

# Week 2

## NAMES OF *Character*

DAY 1



EL HAKKADOSH

אל הקדוש : Holy God

DAY 2



RAV-CHESED

רב־חסד : Abounding in Love

DAY 3



RACHUM VE-CHANUN

רחום ורחון : Merciful and Gracious

DAY 4



EMET ELOHIM EMET

אמת אלהים אמת : Faithful and True

DAY 5



HIGDIL TUSHIYYAH

הגדיל תושיה : Excellent in Wisdom

*They shall pour forth the fame of your abundant goodness and shall sing aloud of your righteousness. The LORD is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. The LORD is good to all, and his mercy is over all that he has made.*

Psalm 145:7-9

# יְהוָה

## THE LORD IS *Good*

**char•ac•ter** [kar'ik·tèr] *n.* the set of qualities that make somebody or something distinctive, interesting and attractive; especially somebody's qualities of mind and feeling.



With a house full of athletes, my family has encountered its share of good and bad coaches. Some were bad coaches because they lacked integrity. Some had explosive tempers or foul mouths. Others were dishonest, self-centered, arrogant, abusive, or uncaring about their players. Still others were bad coaches because they lacked know-how.

The good coaches were the ones who had integrity as well as know-how. They sincerely cared about their players and understood how to instruct, motivate, and develop them.

If people in positions of power lack integrity and skill, the results can be devastating and destructive for those under their oversight. But consider for a moment what it would be like to have a “bad” god. Can you imagine what might happen if the Supreme Being of the Universe lacked integrity? What if He were kind and well-intentioned but lacked know-how? The consequences would be horrific.

Last week we studied the Lord's names of deity. His names of deity reveal that He is God. This week we'll study His names of character. You will learn that the infinite God is infinitely good. His character is flawless. We can trust His oversight in our world and in our lives because all aspects of His character are perfect, extraordinary, and spectacularly brilliant.

# EL HAKKADOSH

אל הקדוש HOLY GOD

*“Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!”*  
Isaiah 6:3

*The four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night they never cease to say, “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!”*

**Revelation 4:8**

*“There is none holy like the LORD; there is none besides you; there is no rock like our God.”*

**1 Samuel 2:2**

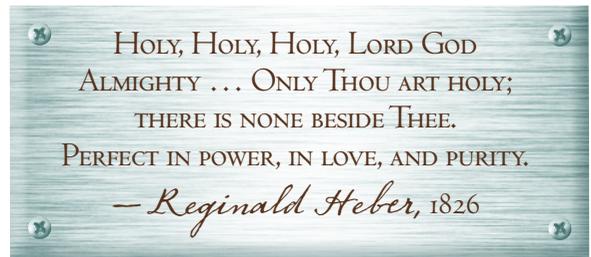
I live near the Rocky Mountains in western Canada. Sometimes, in the winter, it gets cold outside. Cold cold!!! Not the “I need to put on a jacket ‘cause it’s a bit chilly” type of cold, but a “minus 45, it hurts to breathe, exposed flesh freezes in less than five seconds” type of cold. You get the picture. There’s cold, and then there’s cold cold! Repeating the word accentuates the concept.

My word-processing program has underlined the repeated duplicate words in red and is offering to delete them for me. That’s because repeating a word in English doesn’t have the same significance as repeating it in Hebrew. Ancient Hebrew often uses repetition as a special literary device to emphasize a thought.

A humorous example of repetition occurs in a story in Genesis that recounts a battle of kings in the Valley of Siddim. The narrator mentioned that many soldiers fell into the pits of the valley (Gen. 14:10). If you were to compare different Bible translations, you would notice that the pits are variously described as slime pits, tar pits, asphalt pits, bitumen (mineral) pits, or just plain old “pits.” So exactly what kind of pits were they? The original text is unclear. It just gives the Hebrew word for pit and then repeats it. These were “pit pits.” Apparently, there are pits and then there are pit pits. A pit pit is way more “pitty” than an ordinary type of pit. You could say that falling into a pit is the pits, but falling into a pit pit is the pits pits!

Duplicate words to emphasize or accentuate a concept also are used in the New Testament. On numerous occasions Jesus began

teaching with the words, “Truly, truly, I say to you ...” The double use of the word *truly* alerted His listeners to the fact that what He was about to teach was of crucial importance. In a very small handful of occasions the Bible repeats an idea to the third degree. To repeat a concept three times in a row is to attach to it an emphasis of extraordinary proportion.



**In your Bible, read Isaiah 6:1-5. In verse 3, which characteristic of God is mentioned three times in a row? Write it in the three spaces provided.**

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The Bible never describes God as “love, love, love,” “faithful, faithful, faithful,” or “mighty, mighty, mighty.” But it does emphasize that He is “holy, holy, holy.” Holiness is the only attribute of God that is ever tripled. God is more than holy—more than holy, holy. “Holy, holy, holy is Lord God Almighty!” (Rev. 4:8).

**In this space, explain what you think the word *holy* means.**

## *The Spectacular Gem of Holiness*

God’s holiness is more spectacular, immaculate, compelling, and fearful than we can fathom. And it involves a lot more than simply the absence of sin. The Bible indicates there are three main facets to holiness.

To begin, the word *holy* describes God’s perfection. The Lord’s character is morally excellent and spiritually sound. In Him is no spot or stain. His righteousness is pure and absolute. Isaiah 5:16 says, “The Holy God shows himself holy in righteousness.” To be holy is to be 100 percent good.

The second and most prominent facet of holiness has to do with being “a cut apart” or “separate.” Holiness means “to be extraordinary; to be above and independent of.” God’s holiness means that He is uniquely set apart from the rest of His creation. “‘To whom then will you compare me, that I should be like him?’ says the Holy One” (Isa. 40:25). God is separate from all that is sinful and also separate from the finite and created. He is exceptionally uncommon. This facet of holiness indicates that God is exceedingly “different” and “special.”

Finally, the word *holy* means illustrious. To be holy is to radiate and shine brightly. Holiness is inherently brilliant, dazzling, and magnificent. To be holy is to be spectacularly

### THREE FACETS:

- Perfect
- Uncommon  
(A cut apart,  
extraordinary)
- Illustrious

*They shall teach my people the difference between the holy and the common, and show them how to distinguish between the unclean and the clean.*

**Ezekiel 44:23**

*“Who is like you, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders?”*

**Exodus 15:11**

beautiful. That’s why King David sang, “Worship the LORD in the splendor of holiness; tremble before him, all the earth!” (Ps. 96:9).

**This chart summarizes the three main facets of holiness. Complete each row by identifying which facet of holiness the row describes.**

*(Hint: The facets are listed in the margin on page 35.)*

WHICH FACET OF HOLINESS?	DEFINITION	SYNONYMS ( <i>Same Meaning</i> )	ANTONYMS ( <i>Opposites</i> )
	Extraordinary; beyond in elevation, excellence, extent, or degree; a cut above and independent of.	Set Apart Special Separated Consecrated Above Distinct Transcendent	Intermingled Run-of-the-Mill Common Mixed In Desecrated Below Universal
	Ethical excellence, spiritual soundness and purity	Clean Pure Undeified Spotless Righteous Flawless	Unclean Impure Defiled Stained Sinful Flawed
	Brilliant, dazzling; radiating light; strikingly beautiful, shining brightly and intensely.	Bright Shiny Light Glorious Magnificent Awesome	Dim Dull Dark Shameful Unimpressive Average

God wanted His people to understand what holiness was all about. One of the main duties of priests was to teach them “the difference between the holy and the common, and show them how to distinguish between the unclean and the clean” (Ezek. 44:23; Lev. 10:10).

To illustrate that holiness meant moral perfection, the people of Israel had to follow “cleanliness” laws—regularly washing themselves with water. They needed to be physically spotless in order to worship a spiritually spotless God. There were rules about which animals were clean and which should be avoided (Num. 19:17-20; 20:24-26). There were detailed “separation” rules for consecrating and “setting apart” people and objects for God (Ex. 30:25-30). The “off-limit” nature of the tabernacle, and most specifically, the holy of holies, all bore witness to God’s exceptional holiness (Ex. 26:31-34; Lev. 16:1-4). These and numerous other object lessons taught the people that holiness meant being set apart, extraordinary, “uncommon.” Finally, the people discovered that not only is holiness perfectly good and uncommonly extraordinary ... it’s also exceedingly attractive! Moses’ face radiated with dazzling light each time he met with the Lord (Ex. 34:29-35).

Isaiah came “undone” when he had a vision of the holiness of God. He fell to his face and lamented, “I am ruined!” Even the seraphs (the burning ones)—a distinct order of pure, angelic beings who reside in the presence of God—cover their eyes so as not to be overwhelmed by His spectacular holiness (Isa. 6:1-6).

Does God’s holiness attract you or frighten you? Put a mark on the scale below to indicate how you feel:

Attracts Me  Frightens Me

Theologian Rudolf Otto called God’s holiness the “*mysterium tremendum et fascinans*”—the fearsome fascinating mystery. It’s a “mystery” because it’s a reality beyond our conception or understanding. It is “fascinating” for its beauty attracts and allures us; yet, it’s also “fearsome” for its dazzling purity causes us to tremble.

Today we started studying God’s names of character by examining His holiness. We started with holiness because it is the character trait that permeates all of God’s other attributes. God’s love is holy, holy, holy; it’s perfect, uncommon, and spectacular. His mercy and grace are also holy, holy, holy; they are perfect, uncommon, and spectacular. His faithfulness, wisdom, and all other traits are likewise holy, holy, holy; they are all perfect, uncommon, and spectacular. Does the wonder and beauty of the Lord’s holiness take your breath away? It should. Even the angelic beings in heaven are overwhelmed with awe and ceaselessly exclaim, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty!”



## Know Him by name

The Bible urges us to “worship the LORD in the splendor of holiness” (Ps. 29:2). Take a few moments to meditate on His perfect, uncommon, illustrious character. In the space below, write a prayer that worships Him in the splendor of His holiness.



*Worship the LORD  
in the splendor  
of holiness; tremble  
before him, all  
the earth!*

**Psalm 96:9**

*But the LORD of  
hosts, him you shall  
honor as holy. Let  
him be your fear,  
and let him be  
your dread.*

**Isaiah 8:13**

*Let them praise thy  
great and terrible  
name; for it is holy.  
Exalt ye the LORD  
our God, and  
worship at his foot-  
stool; for he is holy.  
Exalt the LORD our  
God, and worship at  
his holy hill;  
for the LORD our  
God is holy.*

**Psalm 99:3,5,9, KJV**