

Th131 God's Plan

Lesson Th131-3 God Is Holy

In our last two lessons we learned that God is eternal and that God is light. In this lesson we will learn another critical aspect of God's nature. We will learn that God is holy. It is God's holiness that defines him so specifically that it actually creates for him limitations. Is it possible that God is limited? Are there things that God cannot do? In today's lesson we will discover a God who is perfect and holy and in the process learn what holiness is.

When God gave his laws to Moses and the people of Israel, six times he commanded them "You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am Holy." Everything in the Bible that was set apart for God's exclusive use was called "holy." These things could not be used for any purpose other than for God. They could not be imperfect or flawed, nor could they be dirty or unclean, but they had to be separated and kept pure for God. Not only were these things to be kept clean and separate, but they had to be handled in the correct and prescribed manner. Failure to follow God's instructions would result in failure and unholiness.

The greatest king in the history of Israel was King David. He was called a "man after God's own heart." It was to him that God promised that the Christ would be one of his descendants. But David would learn a painful lesson regarding the holiness of God.

After David became king he conquered the city of Jerusalem and made it his capital city. It was in his heart to have the Ark of the Covenant brought up into his new capital city. The Ark had largely been ignored by David's predecessor, King Saul. Now the Ark of the Covenant was the most holy item in the entire world. It had been built by Moses hundreds of years earlier by the direct design and command of God. The Ark was a wooden box 130 centimeters long and 80 centimeters high and wide. It was covered completely with gold. On top of ark were two Cherubim with their wings outstretched creating a covering for the Ark. At each of the four corners was a large ring of gold through which was placed a long gold covered wood rod so that the Ark could be carried. God gave Moses very specific instructions on how the Ark was to be moved. He told Moses that only those from the tribe of Levi were allowed to carry the Ark, and that they should carry it by the poles that had been placed through the Ark's golden rings.

Now the Ark of the Covenant had ended up in the home of Abinadab in the city of Gibeath. Abinadab was one of King Saul's sons who had died in battle. Abinadab had three sons, Eleazar, Uzzah, and Ahio. These men were not of the tribe of Levi, but were of the tribe of Benjamin. And on the appointed day, the Ark of the Covenant was placed upon a new ox cart and with Ahio leading the oxen and Uzzah walking along side. Their house was set on a hillside and down the hill the ox pulled the cart with Ahio in the lead. David and the people of Israel danced and celebrated, making music before the Lord with all kinds of instruments. In the midst

of the grand celebration one of the oxen stumbled upon the rough road and the Ark shifted upon the cart. Uzzah reached out to steady the Ark when suddenly God struck him dead for his irreverence. The celebration came to an abrupt end. Everyone stood about in shock and horror. Why had God done such a thing, in the midst of their worship and celebration?

The answer is simple. God is holy. Things must be done right. Not mostly right, or almost right, but completely right. Holiness is not graded by a score. It is pass or fail. You are either holy or not. There is no in-between.

King David was trying to do the right thing but in the wrong way. First, God commanded the Ark to be carried upon the shoulders of the Levites. But David had the Ark placed upon a cart and being transported not by those of the tribe of Levi, but by those of the Tribe of Benjamin. It is a tragic story. A man lost his life. But the new King learned a valuable lesson. He learned to fear and reverence the God who is holy.

God's holiness defines him. It is a law that governs his every action. He cannot be unholy. It is impossible for him. God's holiness is so perfect that it limits him. Yes, there are things that an all powerful God cannot do. God cannot sin. His holiness does not allow it. God cannot create evil for God is light and in him is no darkness.

When we examine God's command to be holy even as he is holy we quickly realize that this is impossible. Humans are imperfect and flawed. All of our efforts at being holy will eventually fail. How then can we ever fulfill God's command to be holy? There is only one way that we can become holy and that is through God's Son, Jesus Christ.

And yes, the Ark of the Covenant was eventually brought into Jerusalem by King David. Only this time it was carried upon the shoulders of the Levites.

The lesson is **important** because it tells a story of what happens when people fail to be holy as God has commanded.

The **main truth** of this lesson is that God is holy in all He does and says, and wants us to be holy like Him.

Let's **review** this lesson:

1. In today's lesson we learned about the one of the aspects of God's nature. What is this key aspect called, which actually limits God? [Pause 5 seconds]

A. If you said, "Holiness," you are correct.

2. What mistake did King David make in trying to transport the Ark of the Covenant into Jerusalem? [Pause 5 seconds]

A. If you said that he placed the ark upon a cart instead of having it carried by Levites, you answered correctly.

3. What is the one thing God cannot do, and why can't He? [Pause 5 seconds]

A. You are right if you said that God cannot sin because He is holy.

Your **assignment** for this lesson is to replay it two or three times until you can repeat the story accurately and quote: "You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am Holy" (Leviticus 19:2). Then, find someone and tell them the story of King David moving the Ark of the Covenant and teach them the verse you have learned.