

# Holy

by Stephen M Golden

Copyright © 17 November 2008 and 4 October 2021

What is the meaning of the word “holy?” Over the years I have participated in lessons and discussions that attempt to explain the meaning of the word “holy.” None of these lessons and discussions seemed to really arrive at the meaning of “holy” because in almost every case, a synonym was used that can also be found in conjunction with the word “holy” somewhere in Scripture.

By examining many of these verses, I deduced what “holy” cannot mean. Holy cannot mean any of the words used in conjunction with holy, such as “pure.” If “holy” is used in Scripture with another attribute, it cannot mean that attribute. For example, holy cannot mean blameless or pure because Hebrews 7:26 (NIV) says “holy, blameless, and pure.”

By re-visiting those same verses, I considered the context, to determine what “holy” might mean. From this, I made a list

# Holy

by Stephen M Golden

Copyright © 17 November 2008 and 4 October 2021

of possible meanings. This is certainly not an exhaustive list of possible meanings, but it is enough for me to conclude what “holy” means. This is my list of possible meanings.

## Possible meanings:

Correct

According to purpose

As it should be

Singular, the only one, the most important

Superlative

For example, Holy Bible - The “most important” “book”.

## Words “Holy” cannot mean:

Based on scriptures in which these words are used in conjunction with Holy in the King James Version (KJV 1769 edition), the New King James Version (NKJV 1982 edition), the New International Version (NIV 1984

# Holy

by Stephen M Golden

Copyright © 17 November 2008 and 4 October 2021

edition), and the New American Standard Bible (NASB 1995 edition), here is my list of what “holy” cannot mean.

High – Isaiah 57:15, KJV, NKJV, NIV, NASB

True – Revelation 3:7; 6:10, KJV, NKJV, NIV, NASB

Honorable – 1 Thessalonians 4:4, NIV

Awesome – Psalm 111:9, NKJV, NIV, NASB

Reverend – Psalm 111:9, KJV

Glorious – Daniel 11:45, KJV, NKJV, a mountain is described as holy

Righteous – Psalm 145:17; Revelation 22:11, KJV, NKJV, NASB

Blameless – Ephesians 1:4, NIV, NASB; 5:27, NIV, NASB; Colossians 1:22, NASB, NKJV; Hebrews 7:26, NIV

Without blame – Ephesians 1:4, KJV, NKJV

Blessed – Revelation 20:6, NIV, KJV, NASB, NKJV

Pleasing – Romans 12:1, NIV

Acceptable – Romans 12:1, KJV, NASB, NKJV

Faithful – Isaiah 49:7, NIV, KJV, NASB, NKJV

Disciplined – Titus 1:8, NIV

Temperate – Titus 1:8, KJV

# Holy

by Stephen M Golden

Copyright © 17 November 2008 and 4 October 2021

Self-controlled – Titus 1:8, NKJV, NASB  
Godly – 2 Peter 3:11, NIV  
Pure – Hebrews 7:26, NIV  
Just – Titus 1:8, KJV, NKJV, NASB  
Good – Romans 7:12, NIV, KJV, NASB, NKJV  
Beautiful – Daniel 11:25, NIV, NASB  
Without blemish – Ephesians 5:27, KJV, NKJV;  
Colossians 1:22, NIV  
Set apart – Hebrews 7:26, NIV  
Sanctified<sup>1</sup> – 1 Corinthians 1:2, NIV, “those who  
are sanctified, and called to be holy”  
Undeiled – Hebrews 7:26, NASB, KJV, NKJV  
Innocent – Hebrews 7:26, NASB  
Right – Revelation 22:11, NIV  
Special – 1 Peter 2:9, NIV, KJV, NKJV, NASB

If you assert that any of the above words are part of the definition of Holy, you are asserting that at least one of these four translations is incorrect (KJV, NKJV, NASB, NIV). You might say my conclusion is subject to errors of the translators, but keep in mind, a translator’s goal is to give us the

---

<sup>1</sup>Sanctified means set apart for a holy purpose.

# Holy

by Stephen M Golden

Copyright © 17 November 2008 and 4 October 2021

meaning of the passage through the words in the original text. Whether the translator used the correct English word in the translation is not relevant to the fact that the word is a different word from “holy” in the original language. Since the word was included with the word that means “holy” in the original language, the original writer was making a distinction between that word and “holy.”

Ezekiel 44:23 and 26 (KJV, NKJV, and NIV) indicate that “profane” and “common” are the opposite of holy.

One definition for “holy” that comes to me is “the opposite of evil”. However, that definition is circular. Evil could be defined as that which is not holy. It doesn't get to the point, and we're still left with the question, “What is the meaning of 'Holy'?”

Paul indicates it means “clean” (as in uncorrupted)

# Holy

by Stephen M Golden

Copyright © 17 November 2008 and 4 October 2021

1Corinthians 7:14 For the unbelieving husband has been sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified through her believing husband. Otherwise **your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy.**

Nevertheless, because of its use in other passages, I conclude the meaning of “holy” is “according to God’s intended purpose.”

In the case of God’s holiness, it means God is completely consistent in all ways.

## According to God’s Intended Purpose

So, if “holy” means “according to God’s intended purpose, anything we do or make that is different from God’s intended purpose might be considered unholy.

But wait a minute...

# Holy

by Stephen M Golden

Copyright © 17 November 2008 and 4 October 2021

I want to present to you the concept of **legal**, **not legal**, and **illegal** and draw an analogy from it.

Under the law, something is legal if there is a law saying you can do it. Something is illegal if there is a law saying you cannot do it. However, if there is no law addressing the act, it is not legal and it is not illegal.

So, perhaps “holy” is analogous to this. Something is holy if it is according to God’s intended purpose. Something is unholy if it is contrary to God’s intended purpose. What about something that is not actually contrary to God’s intended purpose, but it is not actually the same as God’s intended purpose? That is, “not holy” but “not unholy.” Is it possible to do or make something that is not according to God’s intended purpose, making it “not holy” but still not be “unholy.”

This is a gray area that concerns me.

# Holy

by Stephen M Golden

Copyright © 17 November 2008 and 4 October 2021

For example: seedless fruit. God intended fruit to make seeds. The intended purpose is for the fruit to produce seeds to propagate more fruit. We have seedless watermelon, naval oranges, bananas, seedless grapes, and more. These are clearly contrary to God's intended purpose. These are not "holy." But are they simply "not holy" or are they "unholy"?

You might think I'm just stirring the pot, but I really do have concerns about this. Is this a perversion of God's creation with which God is annoyed, or is this just a harmless extension of man's creativity and efforts toward a more convenient life?

Sometimes, when I open a navel orange, I see that the sections are all messed up inside, especially around the navel. These messed up sections sometimes take up to a third of the orange! Is that a manifestation of the fruit's unholiness?



# Holy

by Stephen M Golden

Copyright © 17 November 2008 and 4 October 2021

Consider the unhealthy modifications we make to almost all our food supply. This undoubtedly contributes to our rising incidence of disease and unhealthiness like diabetes, heart disease, and so on. Then there are the genetic modifications we're making to food. Scientists have been modifying the DNA of our food (GMOs) for many years. They say the modifications are safe, but you could only be sure they are safe if you were God. Whether you believe in God or not, Scientists and Doctors are **not** God. Do we have an unholy food supply?

Now, they're making DNA modifications to humans! The "vaccines" presented to the world in response to COVID-19 are not vaccines at all! Among other questionable things, they contain MRNA! Molecules that will change the DNA of the person who receives it. In my mind, this is a clear

# Holy

by Stephen M Golden

Copyright © 17 November 2008 and 4 October 2021

example of being contrary to God's intended purpose. It is unholy.

The atheistic scientist believes it is a logical direction to change and attempt to improve the human genome. But for someone who believes in God, it presumes to supplant God. It's as if God isn't very bright and He needs scientists to fix what He did poorly.

The problem is not a poor genome, or bad design. The problem is corruption due to thousands of years of sin. I believe many of the things we've done to our environment and our food supply are a result of unholy manipulation. We presume to know enough to make risky modifications to plants and animals and introduce questionable products such as plastic into the world.