

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION
Psalms: Living By Faith In God
XCIX. Relying On A Holy God In An Unholy World
(Psalm 99:1-9)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Biblical holiness, separation from what is sinful, is greatly lacking in today's world:

(1) Much of academia lacks holiness: "With the . . . takeover of (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion) initiatives that have bled into all disciplines, . . . many Americans are coming to see that (many ivory tower institutions) aren't even providing the most fundamental service they – at least in theory – promise to provide; namely, an elite education delivered by scholars in pursuit of the truth." (Jarrett Stepman, "Higher ed's DEI plagiarism dilemma," Republican-American, March 30, 2024, p. 6A) " (Ibid.)

(2) Holiness is lacking in many large cities: (a) The story, "California governor to deploy 500 cameras to Oakland to fight crime" (Ibid., p. 7A) notes that "(p)ublic safety remains a concern statewide . . . forcing even liberal leaders of Democratic cities to embrace increased policing." (b) Another story, "NYC will try gun scanners in subway system in an effort to deter violence" (Ibid.) reported, "The scanner announcement came days after a fatal shove in an East Harlem subway station once again brought the issue of subway safety to the forefront."

(3) Holiness is lacking in many religious circles: (a) "For at least 200 years, Nuevomexicano Catholics have used dirt from the pocito" of "the Santuario de Chimazo" in "Chimazo, New Mexico . . . for its purported miraculous healing qualities. They rub it on their aches and pains; they hold it to focus their prayers and, historically, have ingested it." (Brett Hendrickson, "Good Friday Traditions," Ibid., March 29, 2024, p. 1B) (b) Deuteronomy 22:5 calls cross dressing an abomination to God, so transgenderism is also an abomination, but President Biden on Good Friday, when Christians commemorate Christ's crucifixion, made a proclamation about last Sunday, the day Christians celebrated Christ's resurrection, by stating: "I, Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the United States of America, by the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim March 31, 2024, as Transgender Day of Visibility." ("A Proclamation on Transgender Day of Visibility, 2024," March 29, 2024; whitehouse.gov.) His announcement was met with a strong backlash (Stephen Sorace, "White House doubles down on inclusiveness message amid backlash over Transgender Day of Visibility on Easter," March 31, 2024, Fox News, cited on msn.com), and making that proclamation on Good Friday for the day Christians celebrate Christ's resurrection left the president condoning sacrilege, (c) for "(s)ome churches" were "superimposing transgender themes on Easter celebrations" (Kyle Morris, "Liberal churches celebrate Transgender Day of Visibility on Easter this year: DRAG ME TO CHURCH," March 31, 2024, Fox News, cited in msn.com), and "the Calgary Unitarians" had "a drag show as part of its Sunday service" in "support" of their "Trans Siblings" and to serve "as" an alleged "sacred act of protest." (Ibid.) (d) In evangelical realms, though 2 Corinthians 9:7 directs that believers today are to give not reluctantly or under compulsion, one Baptist Church threatened its people that if they did not sacrificially give to meet the Church's budget needs, God would punish them by taking their money through a costly illness or a bad accident.

Need: *So, we ask, "How does God want us to respond effectively to the unholiness we face in today's world?"*

- I. **Psalm 99:1-9 exalts God's "holiness," His *qadosh* in the Hebrew text (verses 3, 5, and 9; B. D. B., A Heb. and Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 872), God's separation from sin and its corrupting effects, Ibid.**
- II. **Throughout the psalm, the psalmist contrasted the perfect uprightness of the Lord with the unholiness of the world, providing guidance for all who are troubled over the lack of holiness in the world (as follows):**
 - A. God is to be greatly revered as the sole Sovereign over the universe, (Psalm 99:1-2), and to be praised for His awesome name, for He is *qadosh*, "holy, separate from sin and its corrupting effects," Ibid., Psalm 99:3.
 - B. In describing **how** God is *qadosh*, the psalmist noted that unlike all men who are sinners (Romans 3:23), God as Sovereign King of the universe is mighty, and loves "justice" (*mishpat*, Ibid., p. 1048), He has established "equity" (*meysarim*, Ibid., p. 449) and performed what is "justice" (*mishpat* again, Ibid., p. 1048) and "righteousness" (*sedaqah*, Ibid., p. 842), what aligns perfectly with God's strict moral standard, Psalm 99:4.
 - C. We human beings are to exalt the Lord God and to worship Him at His footstool in humility, for He is *qadosh* (v. 5) because even godly believers have failed to live up to God's standard of *qadosh*, Psalm 99:6-8:
 1. Moses and Aaron who were used of God to lead Israel out of Egypt and institute its Levitical priesthood, were among God's priests, and Samuel was among those who called on His name, so when they kept God's statues and decrees, He answered them from the pillar of cloud in great public honor, Psa. 99:6-8a.

2. However, even these spiritual giants at times needed God's forgiveness of sin in their ministries, and He graciously forgave them, but God also avenged their "evil deeds" (*'aliylah*, Ibid., p. 760), Psalm 99:8b,c:
 - a. Aaron made a gold calf for worship (Ex. 32:1-10) and Moses and Aaron struck the rock at Meribah versus speaking to it as God ordered, so both had to die outside of Canaan, Num. 20:1-13, 23-29; Deut. 34:1-6.
 - b. Scripture does not record a sin by Samuel, but his sons took bribes to pervert justice, a likely negative "reflection on Samuel" who failed to disciple his sons, *Ryrie Study Bible, KJV*, 1978, ftn. to 2 Samuel 8:3.
- D. In conclusion, the psalmist directed his listeners to exalt the Lord God, and to worship at His "holy" (*godesh*, Ibid., p 871-872) mountain in Zion, for the Lord God is *qadosh*, Psalm 99:9.

Lesson: *If we believers in Christ are appalled at the unholiness in today's world, we must consider that only God is perfectly separate from violations of His justice, equity, and righteousness, that we humbly worship Him, praising Him and relying on Him as Sovereign King of the universe to administer just judgment on the whole world.*

Application: *(1) May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God's gift of eternal life, John 3:16; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11. (2) May we handle our distaste of the unholiness we face in the world by recalling that we ourselves have fallen short of God's perfect justice, equity, and righteousness, that we then humbly worship and praise God as Sovereign King of the universe Who will administer perfect justice for all.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message and provide additional guidance . . .)

We view and apply Scripture truths to the issues of concern mentioned in our sermon introduction as follows:

(1) On the unholiness in much of academia that promotes errant ideologies at the cost of educating in the truth, may we realize that all of us have misrepresented the truth at some point (Romans 3:4a), that we then humbly rely on the Holy Spirit to obey Paul's directive in Ephesians 4:15 to speak the truth in love.

(2) On the unholiness in crime-laden cities, may we realize that had we lacked proper rearing in stable families, we, too, might likely have committed serious crimes since all of us are sinners, Romans 3:23. May we then recall our great need to rely as believers on the Holy Spirit to produce God's righteousness, Galatians 5:16-23.

(3) On the unholiness in Nuevomexicano Catholics in New Mexico who apply dirt from the pocito of Santuario de Chimazo for cures to ailments, even historically to have ingested the dirt, may we realize that our Gentile forefathers at the start of the Church in Acts 2 were likewise steeped in superstitious spiritual darkness and paganism, that only by God's grace were we allowed to be reared in the afterglow of the influence of Biblical Christianity in Western Civilizations. May we then adhere to faith in God for matters of healing and not look to fetishes or rely on false superstitions that abound even in religious circles in our country today, Philippians 2:25-30.

(4) On the sacrilege of President Biden's Good Friday proclamation that the same Sunday as Resurrection Sunday was to be the Transgender Day of Visibility, may we recall that though transgenderism is an abomination to God, sexually lustful thoughts are also immoral, Matthew 5:27-28. The president's proclamation condoned depravity, but we must humbly rely on God to above immoral thoughts in our own minds by the Holy Spirit, Galatians 5:16-23.

(5) On the unholiness in some churches that superimposed transgender themes on Easter Sunday celebrations as an alleged "sacred act of protest," with one group even hosting a drag show in the Easter morning church service, may we realize that these grossly profane acts "of protest" are simply excessive forms of rebellion against the Lord. Similarly, whenever we ourselves choose to go our own way instead of following the Lord even in how we function in a church service, we are likewise guilty of insubordination to Him that is equal in God's eyes to idolatry, iniquity, and divination, cf. 1 Samuel 15:22-23 NASB. May we then humbly confess any violation of God's leading in our functions even in church settings that we might heed God on how He wants us to serve Him.

(6) On evangelical unholiness where a Baptist Church threatened its people to give to the church budget needs or God would take their money through a costly illness or a bad accident, all in violation of 2 Corinthians 9:7 where believers are to give not reluctantly or under compulsion, such pressure is obviously sinful. It actually arises from misapplying Haggai 1:1-11 where God warned Israel under the Mosaic Law to fulfill her obligations to tithe of her income, that her lack of financial welfare was divine judgment for this sin. However, the Church is no longer under the Mosaic Law (Romans 7:1-6; Colossians 2:11-17), but under grace where 2 Corinthians 9:7 applies to how we are to give now. We must thus watch that we not violate Matthew 23:1-4 in creating extrabiblical oppressive rules!

May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God's gift of eternal life. May we handle our distaste for the unholiness we face in the world by realizing that we ourselves may have fallen short of God's perfect justice, equity, and righteousness. If so, may we humbly adjust as needed and worship and praise Him as Sovereign King of the universe to administer perfect judgment on all.