

**The 1689 Confession of Faith; Chapter 2 – “Of God and the Holy Trinity”,
Message # 15 – “God is Most Holy”, Presented in the Adult Sunday
School Class by Pastor Paul Rendall on December 4th, 2016.**

Chapter 2 – Of God and the Holy Trinity, Paragraph 1 -

The Lord our God is but (a)one only living and true God; whose (b)subsistence is in and of Himself, (c)infinite in being and perfection; whose essence cannot be comprehended by any but Himself; (d)a most pure spirit, (e) invisible, without body, parts, or passions, who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; who is (f)immutable, (g)immense, (h)eternal, incomprehensible, (i)almighty, every way infinite, (k)most holy, most wise, most free, most absolute; (l)working all things according to the counsel of his own immutable and most righteous will, (m)for his own glory; most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; (n)the rewarder of them that diligently seek him, and withal most just (o)and terrible in his judgments, (p)hating all sin, and who will by no means clear the (q)guilty.

John Brown of Haddington says in his Systematic Theology – “The Holiness of God is that essential perfection of His nature, which lies in perfect freedom from, and hatred of all sin, and in perfect love to everything holy and pure.”

1. God is infinitely holy –

Isaiah 57: 15 – “For thus says the High and Lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him who has a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.”

Daniel Whedon says: “Whose name is Holy – A name expressing infinite purity and excellence inconceivable; and such a being deigning, yea, delighting, to be in communion with the **humble and contrite ones** of this wicked world! He loves to **revive the heart** of such, and to assure them for the present and future.

Charles Simeon says: “The “name” is that whereby any person is known, and, as applied to God, comprehends everything whereby he is known to men. The perfections of his nature, the works of his hands, the dispensations of his providence, and the declarations of his grace, all are holy [Note: [Psa 145:17](#). His hiding of his face occasionally, even from his dearest people, is no exception to this. See [Psa 22:1-3](#).].” And as he is holy in himself, so He cannot endure anything which is defiled by sin; “He is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity [Note: [Hab 1:13](#).].” Indeed holiness is the very perfection that stamps a worth and excellence on all the other attributes of the Deity: without holiness his wisdom would be craft, his power tyranny, his mercy a weak, indiscriminate, or partial favor. Glorious as he is in every perfection, he is declared more especially to be so in holiness [Note: [Exo 15:11](#).]; and the angels in heaven make it the more immediate subject of their incessant praises [Note: [Isa 6:3](#), [Rev 4:8](#).]. God himself is pleased to distinguish this perfection in a peculiar manner by making it the pledge of his fidelity in a most solemn oath [Note: [Psa 89:35](#).]; nor does he less surpass all created beings in holiness than he does in greatness and majesty: “There is none holy as the Lord,” says the Scripture [Note: [1 Sam. 2:2](#).]; and again, “Thou only art holy [Note: [Rev 15:4](#).].”

John Calvin says: “For thus hath spoken the High and Lofty One. He confirms the former statement about the restoration of the people from captivity. But this verse may be explained in two ways; either that the Prophet meets the doubt which might spring up in the hearts of good men, and thus compares things which are contrasted with each other; or, that he draws an argument from the nature of God, in

order to strengthen weak minds. To explain these things more clearly, we know, first, that our hearts are often distracted by these thoughts, that God is actually in heaven, but that there is a great distance between him and us, and that, he overlooks or despises human affairs, and, in a word, that he takes no care at all about us. In order to correct this imagination, the Prophet says that God does indeed dwell in a lofty place, but does not the less on that account look at this world and govern it by his providence; for he is anxious about the salvation of men, and dwells with the afflicted, and with them that are of a broken and humble heart; as it is said, "Jehovah is high, and hath respect to the lowly," (Psa_138:6) and in other passages.

The other meaning is, that the Prophet shows that God is very unlike us; for we tremble in adversity, because we measure him by our standard, and say, "How shall the Lord render assistance to us, who are oppressed?" Besides, men who are in distress are commonly overlooked and despised. Thus we think that God holds us in no estimation, because we form our ideas of him from our own nature. But we ought to entertain very different views of him; and therefore he says, that he "dwelleth in heaven," in order to intimate that he is not liable to human passions; for he is like himself at all times, and never changes his purpose; and therefore as he has once promised restoration to his people, so he will perform it. I do not dislike this interpretation, nor do I reject the former, which is fuller and more abundant, and agrees with other passages of Scripture, that commonly join together those two things; that the Lord dwelleth in heaven, and taketh care of human affairs, and especially of his children, as I stated briefly a little before.

Who dwelleth in eternity. We are fickle, and apply our minds sometimes to one subject, and sometimes to another; and our hearts do not continue to be fixed on that which we have once embraced. On this account he distinguishes between God and men, for on him no shadow of change falls; but we have not such steadfastness as to exercise constant care about those who need our assistance.

I inhabit the high and holy. קדוש (kadosh) sometimes denotes the temple, but here it denotes heaven itself. We see the reason why he calls him "the Holy One," and "the inhabitant of the holy and lofty place." It is in order to inform us how much he differs from us, and how unlike he is to our nature. Besides, we ought to draw from it a singular consolation, that the Lord wishes to assist the wretched, and even chooses for himself a habitation amongst them, that is, provided that they acknowledge their wretchedness.

2. It is good to catch a vision of the holiness of God if you are going to serve Him.

a. Those who are called to preach need to have a good sight of God's holiness:

Isaiah 6: 1-5 – "In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple." "Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew." "And one cried to another and said: 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!' "And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke." "So I said: 'Woe is me, for I am undone!' "Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts."

Revelation 4: 8 – "The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!"

Revelation 5: 8-12 – "Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth." Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice: "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain To receive power and riches and wisdom, And strength and honor and glory and blessing!"

A Quote from my sermon on Revelation 4: 8 – The Ministry of the Living Creatures –

“As we read the Bible we find that there are angels who pose as men on their missions for God, and then there are also men who are called to preach who resemble angels in their mission. They stand in the presence of God as they preach and they deliver His word. Prophets in both Old Testament and New saw visions of these Seraphims and Cherubims, Living Creatures who look like angels, and their ministry is being represented as angelic in terms of their service to God. This is certainly true of both Isaiah and Ezekiel. I believe that what Isaiah was seeing here in this vision in Isaiah 6 is directly related to His being called and commissioned by God as a prophet. He was being given a pictured ideal of what all ministers of God’s Word are called to be like spiritually. Each of these sets of wings has a real significance. With the first set the Seraph covers his face. This shows us that a minister, as he stands in the presence of God, has a sense of his own unworthiness to be there. Again, this cannot be an angel for an angel is often standing in the immediate presence of God. A holy angel has nothing to be ashamed of, as he has not sinned, and he is continually doing and performing his duties as an angelic being in the very presence of God. He is not unworthy of the office which God has place him in. But a minister is a sinful man, whom God has changed by His mighty grace, and raised him up to a position of service unto Himself. He is unworthy of such a high calling. He is a man who realizes that his heart and his thoughts and even the best of his actions have sin attached to them and he cannot think about this fact, or behold the Divine Glory in any measure, without feeling ashamed of Himself. God is so infinitely Holy, Wise, and Just, that the man who is being raised up to the ministry cannot comprehend why God would choose him to speak and preach for him. He considers himself the “chief of sinners” and “less than the least of all the saints” as Paul did. It is hard for him to think of the Lord’s steady gaze upon him without feeling embarrassment. What is he doing there in the pulpit, delivering the inspired, inerrant, infallible word of God when he perceives himself to be vile in so many ways? It is only grace which has made him to differ, and he feels his own insufficiency for such a task.

You can see an example of this in Exodus 3 when God reveals Himself to Moses in the burning bush. In verse 5 it says, “Then God said to him, ‘Do not draw near this place.’” “Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground.” “Moreover He said, ‘I am the God of your father – the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’” Then it says, “And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God.” This is how a true minister feels in the presence of God. Angels have none of this sin to worry about. The Lord Jesus says of them in Matthew 18: 10 that we should not despise little children because, “their angels always see the face of My Father in heaven.” But men have every reason to cover their face. Elijah, when he heard the still small voice of God in 1 Kings 19: 12 and 13, he “wrapped his face in his mantle,” it says and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave. This is appropriate in the great prophet, and how much more so in the heart and mind of the gospel preacher. I think that there is, in general, a lack of this kind of attitude in our own day among many of the preachers of the Word; that they do not understand themselves as standing before an infinitely holy God, and it keeps them from being able to communicate their message in the power of the Lord. Often, people want everything in worship to be casual, everything in God’s presence to be relaxing. They want everything in the teaching to be centered around man. People come to think that they have to always be comfortable in the presence of God, and that the fear of God has no place in worship. But it is the minister’s calling that the majesty and glory and holiness and justice of God be set forth to his congregation just as much as His love and compassion and mercy. All of these things find their focus in the minister “seeing Christ”, the Lord of Hosts. Let us pray that many men will be called to the ministry and come to fulfill their duties with a sense of reverential awe; that they stand in the presence of the holy God. Perhaps we will then come to experience revival in our churches.”