the Old Testament and the book of Leviticus in particular: ***“Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy.” -- Lev 19:2.***

The word “holy” simply means “set apart,” or “sanctified.” One who is holy is one who has been set apart and lives a separated life from others. This does not mean we are to elevate ourselves above others in our thinking or attitude, but it does mean we are to live a life which is separate from those of the world. The Hebrews writer wrote this concerning Jesus: ***“For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;” -- Heb 7:26.*** Jesus was “separate” from sinners in that He did not live like they did. However, He did associate with them in order that he might teach them the truth concerning eternal life: ***“Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him. And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.” -- Luke 15:1-2.*** On that particular occasion. Jesus spake the parable or parables (depending if you believe Luke 15 is one parable or four parables) concerning the lost. He directed it toward the Pharisees because of the hardness of their hearts toward the lost. We need to be like Jesus -- associate with sinners only to teach them the truth.

What about holiness? Can we claim to be holy without sinning? Can we know who is and who is not holy?

GOD THE FATHER DEMANDS THAT WE BE HOLY

When Adam and Eve were created, they were placed in the garden and instructed not to

partake of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Thus, God expected them to be obedient to what He commanded. A penalty was placed upon them if they disobeyed. God demanded that they separate themselves and obey Him. They did not and God proved He meant what He said by expelling them from the garden and pronouncing the entrance of physical suffering and death as a result of their disobedience

When God gave Israel the Law of Moses, He emphasized their being holy over and over again. Notice what he said: ***"Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel."*** -- ***Exo 19:5-6***".....***And ye shall be holy men unto me: neither shall ye eat any flesh that is torn of beasts in the field; ye shall cast it to the dogs."*** -- ***Exo 22:31***.....***"And of the blue, and purple, and scarlet, they made cloths of service, to do service in the holy place, and made the holy garments for Aaron; as the LORD commanded Moses."*** -- ***Exo 39:1***.....***"And the LORD spake unto Aaron, saying, Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations: And that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean;"*** -- ***Lev 10:8-10***.....***"For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God, and the LORD hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth."*** -- ***Deu 14:2***. From a reading of these verses and others like them, one can see God demands His people be different. God is a jealous God and He will not occupy second place: ***"Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;"*** -- ***Exo 20:5***.....***For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God:"*** -- ***Exo 34:14***.....***"For the LORD thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God."*** -- ***Deu 4:24***.

God has a right to demand His people be holy because (1) He created us in His image (Gen 1:26,27); (2) He is holy Himself (Lev 19:2). God will not acquit the person who will not be penitent and live a holy life.

GOD THE SON DIED THAT WE MIGHT BE HOLY

Jesus Christ came and died on the cross that we might be people who are different and set apart. Paul writes: ***"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."*** -- ***Titus 2:11-14***. Notice Jesus came that He might "redeem" us. That is, that He might "buy us back." He paid the ultimate price for our souls -- His own innocent blood (Acts 20:28; Eph 2:13-16; 1 Pet 1:18,19). His death enables us to become separate from sinners by being washed in His blood and added to His church (Acts 2:47; Rev 1:5). Our obedience does not nullify God's grace, it is the means by which we access this grace. The death of the second person of the Godhead made this possible for us.

He also dedicated His will with His blood -- ***"And for this cause he is the mediator of the***

new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth. Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood." -- Heb 9:15-18. The first testament was dedicated with the blood of animals. This blood served as a substitute for the innocent blood the Lamb of God -- Jesus Christ. Today we can be holy, set apart from the world, by the blood our Savior.

GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT DIRECTS US THROUGH HIS WORD TO BE HOLY

When Jesus returned to the right hand of the Father, He sent the Holy Spirit to guide the apostles into all truth (John 16:13). Directions were given as to how to please God. We are told how to obey the gospel, having our sins washed away and being added to His body. We are also told how to live a life which will bring glory to God. We are directed as to how to be separate from sinners ourselves: "*And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.*" -- *Eph 5:11*. We are to follow after - that is, pursue with the intent of catching, holiness: "*Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:*" -- *Heb 12:14*. If we will see the Lord in the end, we must follow holiness. We must be set apart for the Master's use and live accordingly.

The "pope" can be a holy man if he will obey the gospel and be directed by the Holy Spirit through His word. Friend, have we obeyed? Are we living accordingly?