

PUBLISHED TO SHARE OUR HOPE IN JESUS CHRIST

FAITH ALIVE

HOLINESS

UNDERSTANDING
HOLINESS
THE HOLY SPIRIT
CONTAGIOUS
HOLINESS
AND MORE ...

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EDITORIAL

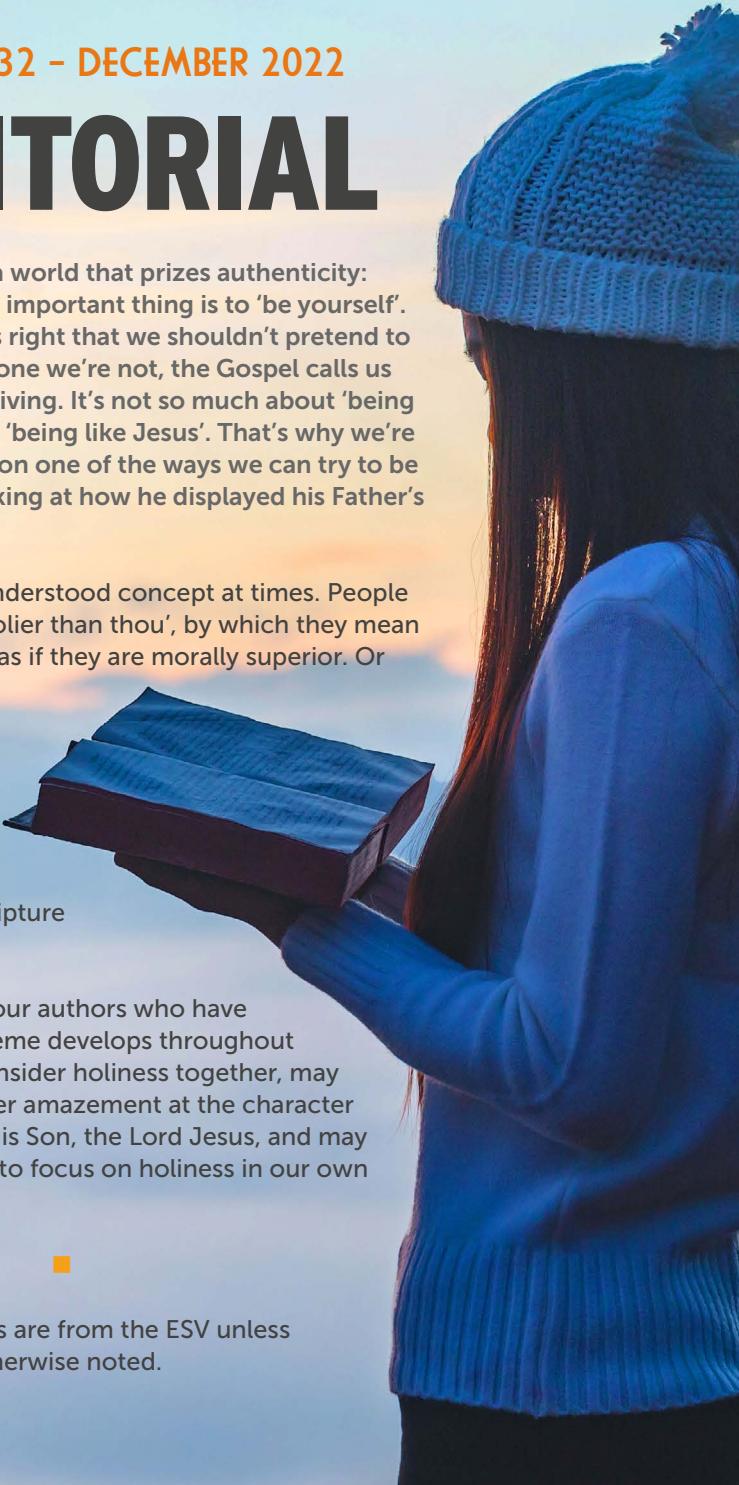
We live in a world that prizes authenticity: the most important thing is to 'be yourself'. While it's right that we shouldn't pretend to be someone we're not, the Gospel calls us to a higher way of living. It's not so much about 'being ourselves' as about 'being like Jesus'. That's why we're focusing this issue on one of the ways we can try to be like Jesus – by looking at how he displayed his Father's holiness.

It's perhaps a misunderstood concept at times. People talk about being 'holier than thou', by which they mean that someone acts as if they are morally superior. Or sometimes people mistake being holy for being weird – trying to be different simply for the sake of seeming different. That's not what scripture means by holiness.

We are grateful to our authors who have shown how this theme develops throughout the Bible. As we consider holiness together, may it move us to greater amazement at the character of our Father and His Son, the Lord Jesus, and may we be encouraged to focus on holiness in our own hearts and minds.



*All quotations are from the ESV unless otherwise noted.



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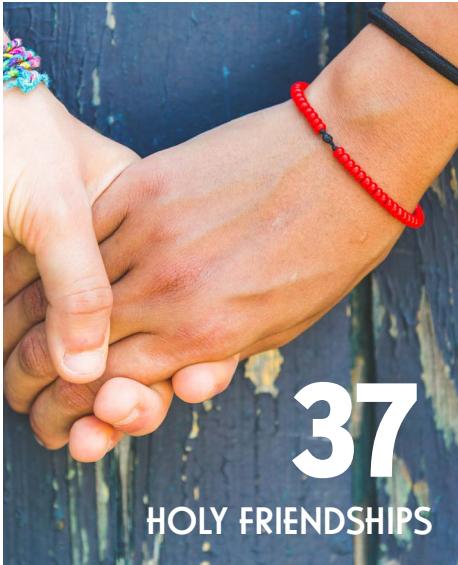
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HOLINESS: GOD'S ATTRIBUTE

ANTHONY WHITEHORN, WOKINGHAM, UK

If you were asked to choose which is God's most unique attribute, what would you say? Imagine you had to choose between grace, love, holiness and compassion. Many would opt for either grace or most likely love. But the most unique characteristic is actually holiness. It is God's defining characteristic; it's a term the Bible uses to define His goodness and power. Now that should make us think, 'What is holiness?'

The Hebrew word is 'qodesh', which literally means 'set apart'. However, that has been somewhat misused and misinterpreted. People can take this to mean that they should not associate with anything or anyone and so they become very insular. Jesus was the "*holy one of God*" yet he associated with many – so it can't quite mean that we should live as hermits.

Holiness is very difficult to explain but a simplified description could be 'being perfect and pure in every way'. God contrasted His 'complete perfection' with our imperfection by telling Moses to remove his sandals because he was standing on "*holy ground*" (Exodus 3:5). Isaiah in his vision was told: "*Holy, holy, holy is the LORD*" (Isaiah 6:3). Not just 'holy' but three times holy! It's as if I said that I saw a man who was huge, huge, huge – you'd know this was a very big man. That is what God is like – He is pure in every way.

God wants us also to be "*perfect and pure in every way*" and says in Leviticus, "*be holy, for I am holy*" (Leviticus 11:44). The whole of Leviticus is about becoming perfect or holy as the children of Israel were about to enter the land God had prepared for them. He wanted them to reflect His perfection. But to help them understand that they were impure He made them go through rituals to remind them



“... but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy.’”

(1 Peter 1:15,16)



of their position and state. The difference between God (holy) and mankind (unholy) was stark. God cannot abide impurity and will consume it – hence the frightening power of God is emphasised in the Old Testament.

In the New Testament the emphasis changes. Jesus Christ touches the impure; he associates directly with the unclean, but instead of repelling them he transfers his holiness to them. He heals the infected, he cleanses the unclean. It's as if he is making them 'pure' and that is the message to us. We cannot become holy on our own, it is our Lord who can cleanse us and therefore bring us near to God.

Holiness is God's characteristic which we cannot attain on our own; it is only through the touch of Jesus that we can come into His presence. ■

BE HOLY FOR I AM HOLY

AMY PARKIN, BEVERLEY, UK

You've probably heard the phrase, 'Like father, like son'. Family likenesses are often easy to spot and are passed down from generation to generation. A child might inherit their father's nose, their mother's laugh, or their grandfather's artistic talent. This works in reverse, too. People might expect that the daughter of an artist would be artistic, or that the son of an accountant would be good with numbers. To some extent, every child lives under the shadow of their parents' reputation: generous or stingy, good at football or terrible at it, grumpy or cheerful, always early or rarely on time. As they get older, they will choose either to live up to that reputation, or to break the family mould!

We have all inherited human nature, passed down through the generations. By godly standards, humans have a reputation for being self-centred, prone to sin, and blind to the consequences of their actions. Yet God has called us to be His sons and daughters, and this creates a challenge for us. Will we continue to live up to the reputation of the flesh, or will we accept this high calling and try to live up to a new, holy reputation?

Our heavenly Father has a reputation for being patient, kind, fair, forgiving, and abundant in steadfast love. He hates evil and loves good. He is holy. When we get baptized, the old self (a child of Adam, a child of the flesh) is put to death and a new creation (a child of God, a child of the spirit) is born. Our allegiance changes, and we have a new family reputation to live up to. We won't always succeed, but we'll try all the same. And what a wonderful, inspirational family to be part of! We now come from a long line of faithful men and women who, among so many other things, have "*subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises [and] stopped the mouths of lions*" (Hebrews 11:33, KJV).

God wants us to live up to the family reputation because doing so brings Him glory. He wants us to be holy because He is holy (Leviticus 11:44; 1 Peter 1:16). But holiness is a choice. We have to choose to be like God; He will never force holiness upon us. It is so easy to fall back into old patterns of selfishness, lust and pride, but it helps to remember our new identity. We are "*Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise*" (Galatians 3:29), being "*built up [...] to be a holy priesthood*" (1 Peter 2:5). We are sons and daughters of the living God. Are you ready and willing to live up to God's holy reputation? ■



HOLY,
HOLY,
HOLY
IS THE LORD OF HOSTS;
FOR THE WHOLE
EARTH IS FULL
OF HIS
GLORY.

ISAIAH 6:3

UNDERSTANDING HOLINESS

JAMES MCCORRIE, FORDHAM, UK

The two main words translated 'holiness' in scripture are 'qodesh' in Hebrew and 'hagios' in Greek. Both seem to have the general idea of being pure or clean.

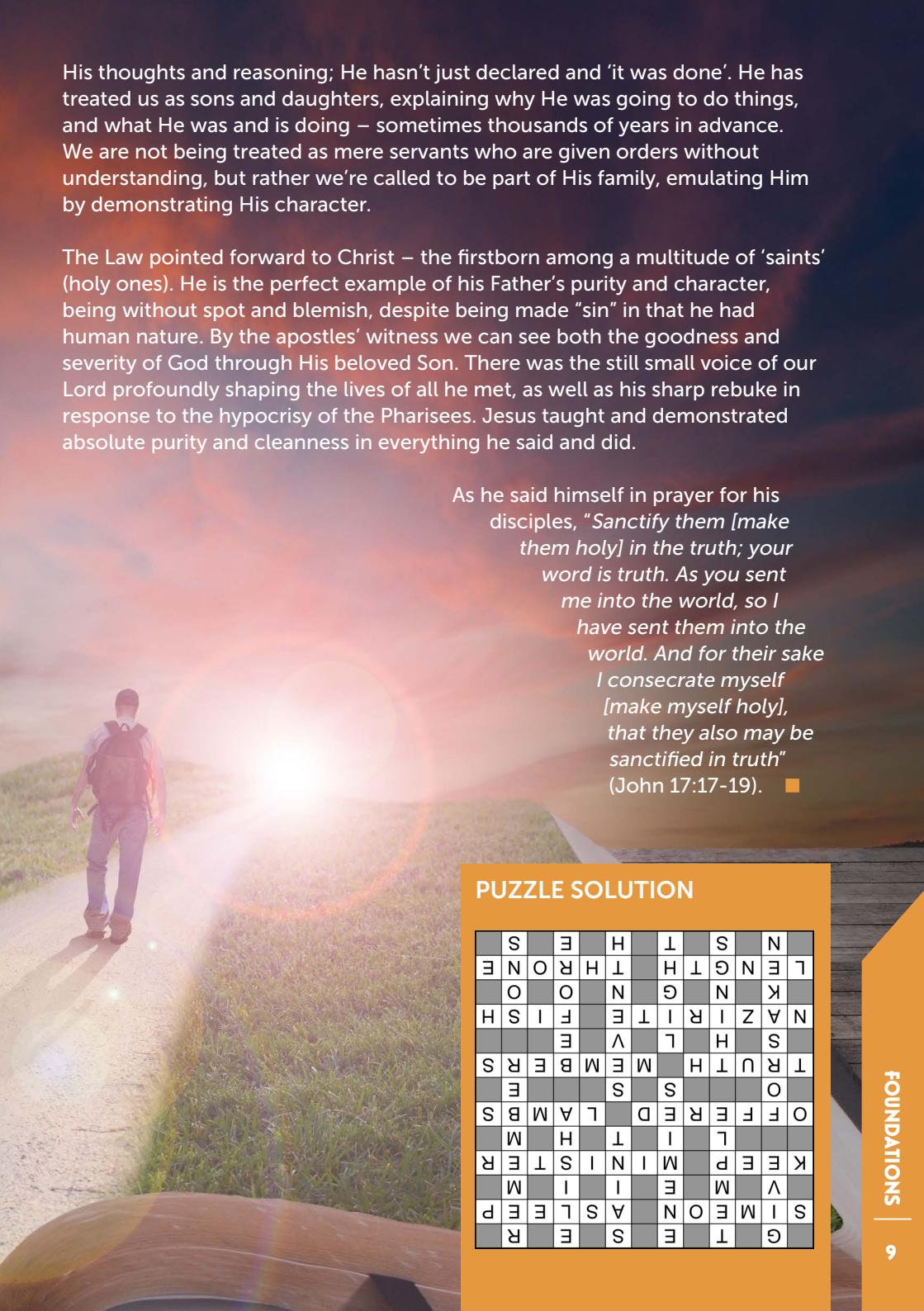
Our natural view of what is pure or clean can be the opposite of God's view. The temple prostitutes of the goddesses Astarte or Venus were called 'qadesh' or 'q'deshah' – pure and clean in the eyes of their followers, but they were nothing of the sort in the eyes of Yahweh.

It was the priests' role to "teach [Yahweh's] people the difference between the holy and the

profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean", by making sure the people kept His laws and statutes (Ezekiel 44:23,24). By the ceremonial purity demonstrated in the rituals of the law, the people were to learn how to purify their thoughts and actions, as explained in the letters to the Romans and the Hebrews, amongst others.

The Holy One of Israel – the pure one of Israel – has provided a record of His dealings with humanity for the past 6,000 years. He has given us an opportunity to understand

"Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God."
(2 Corinthians 7:1)



His thoughts and reasoning; He hasn't just declared and 'it was done'. He has treated us as sons and daughters, explaining why He was going to do things, and what He was and is doing – sometimes thousands of years in advance. We are not being treated as mere servants who are given orders without understanding, but rather we're called to be part of His family, emulating Him by demonstrating His character.

The Law pointed forward to Christ – the firstborn among a multitude of 'saints' (holy ones). He is the perfect example of his Father's purity and character, being without spot and blemish, despite being made "sin" in that he had human nature. By the apostles' witness we can see both the goodness and severity of God through His beloved Son. There was the still small voice of our Lord profoundly shaping the lives of all he met, as well as his sharp rebuke in response to the hypocrisy of the Pharisees. Jesus taught and demonstrated absolute purity and cleanliness in everything he said and did.

As he said himself in prayer for his disciples, *"Sanctify them [make them holy] in the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sake I consecrate myself [make myself holy], that they also may be sanctified in truth"*
(John 17:17-19). ■

PUZZLE SOLUTION

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SEPARATE FROM AND SEPARATE TO

SHANNON MCQUEEN, STUTTGART, GERMANY

Sometimes we can fall into thinking that because holiness is God's characteristic, we aren't like Him. Even if we tried to be holy, that sounds like an awful lot of discomfort and effort. Does that sound familiar? Those thoughts can creep into our mind if we have a wrong image of holiness, so it is essential for us to look at what holiness really means for us.

I'd like to pose the following hypothesis: Even though God is holy, complete, completely perfect, and perfectly separate from sin, holiness is not unreachable for us. All the words I just mentioned are commonly used interchangeably for the word 'holy'. Visualise them in your mind as a precious jewel – something perfect in the way it's made. When you look at it, you can't help thinking it is complete. This jewel is incredibly valuable and therefore something you would keep separate, apart from influences that could cause damage or harm to it.

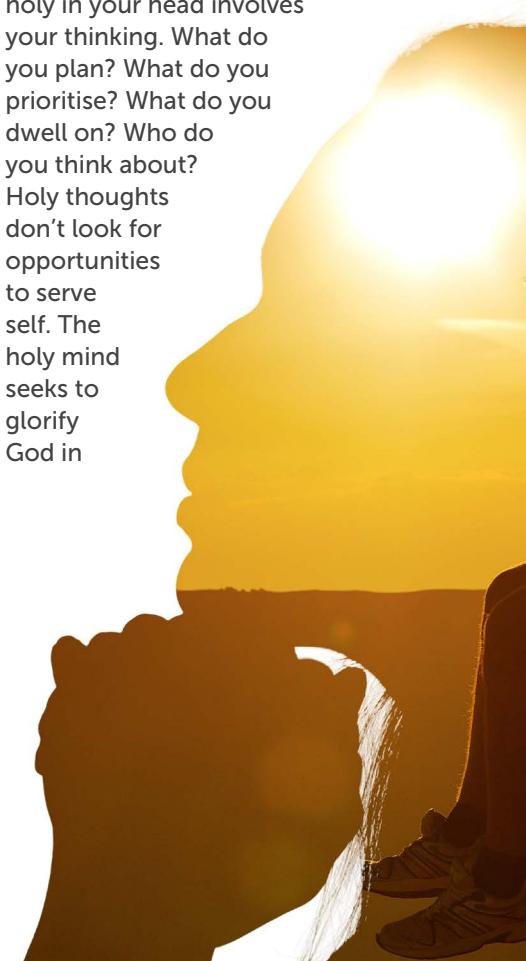
Now imagine you are that jewel. That's what God means when He says: "*Be holy, for I am holy*" (Leviticus 11:44). You are precious in His eyes! How can we be holy? Stay away from those harmful influences. Show that

you are special. Stay separate.

In practice, that involves having the following:

A HOLY HEAD

The most crucial part about being holy in your head involves your thinking. What do you plan? What do you prioritise? What do you dwell on? Who do you think about? Holy thoughts don't look for opportunities to serve self. The holy mind seeks to glorify God in





everything: "my brothers and sisters, always think about what is true. Think about what is noble, right and pure. Think about what is lovely and worthy of respect. If anything is excellent or worthy of praise, think about those kinds of things" (Philippians 4:8, NIrV).

HOLY HANDS

Holy hands refer more to what we are doing physically. Jesus Christ had perfectly holy hands. With them he blessed the children, he reached out to the outcasts of society. He was not defiled by their uncleanness; he brought them the help they needed, and so made them complete.

He prayed, maybe even with his hands uplifted. His holiness came from a

closeness to his God, and therefore being separate from sin. We can follow that example and use our hands to do what blesses and does good to those around us. Holy hands don't follow bad habits, lead people (including ourselves) astray or craft distracting false idols. They don't try to get as close as they can to sin.

A HOLY HEART

In many ways, the holy heart is the trickier challenge because a holy heart is not directly visible to the outside world. A holy heart is set upon what is right – working towards God's kingdom. In your heart, your secret place, you can keep what you treasure most. Is God in that secret place for you? Or is your heart filled with things you would be ashamed of saying in front of your Lord Jesus? "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Luke 12:34).

Does that make you feel like you will never measure up? The good news is that "it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13). Paul goes on to say, "Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labour in vain" (verses 14-16).

It is worth it, because one day – on that day of Christ's return – we will see the Holy One, face to face. ■

"I HAVE CALLED YOU BY NAME"

EMILY FRIEDRICH, PORTHLEVEN, UK



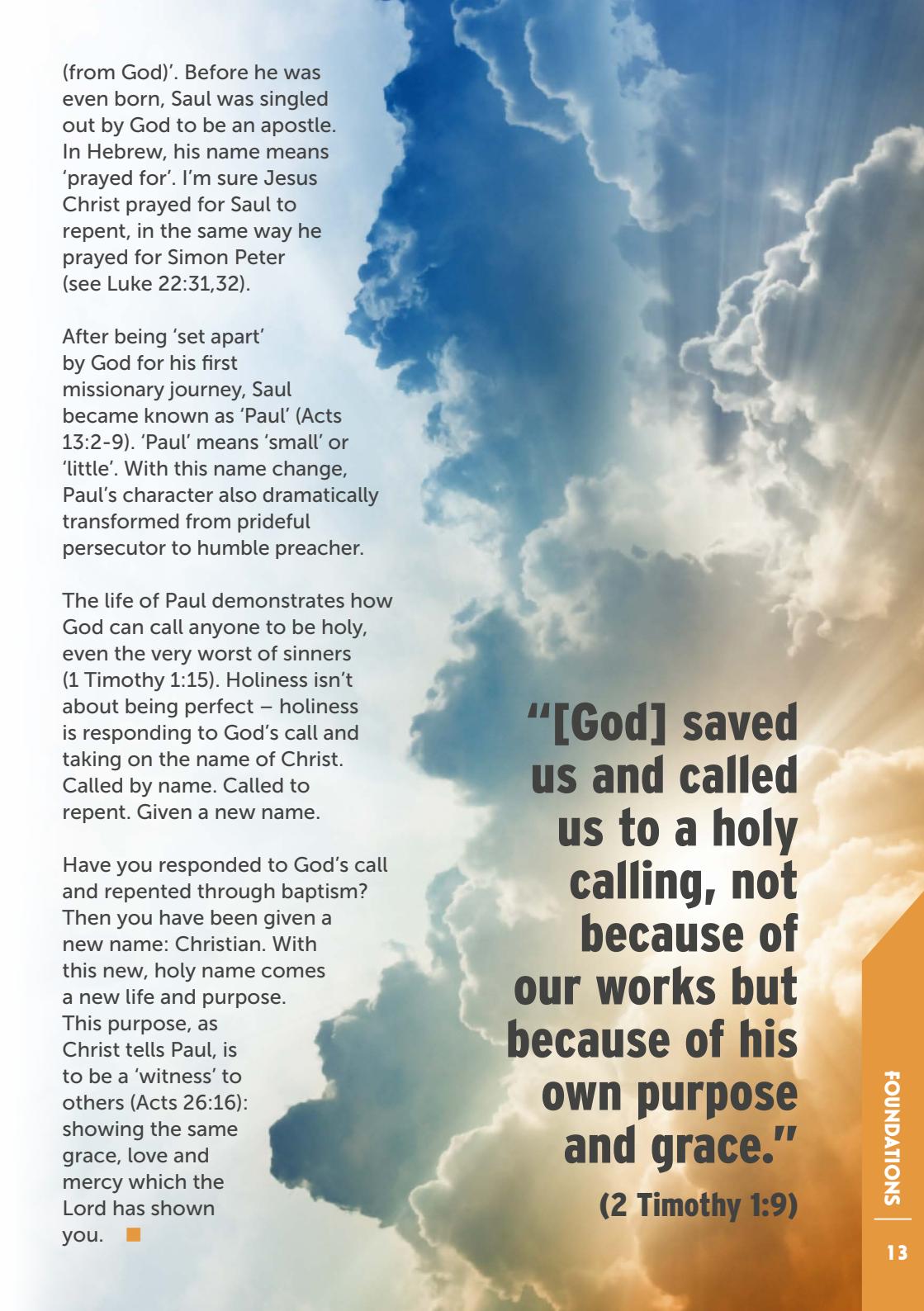
Another aspect of holiness is being 'set apart' by God for His purpose. Paul was a man who knew first-hand the grace and purpose of God. As someone who was "*called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God*" (Romans 1:1), God had a special plan for him which would be revealed through a dramatic encounter with the Lord Jesus.

Before he was known as Paul, "*servant of Christ Jesus*" (Romans 1:1), he was Saul of Tarsus, a pedantic Pharisee and religious extremist who tried to destroy the Christian church (Acts 8:3). He was still "*breathing threats and murder*" against Christians when he encountered Jesus on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:1).

A voice from heaven called out his name: "*'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?'*" (verse 4).

These seven anguished words transformed Saul's life in an instant. Through tormenting Christians, he was crucifying Christ all over again. In deep remorse, Saul repented of his past and became a follower of Jesus.

In Greek, 'Saul' means 'asked for



(from God)'. Before he was even born, Saul was singled out by God to be an apostle. In Hebrew, his name means 'prayed for'. I'm sure Jesus Christ prayed for Saul to repent, in the same way he prayed for Simon Peter (see Luke 22:31,32).

After being 'set apart' by God for his first missionary journey, Saul became known as 'Paul' (Acts 13:2-9). 'Paul' means 'small' or 'little'. With this name change, Paul's character also dramatically transformed from prideful persecutor to humble preacher.

The life of Paul demonstrates how God can call anyone to be holy, even the very worst of sinners (1 Timothy 1:15). Holiness isn't about being perfect – holiness is responding to God's call and taking on the name of Christ. Called by name. Called to repent. Given a new name.

Have you responded to God's call and repented through baptism? Then you have been given a new name: Christian. With this new, holy name comes a new life and purpose. This purpose, as Christ tells Paul, is to be a 'witness' to others (Acts 26:16): showing the same grace, love and mercy which the Lord has shown you. ■

"[God] saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace."

(2 Timothy 1:9)

WHAT DOES SANCTIFICATION MEAN?

KEVIN RAWLINGS,
WEST BROMWICH, UK

God made holy the seventh day (Genesis 2:2,3). To say the same thing in different words, God sanctified / consecrated / hallowed the seventh day. English Bible translators don't make things easy here!

Sanctifying the seventh day was God's choice and doing, and had a blessing connected to it, and was due to God completing and resting from His very good creative work.

These three aspects of the sanctification of the seventh day set the tone for what scripture more broadly signifies by sanctification. God determines what or who gets sanctified and what or who remains common. The object or person sanctified is brought into a close, beneficial relationship with God, involving

devoted service to Him (Romans 6:19-22; 2 Timothy 2:21). There will often be a reason for sanctification connected to, and teaching us about, God's character and purpose. Therefore, the thing or person sanctified must have characteristics that reflect God Himself (Leviticus 11:44,45).





Before the seventh day was sanctified it was a day like all the other days. Once it was sanctified by God it was transformed into a holy day, different from the other days and special to God. Sanctification has no meaning without God. Perhaps this is why the concept of sanctification in modern times is rarely used with secular meaning.

Sanctification is generally not an accident. Sanctification in an Old Covenant context required an outward sign such as washing, purification, anointing, restraint from certain common activities, a new set of clothes, animal sacrifice etc. (see

Exodus 19:10-15; 28:3,41; 29:1,19-21; 40:9-15). It should have been clear to the surrounding society that sanctification had occurred (Leviticus 21). New Covenant sanctification comes from belief in Jesus Christ (John 17:17-20; Acts 26:18; 1 Corinthians 1:30), with baptism accompanying as an outward sign (1 Corinthians 6:11). Both the body and blood of Christ are said to provide for our sanctification (Hebrews 9:13,14; 10:10; 13:12). The sanctification of us Christians will be evident by our transformed behaviour as we embrace devoted service to God (1 Peter 1:14-17).

Often scripture talks about people sanctifying themselves (Exodus 19:22; Joshua 3:5; 7:13; 2 Chronicles 29:5,15,34; John 17:19). We understand though that people can only sanctify themselves when God has first chosen them to be sanctified. Sometimes it is made clear in the same text that sanctifying oneself is a necessary component of, and response to, God's willingness to sanctify (Leviticus 20:7,8; 1 Samuel 16:5; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8).

Once sanctification has happened it is often not possible to reverse the process by turning the holy back to common. Instead, if the sanctified is no longer fulfilling its devoted service to God, then it is devoted to destruction (Hebrews 10:26-30). ■

“

WHO IS LIKE YOU,

O LORD, AMONG THE GODS?

WHO IS LIKE YOU,

MAJESTIC

----- IN HOLINESS -----

AWESOME

----- IN GLORIOUS DEEDS, -----

DOING WONDERS?

”

THE HOLY SPIRIT

ANDREW BRAMHILL, SOLIHULL, UK

In reading the Bible it is noticeable that the Old Testament talks of God's spirit, and the New Testament speaks of His Holy Spirit, as if there was a difference. The idea that apostles were given holy spirit gifts in a way rarely seen before seems to underline this difference. But a closer look shows there is really no difference at all between Old and New Testaments.

When God created the heaven and the earth, this was done through His spirit. *"In the beginning, God created [...] And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters"* (Genesis 1:1,2). It was by God's power that this great creative work was accomplished. Genesis 2:7 tells us, *"the LORD God formed the man"* and Job says, *"the Spirit of God has made me"* (Job 33:4). These, and other verses, tell us that the spirit of God is His mighty power by which many wonderful things are done. This spirit must always be holy because God is holy. There are occasions in the Old Testament, not just the New, where it is described as holy (e.g., Isaiah 63:10,11).

Nor is it only the New Testament where we read of men doing marvellous things by the power of God's spirit. Bezalel was able to build the tabernacle because God *"filled him with the Spirit of God [...] and with all craftsmanship"* (Exodus 35:31). Men such as Othniel, Gideon, Jephthah and Samson were all

able to perform mighty acts because God's spirit was upon them.

TWO GREAT THINGS

There are two great works done by God's spirit which require attention. The first is the inspiration of His word, for *"holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit"* (2 Peter 1:21, NKJV). This led to the production of the most marvellous book on earth: the only book which tells us about God, His character, His purpose with us and His great saving work through the Lord Jesus.

Secondly it was by the spirit that the only begotten son of God was born (Luke 1:35). As a result, Jesus was truly and uniquely the Son of God. Jesus grew to be filled with God's spirit and was able to perform many miracles and speak many gracious words. Apostles after him were blessed with holy spirit gifts whilst the New Testament was being compiled, and in the future age His spirit will again be poured out (Joel 2:28). ■



SEPARATION IN CREATION

DAN WEATHERALL, TAMWORTH, UK

**“Let there be an
expanse in the midst
of the waters, and let it
separate the waters from
the waters.”**

(Genesis 1:6)

The majestic opening of the Bible presents the sure fact that God made the world in a very deliberate and beautiful narrative. Genesis 1 is not a scientific description of creation. Instead, some very important truths about humanity are communicated in the way this has been written.

The way creation is described is by showing God performing a series of divisions and separation over six days. He separates the light from darkness, He separates waters into those above and those below, He separates dry land from sea.

All of these separations teach us that God's order in the world is brought about through marking something as special, or holy. Much later, Peter describes Christians as those who have been called by God "*out of darkness into his marvellous light*" (1 Peter 2:9). There is an expectation that we have been created to be holy and separate, just as light banishes darkness.

The separation continues throughout Genesis 1 when it describes different things that occupy light, water and land, in exactly that same order: great lights to rule the day and night, creatures in the waters above and below, land animals and, finally, humanity – people to live and rule on the earth.

This careful pattern is very deliberate. God is teaching that He wants others to follow His own separation and holiness. The sun, moon and stars continue the separation between

light and darkness that God began. Creatures maintain the separated order in their habitats. Humans are to follow God's lead and be part of this order and separation.

There is another aspect of creation that relates to holiness. All of the organic life, from plants and insects, to whales and birds, are described as "*according to their kind*". It's a peculiar phrase and it really just means that each of the living things are reflections of themselves. This idea recurs through the creation account – until you come to humans. Men and women aren't made "*according to their kind*" at all. People are made to be in "the image of God" (Genesis 1:27). In other words, whilst the rest of the plant and animal kingdom are reflections of themselves, humans ought to be reflections of God. Humans ought to live as God's representatives in the world God has made, to rule on His behalf. Humans ought to live in God's image, reflecting not their own thoughts and ideas, but bringing God's light and justice and beauty into the world.

That's where the idea of holiness is at its greatest. This chapter is a wonderful and rich description of God's intentions for the world. Instead of answering all the 'how' questions about creation, it answers the big 'why' question. Why are we here? The answer: to live in God's image, as holy people, bringing God's goodness into the world He has made. That's our calling, and what a wonderful mission it is! ■

THE SABBATH

TOMMY & DEBBIE EVANS,
DUNDEE, UK

The idea of the seventh day rest, or 'Sabbath' is introduced right back in the second chapter of the Bible: "*So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation*" (Genesis 2:3). It is blessed, and it is holy. In Exodus 20:8, God commands the people to "*Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy*". Why? And what relevance does it have to our lives today?

Most of us are leading busy lives and dealing with the 'always on' culture of our society. However, most of us who are employed or in education are given set times off work, so in a sense we already have a Sabbath just like everyone else. But is it just about having a chill-out? What is holy about a Sabbath? Have we ever thought about it as a faith exercise?

Nehemiah neatly sums up what the Sabbath and laws like it looked like in real life:

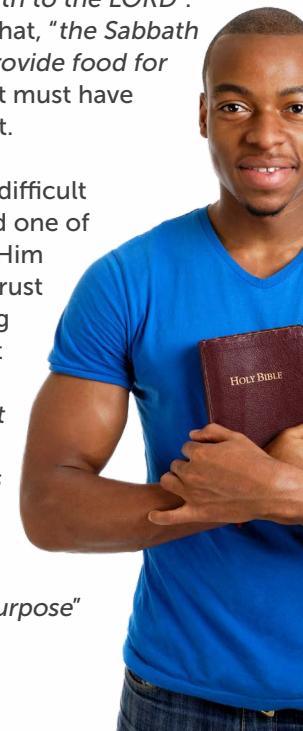
"And if the peoples of the land bring in goods or any grain on the Sabbath day to sell, we will not buy from them on the Sabbath or on a holy day. And we will forego the crops of the seventh year and the exaction of every debt" (Nehemiah 10:31).

Back in the day work wasn't a 40ish hours per week affair, it was

a lifestyle. There were no monthly salaries, no sick leave, nothing to cover your back if you needed a break. To take a Sabbath away from work was to step away from the chance to earn in order to feed your family.

In the Law there was a Sabbath year for the land, where fields were to be left unfarmed for one year in every seven (Leviticus 25:4), meaning you lost income and food from a whole field for a whole year! It may be the case that this was ecologically beneficial in the long run for the land, but that's not why God asked the Israelites to do it. He simply said that it was to be "*a year of solemn rest for the land*", "*a Sabbath to the LORD*". They had to trust that, "*the Sabbath of the land shall provide food for you*" (verse 6). That must have been really difficult.

God asks us to do difficult things for Him, and one of them is to trust in Him and His plan – to trust that if we are trying to follow Him, that He will bless us: "*And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose*" (Romans 8:28). ■



IN HIS PRESENCE

JEREMY THOMAS,
BIRMINGHAM, UK

We can work out precisely how long the Book of Leviticus lasts. The previous book, Exodus, ends with Moses erecting the tabernacle on the first day of the first month of the second year after the Israelites' departure from Egypt (Exodus 40:17). The next book, Numbers, begins on the first day of the second month of the same year (Numbers 1:1). So the events recorded in Leviticus take exactly one month. It's unusual for us to be able to do this with any book of the Bible.

There's something else unusual about this time period: Moses changes location. At the end of Exodus, Moses was unable to enter the tabernacle (Exodus 40:35). By the beginning of Numbers, however, he has gone inside it (Numbers 1:1).

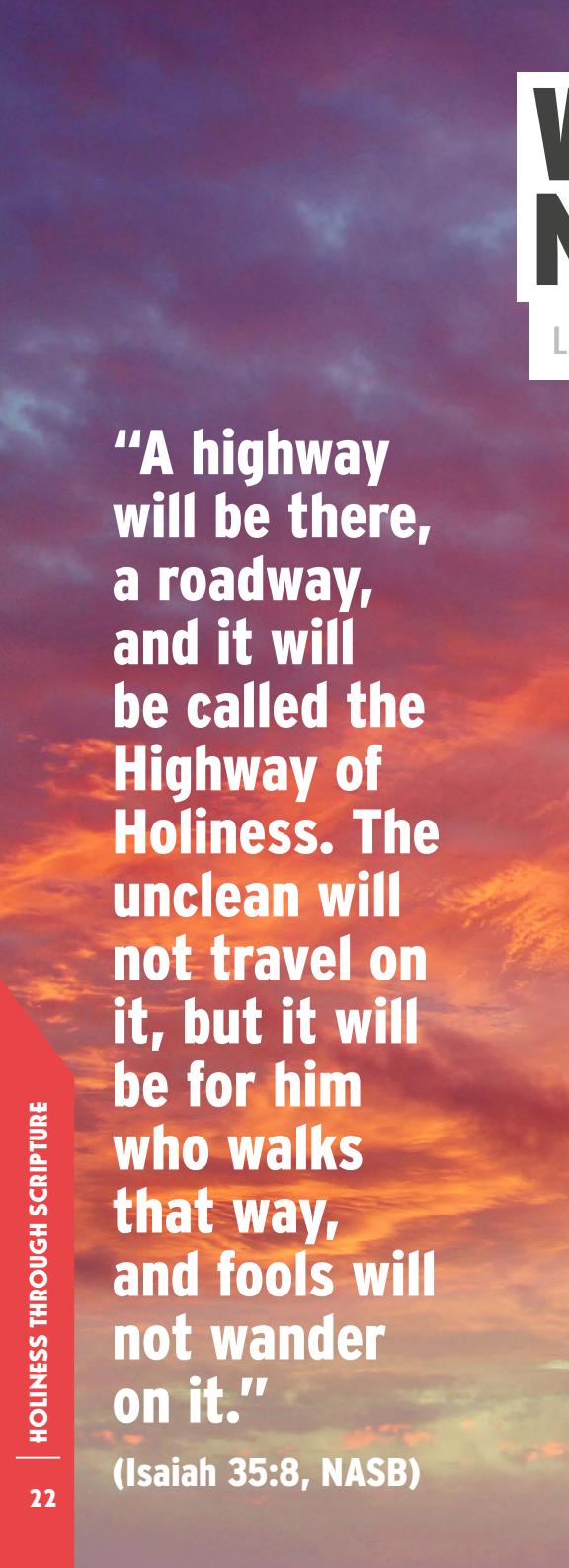
The tabernacle was the place for God symbolically to 'dwell' in the midst of His people (Exodus 25:8). By entering the tabernacle, therefore, it's almost as if Moses goes into God's presence. The priests of Israel were the only other people permitted to do this. What is this telling us?

As we saw from Exodus 25:8, God didn't want to keep

His distance from the Israelites; He wanted a close relationship with them. But He is a holy God, so for this relationship to be possible His people needed to be holy too. This would be an exclusive relationship. God would be God for Israel alone (Deuteronomy 4:7), and Israel would worship Him alone (Exodus 20:3). This is like a marriage relationship, in which one man and one woman keep themselves exclusively for each other.

This important principle helps us to understand the sacrifices and rituals recorded in Leviticus, which can seem strange and hard to understand. They begin to make more sense, however, when we recognise that they're things designed to keep the relationship between God and His people holy. This isn't God keeping His distance from Israel; it's the opposite! By following God's commandments, Israel made it possible for God to continue living among them. Although not everyone was allowed into God's presence in the tabernacle, Moses and the priests could do so on everyone's behalf – just as the Lord Jesus has gone into God's presence in heaven on behalf of those who believe in him (Hebrews 9:24).

Remembering this will help us understand the purpose of the Book of Leviticus. It will also help us to cultivate holiness in our own relationships with God, "without which no one will see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:14). ■



WHY BE A NAZIRITE

LAUREN SWAIN, CARDIFF, UK

“A highway will be there, a roadway, and it will be called the Highway of Holiness. The unclean will not travel on it, but it will be for him who walks that way, and fools will not wander on it.”

(Isaiah 35:8, NASB)

The word Nazirite comes from the Hebrew word ‘nazar’, meaning ‘to abstain from’ or ‘to consecrate oneself’. This implies a sort of separation or setting apart. Consecration has many links to holiness, and the Nazirite (like the priests) was expected to be holy and separate for God.

The Nazirite vow given to Moses by God (Numbers 6:1-21) detailed how a person would be able to live as a Nazirite. The instructions begin, *“When either a man or a woman makes a special vow, the vow of a Nazirite, to separate himself to the LORD”* (verse 2); then it lists the commands a Nazirite must follow. God instructs anyone – man or woman – who wished to become a Nazirite to set themselves apart. In fact, the Hebrew words for ‘separation’ and ‘separate’ occur 18 times in this passage.

For the duration of their vow, a Nazirite would have to *“separate himself from wine and strong drink”*, also *“no razor shall touch his head”*, and *“he shall not go near a dead body”* (verses 3-6). Each of these commands has significance in showing separation and while

they are kept, "all the days of his separation he is holy to the LORD" (verse 8). Abstaining from wine meant the Nazirite remained sober, ensuring they were in the right frame of mind to serve God. Remaining sober is a principle carried throughout the Bible, and we are instructed, "do not get drunk on wine [...] but be filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18). During the vow, "locks of hair of his head [would] grow long" (Numbers 6:5), an outward sign of dedication. We can outwardly show our dedication to God through our actions, the way we live our lives showing our faith.

Under the Law, "whoever touches the dead body of any person shall be unclean seven days" (Numbers 19:11). A Nazirite was "not to go near a dead body. Not even for his father or for his mother, for brother or sister" (Numbers 6:6,7). This was to ensure they remained pure. Even the priests, who were not allowed to become "unclean for the dead", were allowed to break this for close relatives (Leviticus 21:1-3). This strict separation from dead bodies demonstrates a Nazirite's separation from death and mortality, and separation to God who represents life.

Being set apart from the world is a choice: just as a Nazirite would choose to take their vow, we can choose to be baptized and separate ourselves. With Jesus Christ as our example, a "high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens" (Hebrews 7:26), we must also strive to remain separate and holy, like the Nazirite, as instructed by God: "Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you" (2 Corinthians 6:17). ■

"That we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all our days."

(Luke 1:74,75)



“LET THEM MAKE ME A SANCTUARY”

REBEKAH DWYER, LICHFIELD, UK

God commanded Moses to build the tabernacle and within it he was to make a sanctuary – a holy place. Exodus 25:8 makes the reason clear: “*And let them make me a sanctuary that I may dwell in their midst*”.

Everything about the tabernacle had to be done exactly as God had commanded. And the part of the tabernacle where God would meet

His people was to be the Most Holy Place. Only in this most special, most separate, most holy place could God meet with His people. And this

was something that happened only once a year when the High Priest entered

the Most Holy Place on the Day of Atonement (Hebrews 9:7; Leviticus 16:30-34).

The Letter to the Hebrews explains how the tabernacle pointed forward to the work of Jesus: “*For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf*” (Hebrews 9:24).

Jesus’ work as High Priest enables

believers in Christ to come directly into God's presence now. This was otherwise impossible. *"Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession [...] Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need"* (Hebrews 4:14,16).

Those who are faithful and have been baptized into Christ can now come directly into God's presence in prayer, because Christ has entered the Most Holy Place (heaven), and is in the presence of God, where before no one could enter as the way had not yet been made open (Hebrews 9:8). Thus we can pray directly to God – a blessing we should never take for granted.

In coming into God's presence, we should never forget His holiness and the instruction He has given to strive for holiness in our own lives. *"As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy'. And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot"* (1 Peter 1:14-19). ■





JOANNA CHERRY, STOCKPORT, UK

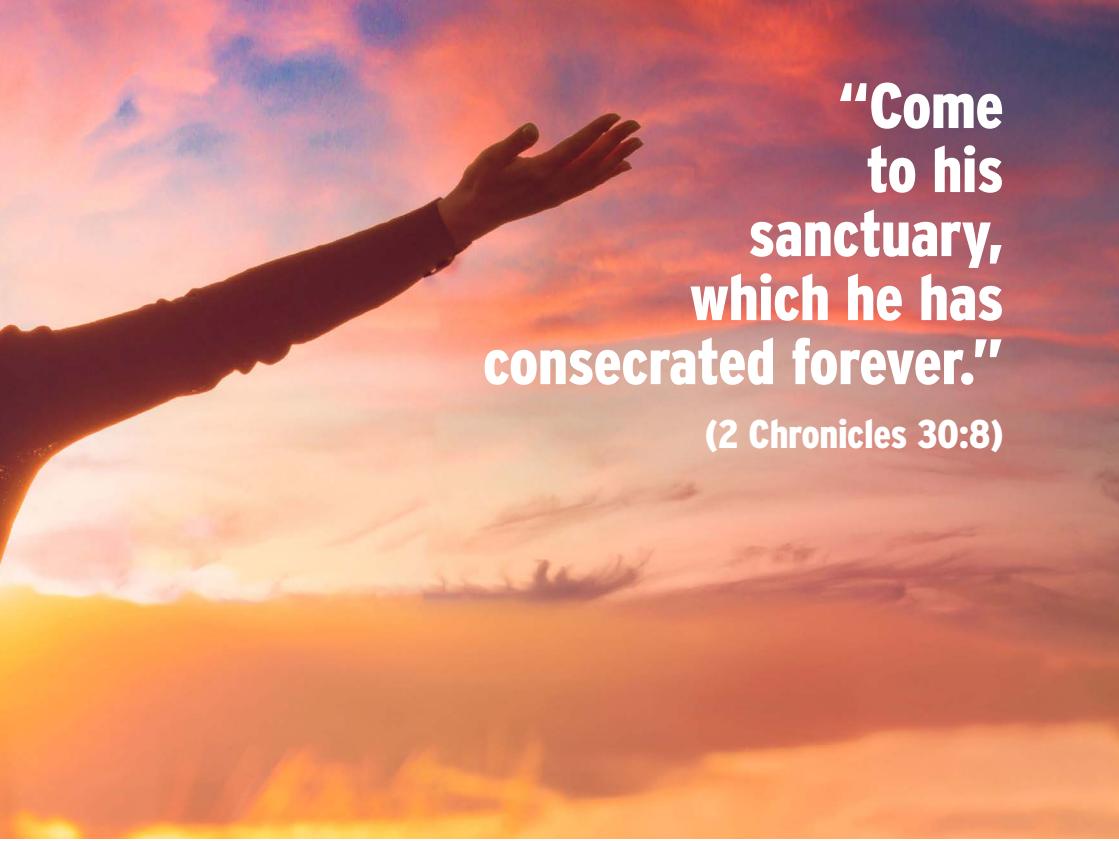
HEZEKIAH'S PASSOVER

There was excitement in the land of Judah! The new king was making some radical changes – though he was only twenty-five years old! (2 Chronicles 30). He had declared that Yahweh was the true God and had reopened His temple in Jerusalem. The priests had been called back to their duties and the scribes were busy reading the old scrolls. The singers sang, the trumpets sounded, and the nation of Judah worshipped the true God again.

What a change this was! The last king had encouraged everyone to worship other gods. He had even promoted his favourite gods – the gods of Damascus. He had closed the temple

doors and destroyed the vessels used for worship.

But now King Hezekiah demanded holiness from the people and the priests. Worship of the gods of Damascus was not compatible with worship of the true God. The Law said that in the first month each year they must keep the Passover, celebrating how God had saved Israel out of Egypt. But there was a problem. Only a few of the priests had consecrated themselves. The others had been slow to follow Hezekiah's directions and were not consecrated. So why was this a problem? Surely it was important to keep the Passover – couldn't they just offer the sacrifices anyway?



**“Come
to his
sanctuary,
which he has
consecrated forever.”**

(2 Chronicles 30:8)

The king, the princes and the leaders of the people met together and consulted on what to do. They found the answer in the Law (Numbers 9:10,11). There was to be no leeway for the unconsecrated to keep the Passover. Instead, they had to consecrate themselves and keep the Passover the following month. These priests now had to wear the proper robes, be anointed with oil and take part in animal sacrifices for their cleansing (Exodus 29).

But why was this so important that it stopped them keeping the Passover? We find the answer when we understand that God is righteous and will not overlook sin. To do so would be compromising His

righteousness (Exodus 34:7).

If God was to accept the sacrifice of the unsanctified priests, it would be like saying that sin could be overlooked or ignored. But this is never the case. God is righteous, so sin must always be cleansed, before the sinner can approach God in acceptable worship.

The rituals of the Law pointed forward to Jesus' sacrifice. So for us to be acceptable to God, our sins must be forgiven. We show our belief in this by being baptized into Jesus' death and resurrection; being washed, being cleansed by his blood. Through his sacrifice we are forgiven, sanctified and so can worship God acceptably. ■

JESUS' LIFE OF HOLINESS

EMILY BAWDON, COVENTRY, UK



700 years before the birth of Christ, the prophet Isaiah saw the Lord in glory: the seraphim cried "*Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts!*" (Isaiah 6:1-3). We might first think that this was a vision of God Himself, yet

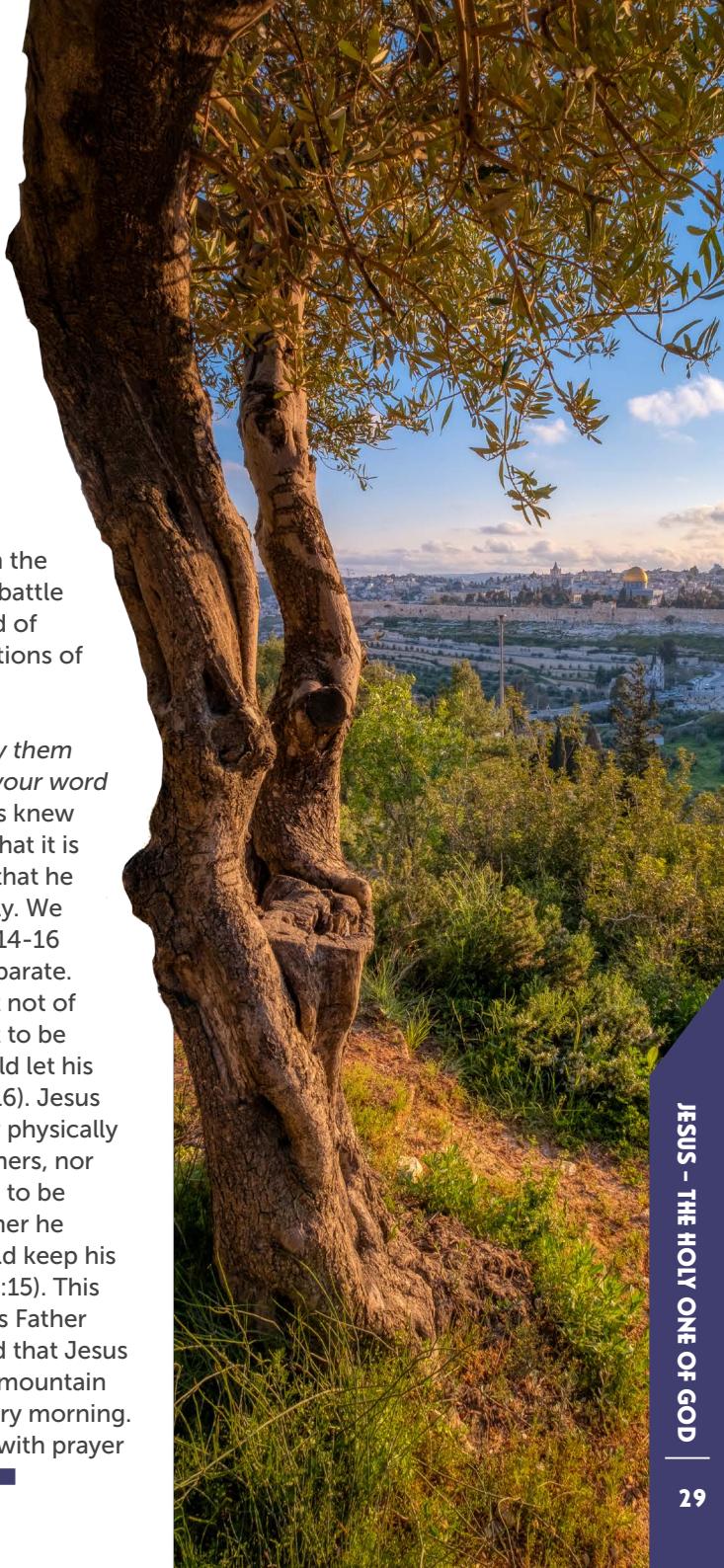
John 12:23-41 indicates that it was Jesus who Isaiah saw. As one who perfectly represents God, Jesus is holy because his Father is holy.

Throughout his life, Jesus would have readily had in his mind the words of Leviticus 20:26: "*You shall be holy to me, for I the LORD am holy.*" The context here is of Israel called to be separate. God "separated" them from other people. This word is first used in Genesis 1:4 when God "divided" the light from the darkness. To be holy, then, is to be the light: "*I am the light of the world*" (John 8:12). We can associate holiness with Jesus throughout his life. From his miraculous birth, born of the Holy Spirit, Jesus was called holy (Luke 1:35). As he grew up, we see him keeping separate from the world and being found in the temple, hearing and asking about the word of God. At his baptism, the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus like a dove,

and Jesus continued to work miracles by the power of the Holy Spirit in his ministry.

But how did Jesus keep himself holy? Ephesians 5:26,27 is helpful in understanding how to achieve holiness: Jesus keeps the ecclesia holy by sanctifying her and washing her with the water of the word. In the same way he was able to keep himself holy. By dedication to reading, hearing, proving and meditating upon the holy scriptures, Jesus was able to resist temptation in the wilderness. He fought the battle of the mind with the sword of the Spirit – by reciting sections of the Law in Deuteronomy!

Jesus also prayed, "*Sanctify them [his disciples] in the truth: your word is truth.*" (John 17:17). Jesus knew as he prayed to his Father that it is through the word of truth that he himself had been made holy. We can also learn from verses 14-16 how Christ kept himself separate. Jesus was in the world, but not of the world. It was important to be in the world so that he could let his light shine (Matthew 5:14-16). Jesus did not achieve holiness by physically separating himself from others, nor did he pray for his disciples to be taken out of the world; rather he prayed that his Father would keep his disciples from evil (John 17:15). This is the key: Jesus prayed. His Father was his help. Often we read that Jesus rose early and went to the mountain to pray: God came first every morning. With the word of God and with prayer Jesus achieved holiness! ■



CONTAGIOUS HOLINESS

TOM BENNETT, DUDLEY, UK

We have all experienced over the past couple of years how easily illnesses can spread. If we were to spend time in close contact with someone who is coughing and spluttering, then we can reasonably expect to catch that illness from them. Yet if someone has had a vaccination, they are not able to pass that immunity on to others by standing next to them. Infection spreads; immunity doesn't!

According to the Law, when someone was sick, they had to isolate themselves. This prevented others from becoming unclean and helped protect the community from diseases. If any of the people "*approaches the holy things that the people of Israel dedicate to the LORD, while he has an uncleanness, that person shall be cut off from my presence. I am the LORD*" (Leviticus 22:3). The statement "*I am the LORD*" reminds us that God is separate, and humans cannot approach into His presence when unclean. This is not just physical. It was also used as a teaching aid about morality.

In the time of the returning exiles, Haggai used these laws to teach the people about their worship. If the priest's garments touched some

bread after carrying holy meat the bread did not become holy. (Haggai 2:12).

Ritual cleanliness was not contagious. But if someone defiled by touching a dead

body touched any of these (2:13) they became unclean. The contamination was contagious. Everything that they offered to God was counted as being unclean. They couldn't purify their unclean actions with ritual. Their unclean actions were negatively affecting their worship and affecting how God viewed their offerings.

The Lord Jesus tips all of this on its head. When the leper in Matthew 8:2 says, "*Lord, if you will, you can make me clean*", Jesus could have healed him with a word. Instead, the Lord chose to reach out and touch him (verses 3,4). For the first time we have a case of contagious holiness. The one who encounters Jesus is made clean.

We have a choice in our lives by the grace of God. Paul tells us that "*bad company ruins good morals*" (1 Corinthians 15:33). It is possible for us to be morally contaminated. But we also have the choice of being clean. God is willing to count us as righteous. If we are found in Christ, then we will have a righteousness not "*of our own [...] But that which comes through faith in Christ*" (Philippians 3:9). Let's make sure we are associated with Jesus so that his righteousness is counted as ours. ■

MAKING OTHERS HOLY

JON FRY, MELBOURNE,
AUSTRALIA

Under God's Old Covenant with Israel, the path to holiness was through animal sacrifice. The blood of unblemished bulls and goats played a part in the rituals of the Law. Yet this purification was only temporary. It wasn't long before the people found themselves defiled again, through their own failings.

Thankfully, in the New Covenant: "we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Hebrews 10:10). Christ is holy and his perfect, single sacrifice provides a lasting sanctification that can purify our conscience. Jesus "is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him" (Hebrews 7:25).

A HOLY TEMPLE

We share in Christ's holiness through faith in God's word and baptism into the Lord Jesus. By God's grace and forgiveness we can become part of His family. We can be a hallowed

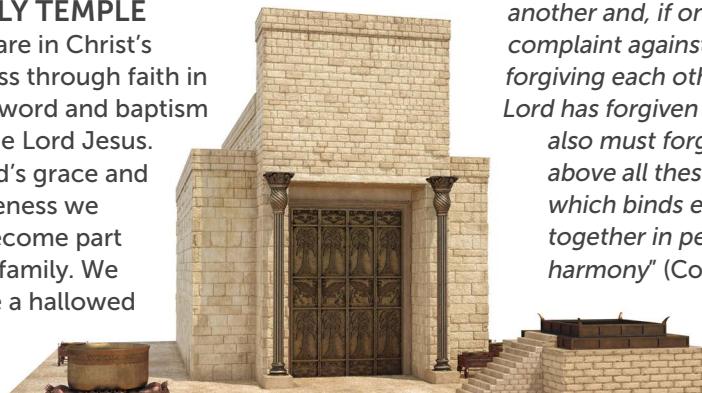
stone in the house of God: "Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit" (Ephesians 2:20-22).

When we are part of the community of Christ, we are made holy: "God, who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began" (2 Timothy 1:8,9).

YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY

In Christ, our failings are forgiven and we are made holy, yet we also have a responsibility to live in harmony with His holiness. We've been asked to present ourselves as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable.

God said to the people, "be holy, for I am holy" (Leviticus 11:44). Holiness is a gift and also something for us to strive for as we serve the living God. And what does that look like? "Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony" (Colossians 3:12-14). ■



PRACTICAL HOLINESS

BRENTON AND BEC MITSOS,
ADELAIDE, AUSTRALIA

Peter's direction in 1 Peter 1:15 is clear: "As he who has called you is holy; you also be holy in all your conduct". Our response to God's holiness will be demonstrated in our behaviour. So what does it look like actually to live a holy life, and how can we nurture a lifestyle that promotes holiness?

In Romans 6 Paul describes a person who has been made free from sin, and become a servant to God (verse 22) through baptism. The servant refuses to allow his old master (sin) to rule over him. Instead, he willingly chooses to surrender himself to his new master (God) as an instrument of righteousness (verse 13). What prompted the servant to change masters, and behave in a way completely opposite to what he was doing in the past? The behaviour had its origin in the mind of the servant. It began with an inward conviction from the heart (verse 17), and this conviction motivated a way of life that developed holiness (verse 22).

HOLINESS BEGINS WITH AN INWARD CONVICTION

The key to this is getting God's word into your mind. In order to be holy you have to learn who God is, what

His truth is, and how you can live it. How can you do this? By reading God's word, hiding it in your heart and meditating on it (Psalm 119:11; Psalm 1:2). If you don't spend time with God or put effort into learning His word, you cannot expect to grow in holiness. But if you receive His words and seek for understanding, you will find it (Proverbs 2:1-5). When you are convinced and compelled to obey from your heart, then an outward expression of belief is shown by baptism into Christ Jesus (Romans 6:17,3).

HOLINESS DEVELOPS BY "WALKING IN NEWNESS OF LIFE"

Walking in newness of life is when we refuse to be slaves of sin, and choose to live as servants to God (Romans 6:6,7,11). We offer ourselves to God as "*living sacrifices, holy, acceptable to God*" (Romans 12:1). How do we do that? Again, it all begins in the mind! It's refusing to allow the world to shape your thinking (being conformed), and instead renewing your mind (Romans 12:2). What does it mean to renew or renovate your mind? We need to inspect our thoughts and hearts to find any weakness, or places where sin has crept in and is causing damage (self-examination). Some thoughts, habits or behaviours may look good externally, but in fact are like wood that has rotted through and needs to be torn down and removed all together (repentance). Our minds may be grimy from the constant stream of evil that is always

presented to us, and need to be cleaned and refreshed (washing of God's word and forgiveness). Our minds might be struggling and need to be strengthened or repaired (encouraged by God's word, and by fellowship). In these ways we make our mind new again, and rededicate ourselves to God as living sacrifices.

Why is holiness in behaviour so closely connected with our minds? Because the way we act, speak and behave are a product of the way we think. This is why we are warned in Proverbs 4:23 to "*keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life*" (NKJV) and to "*ponder the path of your feet*" (verse 26). Ultimately the way we think reflects our character (Proverbs 23:7), and our character will reveal the master we serve: "*whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness*" (Romans 6:16, NKJV).

Ralph Waldo Emerson echoed Galatians 6:8 and Romans 8:1-11 when he said: "*Sow a thought and you reap an action; sow an act and you reap a habit; sow a habit and you reap a character; sow a character and you reap a destiny*". By choosing to dwell on holiness in your mind, your actions will be founded in holiness. Dedication and diligence in holy actions will reap habits of holiness. Your habits will shape your character and, "*thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ*" (1 Corinthians 15:57), our destiny will be – everlasting life! (Romans 6:22).

Therefore, "*whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy – meditate on these things. The things which you have learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you*" (Philippians 4:8,9). ■



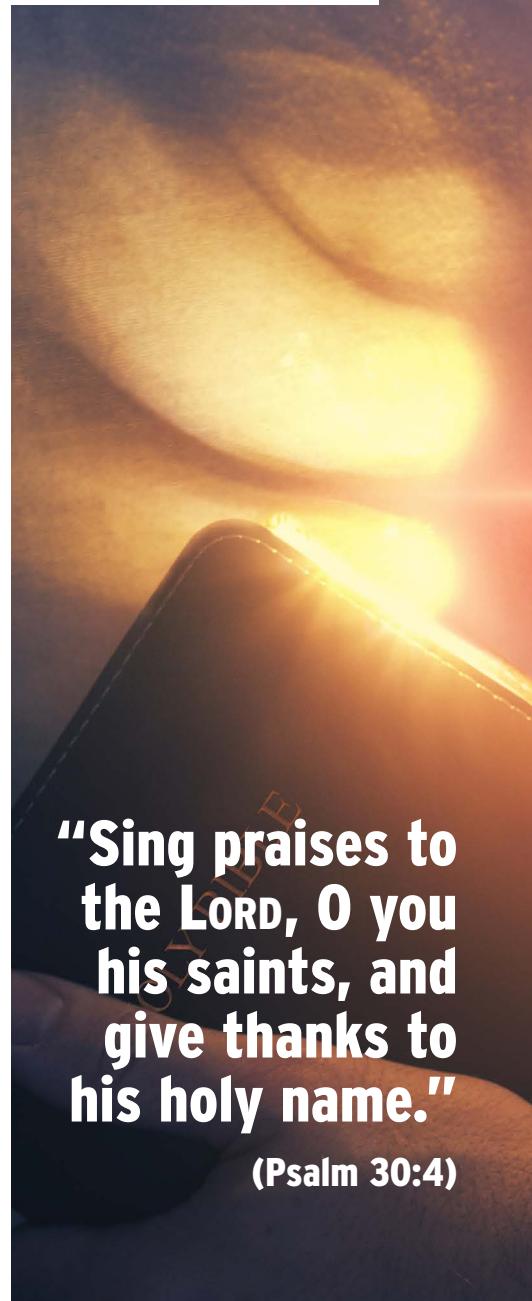
HOLY WORSHIP

JOSH AND SUZY ROBINSON, ADELAIDE, AUSTRALIA

What is worship? According to the Cambridge Dictionary, it means "to have or show a strong feeling of respect and admiration for God". So, when we're talking about 'holy worship', we're talking about praising God in a way that is separate, different, more respectful than we would sing about something or someone else. Importantly, worshipping God in holiness is worship as He has prescribed. Since God is the one who is holy, who defines holiness, our worship must follow His word.

For instance, we are told to "Worship the *LORD* in the splendour of holiness" (1 Chronicles 16:29; Psalm 29:2; 96:9). In 1 Chronicles, it is in reference to a psalm to be sung; Psalm 29 is a psalm of praise: "ascribe to the *LORD* glory and strength" (verse 1); and Psalm 96:1 begins with "O sing to the *LORD*". Yet, while worshipping God in holiness is about song, it also applies whenever we direct our thoughts to God in prayer, meditation, talks, discussions, readings; it should all be done with a sincere reverence of God.

What might 'holy worship' in song look like? What is the music distinct, set apart, from? Common themes in today's music are love, loss, regret, pain, heartbreak, and



"Sing praises to the *LORD*, O you his saints, and give thanks to his holy name."

(Psalm 30:4)



growing up. There is often a focus on self and human achievement. While the question is hard, it is worth considering: do the hymns and songs we sing to God sound different from the other music of the world? Are they distinct from other religions? Singing to God with holiness is putting the focus onto Him, to praise and extol Him, to petition Him. Focus and perspective can be difficult to ascertain but are absolutely vital in all we sing. This is clear in Psalm 96 – just notice how many times “to the LORD” appears!

It’s the same with prayer. Do the conversations we have with our friends, our relatives, our colleagues, sound different from the prayers we offer? We may know people who change their posture, their tone, their vocabulary when in prayer. A reverent tone and Biblical language are part of worshipping in holiness. Think about the principle in 1 Chronicles 29:14, *“For all things come from you, and of your own have we given you.”* While the primary application is material possessions, it applies to everything! How do we know the words to say? God has first shown them to us in His word!

Does worshipping *“in the splendour of holiness”* (Psalm 29:2) mean that we have to be holy before we can worship God with our voice? No, we are all sinners, and our God knows that – it’s the attitude that matters most. As Hymn 113 says: *“Thy humbler creation, though feeble their lays [songs], with true adoration shall sing to Thy praise.”* ■

HOLY LEISURE

PHIL & DEB ARNOLD,
SOLIHULL, UK

A quick Google search provides the definition of 'leisure' as "the time you are not working or doing other duties". Others have coined the phrase 'me time' to describe periods in our days or weeks that allow us to choose what we do, who with and where we do it.

Back when Israel came out of Egypt, God in His love for His people set apart a day each week as a holy Sabbath: *"There are six days when you may work, but the seventh day is a day of sabbath rest, a day of sacred assembly. You are not to do any work; wherever you live, it is a sabbath to the LORD"* (Leviticus 23:3, NIV). This was the original leisure time – it was a gift from God.

But note that the Sabbath was *"to the LORD"*. God wanted man to stop the daily routine in some way, rest from work and enjoy leisure. However, in this resting, there was an expectation that the leisure time could be dedicated to God.

This is a great principle for us to remember when we choose to engage in a leisure activity. Are we, in all good conscience, able to thank God for it? The phrase *"to the Lord"* is repeated four times in Romans 14:6-8. This passage concerns those debatable matters of conscience

over which there is no clear scriptural command. Many leisure activities fall into this category and the advice here is that we should do these things *"to the Lord"* and *"give God thanks"*. If we don't feel comfortable thanking God for what we are doing, then we need to think carefully about whether we should continue.

So, with God's gift of leisure time what are we going to do? How do we make sure that what we do is *"to the Lord"*? Here are a few simple questions that we can ask ourselves to help direct our decisions:

- Can I thank God for the activity?
- Is the activity helping or hindering my faith?
- Am I setting the right example to my friends and others?
- Does this activity only benefit me, or could I adapt it to build up the body of Christ?
- Would I do this activity if Jesus was with me? (Note to self ... he is!)
- Are the relationships I am forming going to help my faith?

The Sabbath was *"made for man"* Jesus said – it was a gift from a Father to His children. God doesn't want it to be all work and no play! But when we do play, thinking about the questions above will help us do it *"to the Lord."* ■



HOLY FRIENDSHIPS

GARY DAVISON, GLASGOW, UK

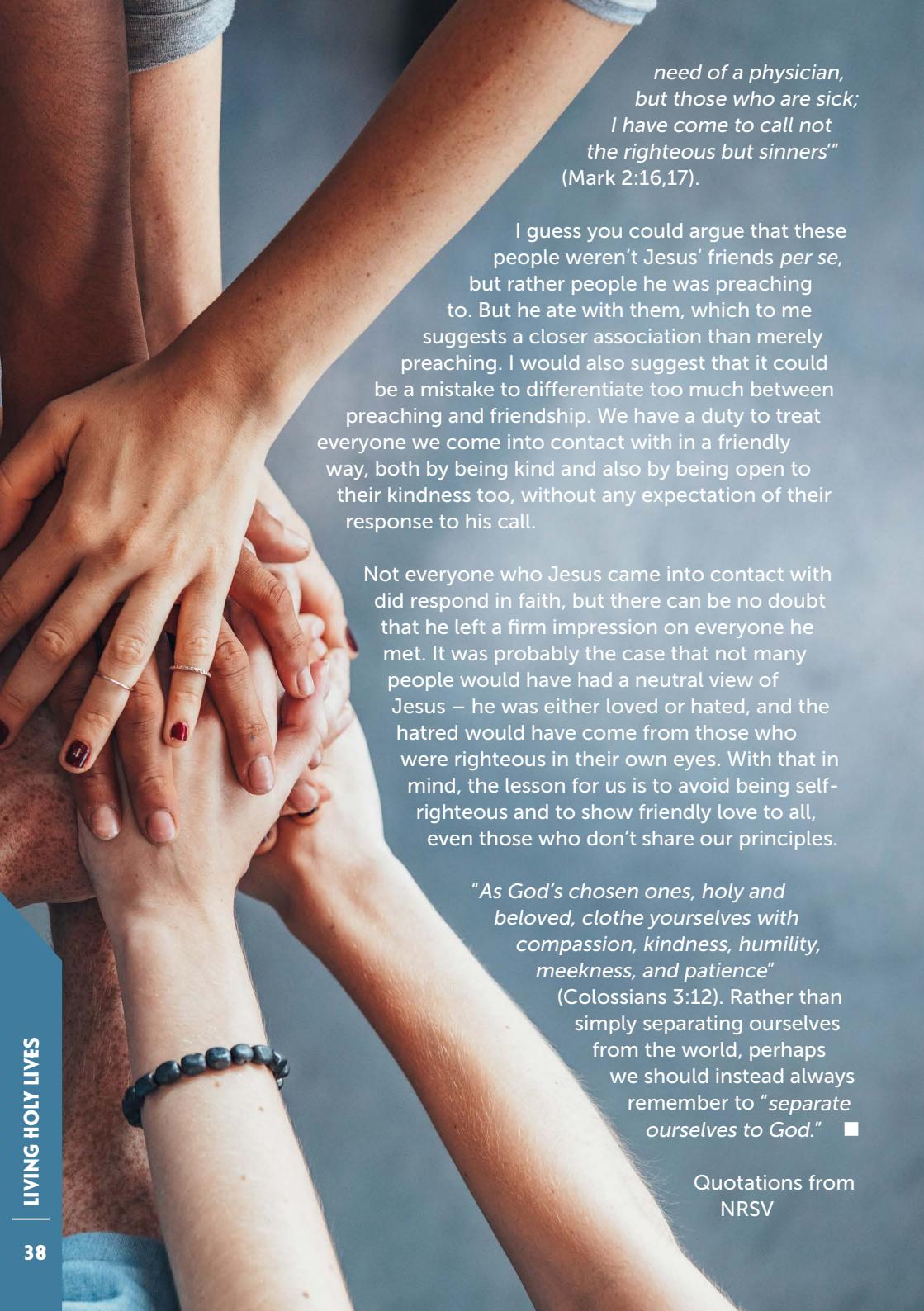
It can be a common expectation in a Christian context only to maintain friendships with those with whom we share a faith. Often the reason given for this is that we should maintain 'separation from the world'. Verses such as this appear to back this up: "*Therefore come out from them, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch nothing unclean; then I will welcome you [...]*" (2 Corinthians 6:17, quoting Isaiah 52).

Clearly, there is a principle found throughout scripture concerning holiness – that we should consider what is right and wrong, and use

that judgement to bring a degree of separation from people and behaviours unacceptable to God. And yet, as is so often the case, our expectations about how this should be manifested can be shaken up a bit when we consider what Jesus did, and how the religious leaders of his day viewed his behaviour.

This example in Mark's Gospel is just one such event: "*When the scribes of the Pharisees saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors, they said to his disciples, 'Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?' When Jesus heard this, he said to them, 'Those who are well have no*





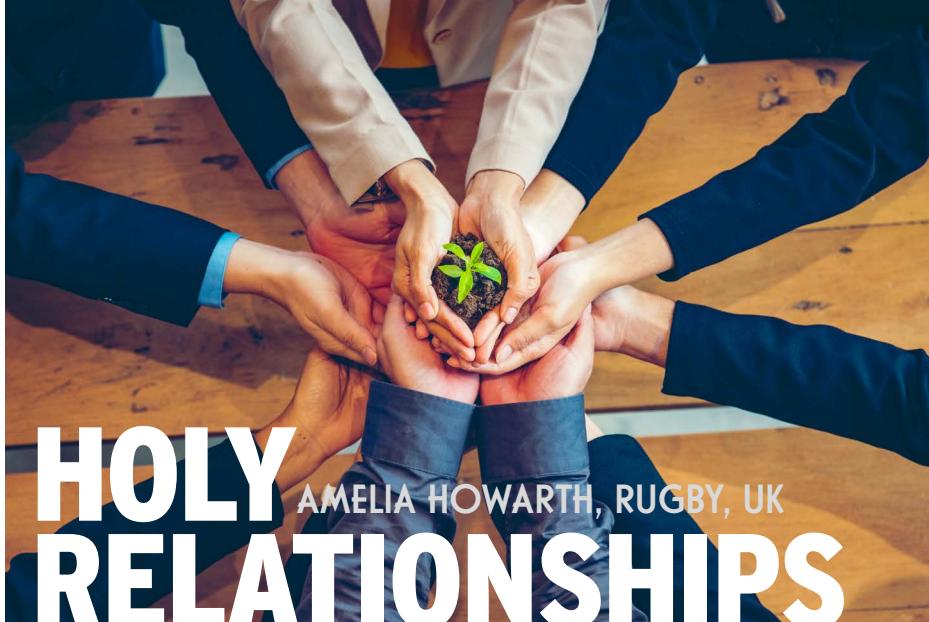
*need of a physician,
but those who are sick;
I have come to call not
the righteous but sinners”
(Mark 2:16,17).*

I guess you could argue that these people weren't Jesus' friends *per se*, but rather people he was preaching to. But he ate with them, which to me suggests a closer association than merely preaching. I would also suggest that it could be a mistake to differentiate too much between preaching and friendship. We have a duty to treat everyone we come into contact with in a friendly way, both by being kind and also by being open to their kindness too, without any expectation of their response to his call.

Not everyone who Jesus came into contact with did respond in faith, but there can be no doubt that he left a firm impression on everyone he met. It was probably the case that not many people would have had a neutral view of Jesus – he was either loved or hated, and the hatred would have come from those who were righteous in their own eyes. With that in mind, the lesson for us is to avoid being self-righteous and to show friendly love to all, even those who don't share our principles.

“As God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience”
(Colossians 3:12). Rather than simply separating ourselves from the world, perhaps we should instead always remember to “separate ourselves to God.” ■

Quotations from
NRSV



HOLY RELATIONSHIPS

AMELIA HOWARTH, RUGBY, UK

God gave us relationships so that instead of being alone, we might have someone to walk alongside us on our journey to His kingdom. But as well as benefiting us, the relationship must most importantly honour Him.

A way of ensuring that our relationships cultivate holiness before they even begin is by seeking to be with a partner who shares our beliefs. Paul says, *"Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness?"* (2 Corinthians 6:14). How can we expect to maintain separation from the darkness of this world if the one person that we intend to share so much time with either has a different belief system, or completely disregards God and His righteous commands? The beauty of godly relationships is that those united in the knowledge and belief of the scriptures can encourage each

other as they strive towards Zion. If one or both in the relationship are not yet baptized, there should be a shared goal of both ultimately being in the household of faith.

Scripture says much about how to honour God within our relationships. 1 Corinthians 6:18 tells us to "flee sexual immorality", and 2 Timothy 2:22 says to "flee youthful passions". This language of 'fleeing' makes it clear that two people who are united in the hope need to make a conscious effort to avoid temptation. 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 gives us a wonderful image of how to behave toward our partner: *"Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things."* We should strive to show this kind of love to everyone, but it may be

harder to remember this at all times with a partner who sees so many sides to us.

Ephesians 4:29 is also relevant: *"Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen"* (NIV). Let's have a godly mind and a Christlike attitude in order to build a relationship that honours our Father. That said, we are all guilty of saying or doing the wrong thing, so we must *"be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you"* (verse 32). By not keeping record of wrongs and forgiving one another 'seventy-seven times', we are further demonstrating holiness and separation from the way people in the world sometimes treat each other.

As well as instructing us how to maintain holy relationships and marriages, scripture also provides valuable examples of partnerships that glorified God even through the toughest of challenges. Mary and Joseph would have had to rely on one another through the great responsibility of bearing God's Messiah (Luke 1). Joseph was a God-fearing partner who embraced this unique honour to help raise the Son of God, and he protected both Mary and Jesus from the wrath of Herod. Priscilla and Aquila, as a married couple, took Apollos aside *"and explained to him the way of God more accurately"* (Acts 18:26). Their example demonstrates how in our partnerships we can work together in order to build others up. Isaac and Rebekah were unwavering in their trust of God through the trial of infertility. Having endured patiently, no doubt leaning on each other, they were eventually blessed with Jacob and Esau (Genesis 25).

Although marriage was ordained by a perfect Creator, our human frailties mean that relationships won't always be plain sailing. Let's always remember to turn to the Bible and to our Father in prayer through any hardships. Fruitful relationships that have God at their centre are a blessing worth the work and the wait. ■



WHY SHOULD WE BE HOLY?

HAMID ALEHAMOUDI,
BIRMINGHAM, UK

I was born into a Muslim family and inherited this religion. As a teenager, my thoughts gradually came into contact with the rules of Islam, and I had many unanswered questions. In time, I began to have serious doubts about my belief system.

One day I was reading a book by the Greek writer Nikos Kazantzakis, and my attention was drawn to the forgiveness of the thief who was crucified on the right side of Christ. The author referred to the moment when the thief repented of his past deeds as "the moment of enlightenment". The thief was enlightened in the blink of an eye, just hours before his death. The thief said to Christ: "*Remember me when you come into your kingdom*". In reply, Christ said: "*You will be with me in paradise*" (Luke 23:39-43).

Well, this was a very beautiful and hopeful scene. Was it possible that I too (with so much guilt that weighed heavily on my shoulders) would experience this precious moment of enlightenment and be forgiven? Finally, after many years, by the grace of Christ, I did experience this moment and I was given the feeling of salvation once and for all, when I was baptized on June 13 in the

garden of a home in Stratford-upon-Avon, UK.

I felt a strange sense of liberation that day, like a bird released from a cage. It's like being a frozen traveller who has lost his way in a snow-covered mountain, but suddenly arrives at a cottage where the fireplace is lit and a cup of hot coffee is prepared for him next to the chair. Yes, I felt lightness, purity and indescribable happiness. I felt like a runner who is behind everyone and has no hope of reaching the finish line, but suddenly the race official resets the stopwatch for him to start again.

Jesus Christ chose me, that is, he set me apart so that in his presence, without any condemnation or blame, I would feel holy and consider myself his. Jesus Christ forgave me like that repentant thief. He bore my sins on the cross, so that by his grace and by the will of the heavenly Father, I would be born again.

The question is therefore not so much, 'Why should we be holy?' as 'Why not be holy?' Why should I miss this new opportunity, this new birth and this great gift? Sin means disobedience to God's will, while I have separated myself to live for God's will. My old self was crucified with Christ and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me (Galatians 2:20).

When Adam and Eve disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden, God promised that the seed of the woman would crush the head of the serpent (Genesis 3:15). This was a sign of God's holiness – holiness consisting of both infinite justice and infinite mercy. God is holy by nature: as light is the essence of the sun, the essence of God is holiness. God's actions and words are pure and holy. Every line of God's word breathes holiness. And let us remember that He created us in His own image (Genesis 1:27). Through Christ, He makes us holy.

When we read the Bible, it is as if God is breathing into us mouth to mouth so that our hearts are filled with holiness. And all the holiness of God throughout the Old Testament is a shadow of the one who would make atonement on the cross – Jesus Christ.

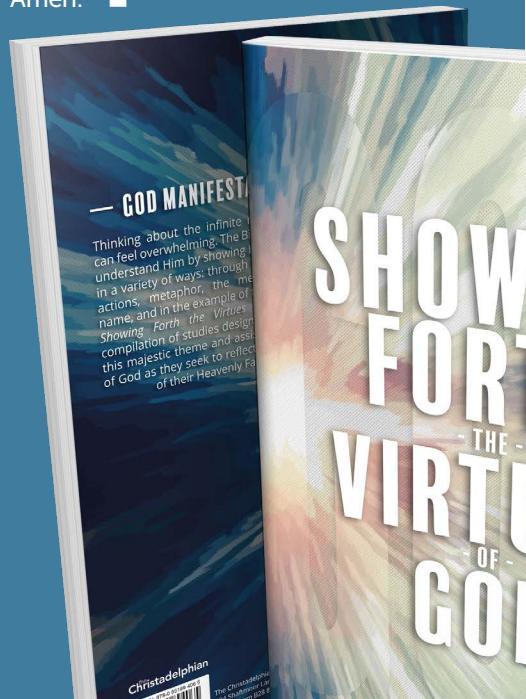
Yes, Jesus Christ is the only true way and the only true model for our holiness and salvation. He came into this world from the offspring of an earthly woman (without having an earthly father) to walk in our shoes. He came into this world to identify with us and our sinful nature. He came into this world to leave us, through his great suffering, a tangible example of his faithfulness to the heavenly Father. He came into this world to crush the head of the serpent and to reach a glorious place where he can intercede for us. The whole of this wonderful story shows the holiness of the heavenly Father, which is manifested in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Now through faith in Jesus Christ we have received a precious gift – a gift that we did not deserve, a gift that

leads us to the kingdom and eternal life. Only those who are holy and pure in their hearts can come before God and enjoy fellowship with Him (Matthew 5:8; Revelation 21:27). Why should we not take care of this expensive gift?

This gift becomes more valuable if we gain the wisdom and strength to increase its blessings through prayer and daily meditation on His holy word. When we pay attention to our own holiness with spiritual awakening, as we wait for the return of our Lord Jesus Christ, we actually convey his good news to others. We show with practical holiness that they too can benefit from this unique and joyful salvation. Let us think about the crucifixion to share the repentant thief's moment of enlightenment, and thereby join the multitude of 'separated ones'.

Amen. ■



BOOK REVIEW

SHOWING FORTH THE VIRTUES OF GOD

Holiness is just one of the characteristics of God revealed in the Bible. This book takes a look at the bigger picture, and through the eyes of a number of Christadelphian authors, considers the many aspects of God's character and how they are shown in the life of the Lord Jesus, and in the life of the believer.

The book is available in both electronic and print formats: www.thechristadelphian.com/shop/ebooks/cmpa-titles-ebooks/showing-forth-the-virtues-of-god-rob-lawson/

[showing-forth-the-virtues-of-god-rob-lawson/](http://www.thechristadelphian.com/shop/ebooks/cmpa-titles-ebooks/showing-forth-the-virtues-of-god-rob-lawson/)

Here's an extract from the section on holiness:

As the Spirit of God had moved upon the face of the waters in the first creation, so God's Spirit – the Holy Spirit – now brought about the miracle of the new creation in the birth of Jesus:



"The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee: wherefore also that which is to be born shall be called holy [hagion, 'separate', 'set apart'], the Son of God." (Luke 1:32-35, RV)

And how often is his coming seen as an expression of God's holy will. Mary said: *"He that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name"* (verse 49). Zacharias (in connection with the coming of the forerunner, John the Baptist) prophesied:

"God hath visited and redeemed his people ... as he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets ... to remember his holy covenant ... that we ... might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him." (verses 68-75)

The Lord Jesus Christ did, of course, fulfil all that was foretold of him: he was *"holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens"* (Hebrews 7:26 – note once more the association of holiness and exaltedness). He was described to the angel of the church in Philadelphia as *"he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David ..."* (Revelation 3:7; cf 6:10).

By manifesting true holiness, Jesus acknowledged the source and inspiration of all holiness – the Father Himself. *"Hallowed be thy name"* was for our Lord not merely part of a prayer but a way of life, seeking in every action to proclaim the holiness of God. ■

Quotations are mostly from the KJV.

NEWS

MANITOULIN YOUTH CONFERENCE, CANADA, 2022

NATHAN EVANS, ADELAIDE, AUSTRALIA

It's a great week to get to know lots of young people, in a smaller setting than many Australian gatherings. I have some cousins in Canada and wanted to spend time with them, but also go to a Bible camp. The camp is unique in the sense that you have to do a workbook in order to go. This gave me lots of encouragement to do some Bible study – you can't be lazy!

WHAT WERE THE TALKS ON AND WHO DID THEM?

The talks were on Esther, which I have never studied in my life. Brother David Wisniewski led the studies, exploring many challenging concepts that really made us think. However, Manitoulin has far fewer talks than most conferences. Instead there are two discussion group sessions each day, where everyone contributes; as they are in small groups, you get so much more out of them.

Between the discussion sessions is a break where people come together to share points they have learned from their group. This break is the best part of the camp – everyone is so enthusiastic! In general, there's

a lot of focus on discussion groups and Bible talks and less emphasis on sports and activities.

WAS THERE A STANDOUT POINT FROM THE WEEK THAT YOU'RE GOING TO TRY AND IMPLEMENT IN YOUR LIFE?

Esther is an interesting book because it doesn't talk about God directly. Instead, it shows the importance of how you act around others and the impact on you and them. Esther went from being an ordinary girl to the wife of the ruler of the then-known world; she was quite influential. A memorable practical point is to remember who our ruler is, understanding that God's commandments are to be followed.

IS IT TRUE THAT YOU HAVE TO COOK YOUR OWN FOOD? HOW DOES THAT WORK?

Yes, you cook your own food in camp groups. Each group has two group leaders, who bring the camping and cooking equipment. Sometimes your group leader or friends can source your sleeping stuff or they can be hired. Often you combine a guys' group and girls' group together to have more people to help with cooking and cleaning – and get to know people better.

Breakfast is catered for (so you don't have to get up too early) but you need to cook lunch and dinner each day. Food is included in your camp fees, but you go and pick up your meal crate from the store each day. You take your crate back to the store after you've emptied it, and they restock it for your next meal.

Sometimes people bring other food for evening suppers. This year there were homemade venison sausages and on the last night there was a big cook-up with sausages and burgers.

WHAT WAS THE BEST MEAL YOU ATE?

The best meal was probably the banquet night, which was unique this year since the banquet was Esther themed. Even better, this was all catered for. It was based on the Feast of Tabernacles.

WHAT'S DIFFERENT FROM MOST OTHER YOUTH CAMPS YOU'VE BEEN TO?

Manitoulin has a broader age group than most other camps I've been to. It is quite relaxed, in terms of structure, which allows for more time sitting around and chatting about the study. Everyone there wants to be there and has done the workbook. It also changes every year, with different groups of people.

HOW DO YOU GET TO THE ISLAND?

There are two ways: by ferry or car. I went by ferry on a previous visit to Manitoulin, but it's expensive. It takes about 1.5 hours, and there's no scenery (the Great Lakes just look like you are in the middle of the sea). Sometimes there are long wait times. Every other time I have been, I have driven.

There is beautiful scenery, greenery, and rock

formations. This is the route I would recommend, despite the roadworks.

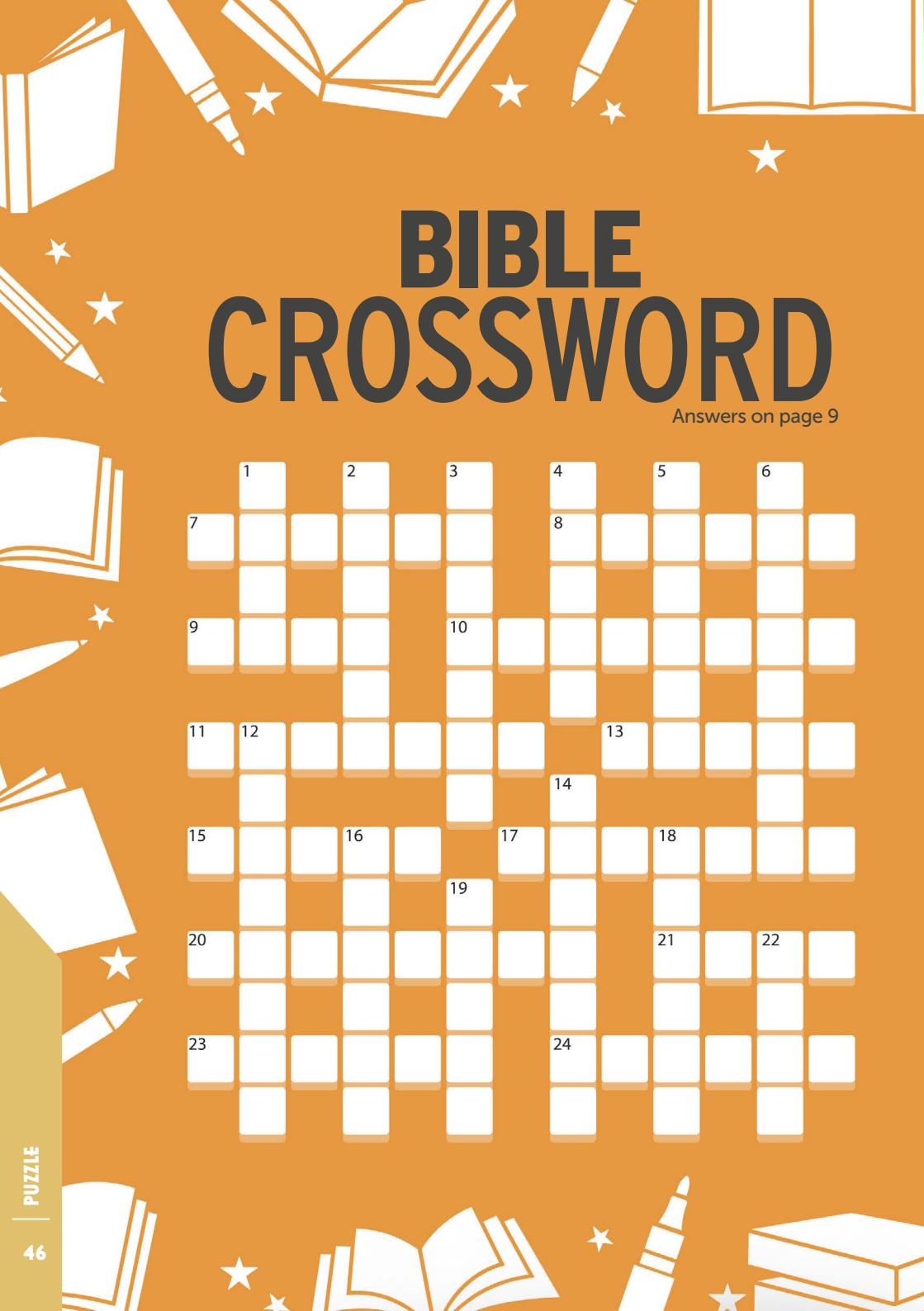
DO YOU HAVE ANY ADVICE FOR SOMEONE WHO'S NEVER BEEN TO MANITOULIN?

- If you want a warm shower, you may have to wake up at 6 am.
- Pace yourself – it's a busy week, but you can get so much out of it.
- If you want to travel abroad and you don't know where to go, go to Canada for a few weeks, and to a Manitoulin camp.
- Stay around afterwards for the Operation Monday preaching event.

WHAT WOULD BE YOUR TOP THREE FAVOURITE YOUTH CAMPS YOU'VE ATTENDED?

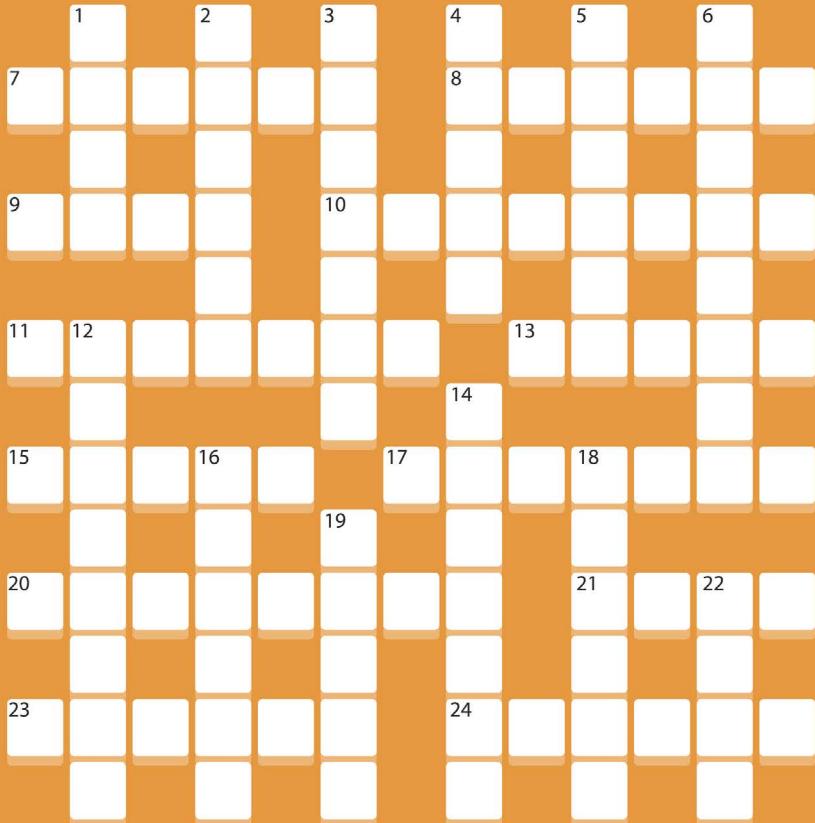
- Manitoulin youth conference
- Australasian youth conferences (New Zealand and Adelaide)
- Hebron (South Australian youth weekend) ■





BIBLE CROSSWORD

Answers on page 9





CLUES ACROSS

7. Man who had the Holy Spirit, saw the baby Jesus, and shared his name with a tribe of Israel. (Luke 2:25)
8. Following the crucifixion, many of "the saints who had fallen ... were raised." (Matthew 27:52)
9. "You shall ... the Sabbath, because it is holy for you." (Exodus 31:14)
10. Aaron and his sons were told to wear linen undergarments "when they come near the altar to ... in the Holy Place." (Exodus 28:43)
11. On the holy altar, burnt sacrifices were ... (Exodus 40:29)
13. Animals which, along with bread, were "holy to the LORD for the priest" and associated with the wave offering at the Feast of Weeks. (Leviticus 23:20)
15. "Send out Your light and Your ... ; let them lead me; let them bring me to Your holy hill and to Your dwelling!" (Psalm 43:3)
17. "You are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and ... of the household of God." (Ephesians 2:19)
20. Someone who makes a holy vow of separation. (Numbers 6:2-4).
21. Jonah's location when he prayed, "I shall again look upon Your holy temple." (Jonah 2:1,4)
23. The Most Holy Place in Ezekiel's visionary temple was twenty cubits in ... (Ezekiel 41:4)
24. "God reigns over the nations; God sits on His holy ..." (Psalm 47:8)

CLUES DOWN

1. "Sing praises to the LORD, O you His saints, and ... thanks to His holy name." (Psalm 30:4)
2. The psalmist bowed down towards this holy building to thank God for His love and faithfulness. (Psalm 138:2)
3. "The LORD your God walks in the midst of your camp, to deliver you and to give up your ... before you; therefore your camp must be holy." (Deuteronomy 23:14)
4. A holy person. (Philippians 4:21)
5. The man of God who had a room, a bed, a table, a chair and a lamp in the Shunammite's house. (2 Kings 4:8-10)
6. The LORD said to Moses, "You shall ... and do all My commandments, and be holy to your God." (Numbers 15:40)
12. Concerning Judah in the time of Isaiah: "They have ... the LORD, they have despised the Holy One of Israel." (Isaiah 1:4)
14. "God blessed the ... day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that He had done in creation." (Genesis 2:3)
16. "Aaron was set apart to dedicate the most holy ..." (1 Chronicles 23:13)
18. "The LORD is in His holy temple; let all the earth keep silence ... Him." (Habakkuk 2:20)
19. Give "thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in ..." (Colossians 1:12)
22. "They shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother and his ... to serve Me as priests." (Exodus 28:4)

NEXT ISSUE

EACH SUNDAY, WE COME TOGETHER FOR THE BREAKING OF BREAD. WE OFTEN CALL IT THE 'FOCAL POINT OF OUR WEEK'. WE ARE COMMANDED TO KEEP THIS FEAST "IN REMEMBRANCE" AND "UNTIL HE COMES". WE THINK OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, HIS DEATH AND HIS RESURRECTION. HOW OFTEN DO WE CONSIDER THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS SPECIAL MEETING? WHY DO WE SING HYMNS, HAVE PRAYERS, OR EVEN COLLECTIONS? WHAT ARE WE MEANT TO THINK ABOUT?

THE NEXT ISSUE WILL EXPLAIN ASPECTS OF THE BREAD AND THE CUP, OF THE SIMPLICITY OF THIS FEAST AND SOME OF THE CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH IT. WE WILL EXPLORE WAYS IN WHICH WE CAN MAKE THIS SYMBOLIC FEAST MORE MEANINGFUL TO EACH OF US, AS WE WAIT FOR THE COMING OF OUR LORD.

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