

Goals of Coram Deo Study

- ❖ The Coram Deo Study has one main goal—to learn to live with God again. Three sub-goals act as supports. Think of a stool. Living with God is the top of the stool and the three truths below are the legs.
 - Learning about God from His own mouth.
 - Guarding ourselves and other from being ashamed of the gospel.
 - Be proud enough of God to defend Him intelligently in a skeptical culture.

Preparation

- ❖ The first lesson covers God’s Holiness. To prepare for this lesson please do the following:
 - Read the passage
 - Listen to the sermon on our website or SermonAudio while looking at the Bible study outline below. Take notes and make figure out how you will guide the group to consider each aspect of holiness.
 - Review the outline below and determine how you want to tailor it to your group. The outline follows the order of events in each small group.

Welcome and Worship [5-10 minutes]

- ❖ Please review your fellowship manual for extensive details. Worship can be accomplished in many ways. You could read a Psalm. You could simply open with prayer. You could sing a hymn.
- ❖ Use your judgment. What kind of worship best sets the tone to connect people with the presence of God? Invoke Him into your midst.
- ❖ Possible Resources
 - Valley of Vision
 - Hymnal
 - The Psalms

Bible Study [15-30 minutes]

Below you will find the outline from the Coram Deo Holiness sermon with questions. Remember, you are not holding a seminary class. You are seeking to bring attention to a few aspects of God’s holiness. The application is included, but don’t focus on that yet. The sharing time is the best place to explore the implications.

“In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he

covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one cried to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!" And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke. So I said: "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 my eyes have seen the King, The Lord of hosts." Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal which he had taken with the tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth with it, and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; Your iniquity is taken away, And your sin purged." Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: "Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us?" Then I said, "Here am I! Send me." And He said, "Go, and tell this people: 'Keep on hearing, but do not understand; Keep on seeing, but do not perceive.' "Make the heart of this people dull, And their ears heavy, And shut their eyes; Lest they see with their eyes, And hear with their ears, And understand with their heart, And return and be healed." Then I said, "Lord, how long?" And He answered: "Until the cities are laid waste and without inhabitant, The houses are without a man, The land is utterly desolate, The Lord has removed men far away, And the forsaken places are many in the midst of the land. But yet a tenth will be in it, And will return and be for consuming, As a terebinth tree or as an oak, Whose stump remains when it is cut down. So the holy seed shall be its stump.'" (Isaiah 6:1–13, NKJV)

Theme: Holiness:

The Otherness of Holiness

- I. How do you understand 'Otherness'
 - A. Spiders (from sermon)
 - B. Under pine tree (from sermon)
 - C. Paranormal activity (from sermon)
- II. Verses 1-4 Present God as Other
 - A. Contrast with King Uzziah
 1. Above political prowess and manipulations of men
 2. Sovereign above kings
 - B. Trisagion
 1. Holy, Holy, Holy used for emphasis
 2. By those from heaven and not familiar human attendants.

The Moral Purity of Holiness

- I. The emphasis on God's Holiness is primarily moral
- II. Israel was meant to represent God's moral purity
 - A. Represent his moral purity among the nations
 - B. Story of idolatry and madness
- III. Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Isaiah (Latter Prophets)
 - A. Commentary of God's mind and heart on the past betrayal and the future promise.
 - B. Isaiah 5:20- Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!¹

¹ *The New King James Version* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), Is 5:20.

- IV. The Coal purifying shows concern over sin.
- V. Application
 - A. Moral purity is a quality of all his attributes:
 - 1. Planning, brilliant event management
 - a. If mixed with evil; conniving, scheming
 - b. If mixed with moral purity, wisdom
 - B. Ah...but mix in other too
 - 1. Wisdom plan that no one would foresee!
 - 2. ³³ Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!
How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!²
 - C. Heart of our cry during difficult and even tragic moments: “I would not govern like God governs.”
 - 1. Instead of doubting Him...assert Him
 - 2. He is morally pure...but he is other
 - a. Until you embrace the fact that the universe is run in all her intricate detail by a God who is other, who will not run things the way you would, then you will worry yourself sick.
 - 3. ⁸“For My thoughts *are* not your thoughts, Nor *are* your ways My ways,” says the Lord. ⁹“For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.”³

[God is holy as in otherness and he is holy in moral purity. We used the example of wisdom to see otherness and moral purity at work. Yet, the focus in this passage is predominantly about his judgement.]

The Judgement of Holiness

- I. Judgement has two related meanings
 - A. A sentence and its execution in punishment
 - B. A moral conclusion based on evidence
 - 1. Lawyers bring facts to judge or jury and they render a judgement.
- II. God as morally pure, and other, rendering judgement
 - A. Context: Is. 1:21-23
 - B. God enters on throne of judgement
 - C. His heavenly court surrounds Him
 - D. Isaiah is completely aware of this
 - 1. I am unclean (6:5)
 - 2. My people are unclean (6:5)
 - E. Judgement envisioned
 - 1. (6:11)
- III. Application
 - A. Mixed with otherness, and moral purity
 - 1. All men can judge
 - 2. But...fear, ambition, love of money enter in for men.

² *Ibid.*, Ro 11:33.

³ *Ibid.*, Is 55:8–9.

3. God...no. just judgement, holy judgement
- B. Are you embarrassed of His holy judgement?
 1. Atheist, Richard Dawkins (The God Delusion): “The God of the Old Testament is arguably the most unpleasant character in all fiction: jealous and proud of it; a petty, unjust, unforgiving control-freak; a vindictive, bloodthirsty ethnic cleanser; a misogynistic, homophobic, racist, infanticidal, genocidal, filicidal, pestilential, megalomaniacal, sadomasochistic, capriciously malevolent bully.”
 2. People are looking for a God that cares and justice seems to contradict that...
 - a. Not true. True love always issues in holy just judgement.
 - b. Becky Pippert (*Out of the Saltshaker and into the world*) also wrote, *Hope has its reasons*:
 - a. *Think how we feel when we see someone we love ravaged by unwise actions or relationships. Do we respond with benign tolerance as we might toward strangers? Far from it... Anger isn't the opposite of love. Hate is, and the final form of hate is indifference... God's wrath is not a cranky explosion, but his settled opposition to the cancer ... which is eating out the insides of the human race he loves with his whole being*⁴

Sharing [15-30 Minutes]

1. When things go wrong in your life, what are some conclusions you draw about the character of God?
2. Does considering his otherness in planning change those conclusions?
3. Do you find it difficult to live with God who is so different?
4. Is God's Holiness attractive to you? Are you indifferent? Repulsed?
5. Are you embarrassed of God exact just holy judgment? Do you share any of the opinion of Richard Dawkins [Read quote]?
6. Does Becky Pippert help or is she a bunch of bologna? How would you defend God's wrath?[Read quote]
7. After this message we celebrated communion. Picture the bread being broken and the wine poured. How do these elements illustrate God's justice?
8. The Lord's Supper shows that God is just and the justifier. For, he sees every sin, and so remains just, and yet allows sinners to escape by sending His Son. When you consider this basic Christian message, how do you react? Is it boring? Is it confusing? Is it high-sounding non-sense?
9. After this sharing time, what are some obvious prayer concerns relative to living with a Holy God in a skeptical world?

⁴ Timothy Keller, *The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2009), 75–76.

Prayer Time [5-10 minutes]

Remember, all kinds of prayer requests may be taken, but keep a good balance. Make sure the emphasis falls on prayer for discovered needs relative to the Holiness of God. Are people frustrated with God's holiness? Pray for them! Are they unimpressed with communion, but want to the sacrament to be more meaningful? Pray! Have they been angry with God? Pray!

Socialize [Up to you]

This is a time to be intentional in your relationships. God has placed you in a leadership position of some sort. Take it seriously!