

## “THERE ARE MANY WAYS INTO GOD’S PRESENCE”

### Prayer Requests

... “Nothing in our hands we bring, simply to your cross we cling; Naked, come to you for dress, helpless, look to you for grace. Foul, we to the fountain fly – wash us, Savior, or we die! Amen.

### Focus

A man by the name of G. K. Chesterton once said: “There are an infinity of angles at which one falls, only one at which one stands.” The Bible tells us that Jesus is the only way to heaven, but that viewpoint isn’t popular in today’s society. More and more people (including some Christians) have fallen for the lie “There are many ways into God’s presence.” In this lesson, we will evaluate that claim based on what God tells us in his Word.

### Introductory Activity

- ❖ Former night talk show host Jay Leno often went out onto the street and asked people random questions. He called the segment “Jaywalking.” Imagine that you are stepping out onto the streets and asking a cross-section of Americans, “Describe God and who he is to you.” List at least five things people might say.
  - Can all of these responses describe the same God? Explain your answer.

### More Than One Way?

#### GOD IS HOLY AND UNAPPROACHABLE

*Isaiah 6:1-5 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. <sup>2</sup> Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. <sup>3</sup> And they were calling to one another:*

*“Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty;  
the whole earth is full of his glory.”*

*<sup>4</sup> At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke. <sup>5</sup> “Woe to me!” I cried. “I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty.”*

- ❖ Read Isaiah 6:1-5. What effect did seeing God in all his holiness have on Isaiah?
  - Why did it have this effect?
  - Often in the Old Testament, we see a similar reaction to being in the presence of holiness. People were terrified! In the New Testament church today, why are we less likely to react that way?

#### WE ARE NOT GOOD ENOUGH TO APPROACH A HOLY GOD

- ❖ Moses wanted to see God's glory. This was God's response: "*You cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live*" (Exodus 33:20). God explained the reason for this: "*All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*" (Romans 3:23). What misunderstandings does someone harbor who believes that God will accept him or her for being a good person?
  - In Romans 6:23 we read, "*The wages of sin is death.*" How would you explain to someone why even one sin merits death?
  - "*All our righteous acts are like filthy rags*" (Isaiah 64:6). Take a moment on your own and consider whether or not even a Christian can do a truly good work. (use Matthew 25:34-40 and 1 John 1:7 below to help formulate your answer)

*Matthew 25:34-40 "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.<sup>35</sup> For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in,<sup>36</sup> I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'*

<sup>37</sup> "*Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink?<sup>38</sup> When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you?<sup>39</sup> When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'*

<sup>40</sup> "*The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'*

*1 John 1:7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.*

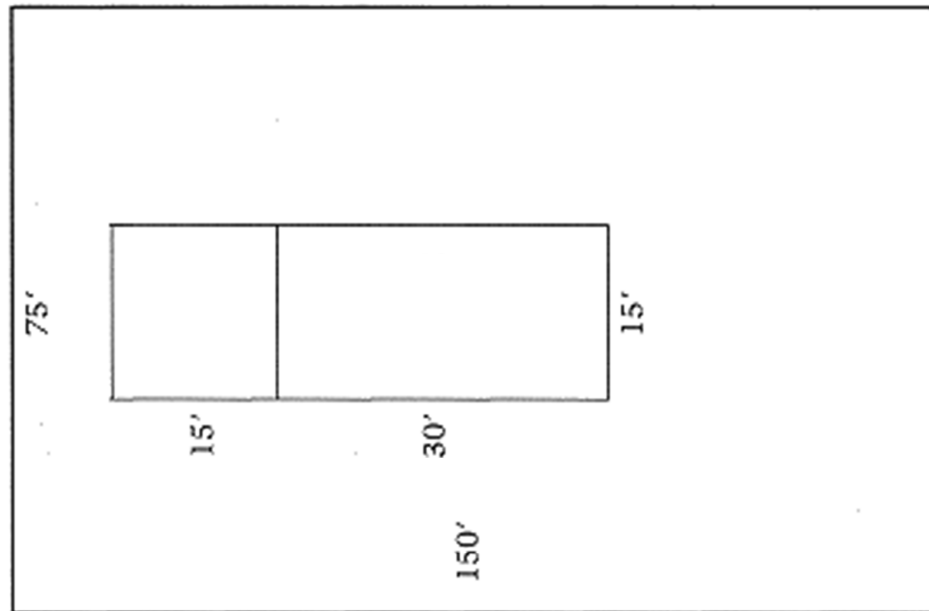
WE NEED A MEDIATOR IN ORDER TO APPROACH A HOLY GOD.

- ❖ Genesis 3:15 says, “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.” Below you see two separate lists of three “people.” Draw a “wall of enmity” (a line) where it belongs between the “people”:

Pre-sin			Post-sin		
Devil	Adam and Eve	God	Devil	Adam and Eve	God

*Leviticus 16:2 The LORD said to Moses: “Tell your brother Aaron not to come whenever he chooses into the Most Holy Place behind the curtain in front of the atonement cover on the ark, or else he will die, because I appear in the cloud over the atonement cover.*

- ❖ Read Leviticus 16:2. Except for the high priest on the Day of Atonement, no one could come into the Most Holy Place, or he would die. In the space below, label and draw the Holy Place, Most Holy Place, and the ark of the covenant.



The Court and Tabernacle

- ❖ Matthew 27:51—“*At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.*”  
Read the passages below and explain the significance of what happened on Good Friday.

*Hebrews 7:26 Such a high priest meets our need—one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens.*

*Hebrews 10:11-14 Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.<sup>12</sup> But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God.<sup>13</sup> Since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool,<sup>14</sup> because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.*

*1 Peter 3:18 For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.*

*Romans 5:1,2 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,<sup>2</sup> through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.*

#### JESUS IS THE ONLY WAY TO A HOLY GOD

*Acts 4:12 Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”*

*John 4:6 Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*

- ❖ Read Acts 4:12 and John 14:6. Respond to someone who says, “Christianity is too exclusive. No one can claim to have the truth exclusively.”

#### **Discussion**

- ❖ Agree/Disagree: If there are many ways into God’s presence, then the God of the Bible is a fool.
- ❖ What are the differences between Christianity and every other world religion?

- ❖ What is the difference between universal justification and universalism?
  
- ❖ How can we respond to someone who says, “You are rather arrogant and intolerant to claim that Jesus is the only right way to salvation”?
  
- ❖ On the basis of our study, how would you now respond to the statement: “There are many paths into God’s presence”?

### **Closing Prayer**

Dear Lord, so many people judge your law as being easy or even beneath them – help them see what it says: “If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us.” So many people see themselves as “basically good.” Holy Spirit - put into their minds and hearts your humbling and delivering Word. O Savior, keep us from falling into these deadly and dangerous ways of thinking, and show all people the ugliness of their disobedience so that we might know the beauty of your scars. Amen.