

A Blue Ribbon Reminder: Holiness to the Lord



Numbers 15:

37 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

38 Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments throughout their generations, and that they **put upon the fringe of the borders a ribband of blue:**

39 And it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the LORD, and do them; and that ye seek not after your own heart and your own eyes, after which ye use to go a whoring:

40 That ye may remember, and do all my commandments, and **be holy unto your God.**

41 I am the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: I am the LORD your God.

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Introduction:

1. Our memory verses as a church for this past week have dealt with the subject of *Be Ye Holy*, though this fact was not instrumental in bringing the Spirit's conviction for this sermon topic.
2. The highest ambition for a child of God is to walk in fellowship with God, and anything short of this is a wasted life; but walking with God can only be done with a holy life (I John 1:3-7).
3. Moses and Joshua learned that meeting God was quite intimidating (Ex 3:1-6; Josh 5:13-15).
4. We live in an unholy generation of Christians, so we will have to be strange (II Tim 3:1-2).
5. We are holy eternally, legally, vitally, and finally by God's grace; but we are also called to it!
6. What about the blue ribbon fringe? What should you do with it? Hang it on your television!

The Context (Numbers 15:30-36)

- A. After providing for sins of ignorance (15:22-29), God condemned presumptuous sins as capital crimes, for their blatant disregard of God and direct profaning of His commandments.
- B. The congregation was then faced with a man who was discovered picking up sticks on the Sabbath Day, which should have been done the preceding day (Ex 20:8-11; 16:23; 35:2-3).
- C. The LORD declared His holy judgment, and the congregation executed the sinner by stoning.
- D. Scorners, skeptics, and sinners might bark against such a severe penalty for a slight sin, but they do not know the holiness of the LORD and His hatred for sinful rebellion.
- E. The LORD explained His holiness and gave them a reminder of it for all future generations, which would have often included the story of the stoning of the man who picked up sticks.

The Text (Numbers 15:37-41)

- A. Israel – the church of God of the Old Testament – was to put fringes on the borders of their garments with a blue ribbon, and they were to do this perpetually through their generations.
- B. The blue ribbon and fringe was designed to be a visual reminder to keep His commandments.
- C. This reminder was to keep them from following their own hearts and eyes (I John 2:15-17).
- D. This reminder was to keep them from whoring away from God for other things (James 4:4).
- E. This reminder was to keep them in all the commandments of God to be **holy** as His people.
- F. The LORD Jehovah declared His identity twice and His expectation of obedience on the part of those whom He saved to be His peculiar people (Titus 2:14; II Cor 5:14-15; II Pet 2:1).

Other Examples of Holiness

- A. After Aaron's compromise with a golden calf, the Levites killed sons, brothers, companions, and neighbors that had been involved in order to consecrate themselves (Ex 32:26-29).
- B. After Aaron's sons' compromise with strange fire, God would not allow either Aaron their father or Eleazar and Ithamar their brothers to mourn or leave the tabernacle (Lev 10:1-7).
- C. After Korah the Levite's rebellion against Moses, the brazen censers of the 250 sinners were made into plates to cover the altar as a reminder against future presumption (Num 16:31-40).
- D. David was afraid of the Lord and His holiness after He killed Uzzah in a parade (II Sam 6:9).
- E. Isaiah the prophet, though a great prophet of God and blessed with a very special vision of God in heaven, was certain of destruction in the presence of God's holiness (Isaiah 6:1-8).
- F. When Peter saw the draught of fishes the Lord arranged, he saw his sinfulness (Luke 5:1-8).

- G. John viewed God's holiness in heaven, and he was as dead before Christ (Rev 1:17; 4:8-11).
- H. The Lord crushed Job twice, and he repented and abhorred himself (Job 40:3-5; 42:5-6).
- I. Consider the fatal consequences of unholiness of Ananias, Sapphira, and Corinth!

The Call to Holiness

- A. God is holy, so therefore He has called His people to be holy (Lev 11:44-45; I Peter 1:13-16).
- B. God's mercies call us to holy lives without conforming to the world at all (Romans 12:1-2).
- C. Since all shall be melted at Christ's coming, we should be holy and spotless (II Peter 3:9-14).
- D. God's will for your life is sanctification unto holiness without fornication (I Thess 4:1-8).
- E. Pure religion involves widows and orphans, but is to be free from the world (James 1:26-27).
- F. The gospel of the grace of God calls us to deny ungodly lusts and live godly (Titus 2:11-14).

The Definition of Holiness

- A. **Holiness.** Spiritual perfection or purity. 1. Kept or regarded as inviolate from ordinary use; set apart for religious use or observance; consecrated, dedicated, sacred. 2. Free from all contamination of sin and evil, morally and spiritually perfect and unsullied, possessing infinite moral perfection as found in God. 4. Conformed to the will of God, entirely devoted to God. Morally and spiritually unstained; free from sinful affection; of godly character and life; sanctified; saintly; sinless.
- B. Sanctification is the act or process by which something is made holy i.e. saint or sanctuary.
- C. Righteousness is legal correctness; holiness is moral or spiritual perfection relating to God.
- D. Holiness is extreme and intolerant! It hates any and all evil or any moral imperfection at all.
- E. God is free from sin and hates sin (Job 34:10; Deut 32:4; I John 1:5; Heb 7:26; James 1:13).
- F. God has infinite hatred for sin (Hebrews 1:9; Proverbs 6:16-19; 8:13; Psalm 5:5-6; 7:11).
- G. He cannot behold or look upon evil approvingly, as the Chaldeans learned (Habakkuk 1:13).
- H. It is impossible to serve and worship God with compromise (Joshua 24:19; Ezekiel 20:39).
- I. It is true Bible separation from sin and sinners and things related (II Corinthians 6:14 – 7:1).
- J. It is being unspotted from the world or flesh (Eph 5:27; Jas 1:27; II Pet 3:11,14; Jude 1:23).

The Importance of Holiness

- A. Consider *holy* for Spirit, Scriptures, angels, people, place, covenant, hill, temple, name, etc.
- B. Where did God dwell in the worship of the Old Testament? In the holiest of all (Heb 9:3,8)!
- C. The Bible emphasizes God's holiness over His other attributes by several different measures.
 - 1. What other attribute was worthy of special creatures to gloriously repeat it three times perpetually? Consider it well. Love-love-love? Mercy-mercy-mercy? I trow not.
 - 2. His name is Holy (Is 57:15; Dan 9:24; John 17:11); He is glorious in holiness (Ex 15:11).
 - 3. For the high priest, Aaron's miter had gold on blue lace for holiness (Exodus 28:36-38).
 - 4. The four beasts surrounding His throne praise His holiness (Isaiah 6:3; Revelation 4:8).
 - 5. The devil and his angels surely know about His holiness (Mark 1:23-24; Luke 4:33-34).
 - 6. The LORD swears by His holiness, which makes His oaths solemn (Ps 89:35; Amos 4:2).
- D. You cannot serve God acceptably without holiness (Joshua 24:19; Ezek 20:39; Rom 12:1-2).
- E. You cannot see God now or in heaven without holiness (Heb 12:14-17; Rev 20:6; 21:27).
- F. God will only hear the prayers of holy men (I Tim 2:8; Psalm 66:18; Isaiah 59:1-8; Jas 5:16).

The Motives for Holiness

- A. Seven wonderful promises are offered for those perfecting holiness (II Cor 7:1 cp 6:14-18).
- B. You have the ability, for God's children have a truly holy new man in them (Ephesians 4:24).
- C. Jesus died for us and saved us from sin legally, so we can be holy practically (Rom 6:19-22).
- D. God chastens us for our profit that we might be partakers of His holiness (Heb 12:10-17).
- E. Christ's coming ... for us ... and to burn the world ... works (I John 3:1-2; II Pet 3:10-14).

The War against Holiness

- A. Our nature is fully unholy, as we follow the devil and world willingly (Eph 2:1-3; 4:17-19).
- B. We live in a very carnal and worldly generation greedily addicted to pleasures in the flesh.
- C. It is hardly ever preached; less seldom demanded; and never enforced in today's churches.
- D. It is a hated subject, for it is the antithesis and enemy of the flesh, the world, and the devil.
- E. Satan will viciously attack it, for he loves carnal and unholy Christians, for they are fruitless.
- F. It is a painful subject, for it demands sacrifices and denial from pleasant habits you enjoy.
- G. Instead of popularity, it will make you strange to others when you practice it (I Pet 4:1-5).
- H. Since it is extreme, compromisers hate it, for it exposes their damning effeminate religion.
- I. It exactly opposes the liberal, lascivious, undisciplined, and worldly Christianity of today.
- J. Christians today modify God to their weak standards to justify themselves (Psalm 50:21).
- K. Both education and entertainment forces are bent on destroying personal and public holiness.
 - 1. They say holiness is extreme, hateful, intolerant, impractical, divisive, old-fashioned, etc.
 - 2. They laugh about sin, joke about it, mock it, and watch it. Only the very strong can resist.
 - 3. Condemnation of sin is called intolerant, fanatic, hateful, controlling, self-righteous, etc.
 - 4. There is nothing sacred or holy anymore; everything is profaned: from unborn to sodomy.
- L. Paul prophesied perilous times for the churches and saints of Christ (II Timothy 3:1-9).
 - 1. The character traits of this compromising and carnal brand of Christianity include unholy (3:2), despisers of those that are good (3:3), lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God (3:4), and having a form of godliness without any authority (3:5).
 - 2. Jeremiah warned of compromising pastors of his day in light of holiness (Jer 23:9-11).
 - 3. This generation of Christians has a pile of teachers avoiding holiness (II Timothy 4:3-4).
 - 4. We should not be surprised, for a warning was given often (II Pet 2:18-19; Jude 1:18-9).

The Application of Holiness

- A. How spotted are you? How conformed? How transformed? How separated? How holy?
- B. Are you spotted with television? friends? speech? thoughts? laughter? jokes? music? covetousness? pride? fleshly minded? money? wine? education? child training? authority? time? service preparation? etc.?
- C. David would set no wicked thing before his eyes out of hatred for compromisers (Ps 101:3).
- D. Holiness knows that playing with sin is profane rebellion against God (Pro 24:9; Rom 1:32).
- E. It is why we do not keep Christmas or Easter (Deut 12:29-32; Ezek 8:16-17; II Cor 6:14-7:1).
- F. Loving the brethren, surprisingly, is a part of holiness (I Thes 3:12-13; 4:1-10; I Pet 1:22).
- G. Your body is the Lord's by His purchase, and the temple of the Holy Ghost (I Cor 6:13-20).
- H. Women should be holy – and this extends far beyond just sexual purity (I Tim 2:15; Tit 2:3).
 - 1. They must mortify idleness, pride, debate, tattling, busybodies, folly, and other sins, etc.
 - 2. Holy women fear their husbands with meek and quiet spirits, as did Sarah (I Peter 3:5).

- I. We look at Isaiah's vision for God's glory, but it also condemns our speech (Isaiah 6:1-8).
- J. Marital treachery profanes God's holiness, as Israel's polygamy with pagans (Mal 2:10-16).
- K. Holiness applies to every aspect of our lives, so apply it always (I Cor 10:31; Col 3:17,23).
- K. You cannot compromise with any sin, for it corrupts all else (Haggai 2:10-14 cp I Cor 15:33).
- L. Godliness (or the practical holiness of God) with contentment is great gain (I Timothy 6:6).
- M. We need holy fathers who will hate sin themselves and teach their children to hate it.
- N. This is the greatest threat to a church as measured by the LORD and prophecy (II Tim 3:1-5).

The Antidote or Cure for an Unholy Generation

- A. You must have a true vision of God and His holiness to know it (Ps 4:4; 33:8; Isaiah 6:1-8).
- B. We should understand and reject the horrible character of the world around us (Eph 4:17-19).
- C. Put away your idols, examine yourself in prayer, and repent of sins (Gen 35:2; Ps 139:23-24).
- D. We must reduce care in our lives where possible to be holy (I Cor 7:32-35; Eph 5:14-17).
- E. Limit your thoughts to holy matters of godly virtue (Phil 4:8; Matthew 12:34-37; 23:25-28).
- F. Put on the holy new man you have received from Christ, which is perfectly holy (Eph 4:24).
- G. Forget everyone else and following a multitude to do evil, for the crowd is wrong (Ex 23:2).
- H. Avoid the appearance or temptation of evil (I Thess 5:22; Rom 13:14), which can save you.
- I. Practical holiness is available to all who will repent in godly sorrow (James 4:8; I John 1:9).

Conclusion:

1. Our highest ambition should be to walk with God, but we must be holy to do so (I John 1:3-9).
2. After this assembly, the combined forces of Satan, the world, and your flesh will assault you.
3. Will you use a blue ribbon and fringe of some sort to remind you to obey all His commands?
4. Holy living is an ancient landmark of our faith in an unholy generation of so-called Christians.
5. We must preach the word (II Tim 4:1-2)! We cannot compromise with unholy entertainers!

For Further Study:

3. The sermon outline, "Sanctification," ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/pdf/sanctification.pdf>.
4. The sermon outline, "Perfecting Holiness," ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/pdf/perfecting-holiness.pdf>.
5. The sermon, "Take Up Your Cross," ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/pdf/take-up-your-cross-daily.pdf>.
6. The sermon outline, "Holiness," ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/pdf/holiness.pdf>.
7. The sermon, "Playing with Sin," ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/pdf/playing-with-sin.pdf>.
8. The sermon, "Walking with God," ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/pdf/walking-with-god.pdf>.
9. The sermon, "Forgotten Sins," ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/pdf/forgotten-sins.pdf>.
10. The sermon, "Your Body Is the Lord's," ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/pdf/your-body-is-the-lords.pdf>.
11. The sermon, "The Judgment Seat of Christ," ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/pdf/judgment-seat-of-christ.pdf>.
12. The sermon, "Eternal Life Is a Gift," ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/pdf/eternal-life-is-a-gift.pdf>.
13. The sermon, "Is There a Burning Hell?" ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/pdf/is-there-a-burning-hell.pdf>.
14. The sermon outline, "True Grace," ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/pdf/true-grace.pdf>.
15. The sermon outline, "God Hates Compromise," ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/pdf/compromise.pdf>.
16. The sermon outline, "Running Scared," ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/pdf/running-scared.pdf>.
17. The sermon, "Saints or Belly Worshipers," ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/pdf/belly-worshippers.pdf>.
18. The sermon, "Standing Before God," ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/pdf/standing-before-a-holy-god.pdf>.