

## THE OLD TESTAMENT FOUNDATION FOR SEPARATION

by  
Robert V. McCabe<sup>1</sup>

Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary began in 1976, and this fall semester marks the beginning of its 27th year of its existence. The founding of the seminary was a result of the ministry of a separatistic fundamental Baptist church, Inter-City Baptist, and its fundamentalist pastor, Dr. William R. Rice. As a ministry of a fundamental Baptist church, DBTS started as “a seminary committed to solid theological education combined with an uncompromising commitment to separatist fundamentalism.”<sup>2</sup> Since its inception, DBTS has remained unashamedly committed to its fundamentalist moorings as reflected by its seminars,<sup>3</sup> publications<sup>4</sup> and academic environment.

The fundamentalist movement has been committed to a literal exposition and defense of core biblical doctrines, a militant exposure of non-biblical expressions of these truths, and an ecclesiastical separation from those who deviate from these scriptural beliefs.<sup>5</sup> What sets

---

<sup>1</sup>Dr. McCabe is Professor of Old Testament at Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary in Allen Park, MI.

<sup>2</sup>“William R. Rice: Biographical Sketch,” *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 1 [Spring 1996]: 7.

<sup>3</sup>This paper was initially developed for the DBTS sponsored Mid-America Conference on Preaching, hosted by Inter-City Baptist Church on October 18–19, 2001. The MACP has been annually held at Inter-City Baptist Church since 1991. Over this period, individual papers and sermons have periodically addressed issues associated with biblical separatism; however, last year’s Conference was entirely devoted to this subject, as reflected by its theme: “Fundamentalism at the Start of the 21st Century” (see <http://www.dbts.edu/aboutdbts/macp>).

<sup>4</sup>For examples of DBTS publications, see the following: Rolland D. McCune, “Ecclesiastical Separation,” *The Sentinel* 1 (Spring 1985): 1; R. Bruce Compton, “2 Thessalonians 3:6–15 and Biblical Separation,” *The Sentinel* 5 (Fall 1988): 1–2; and David M. Doran, “In Defense of Militancy,” *The Sentinel* 11 (Spring 1995): 1–2.

<sup>5</sup>Rolland D. McCune, “The Self-Identity of Fundamentalism,” *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 1 (Spring 1996): 34. For a definition of fundamentalism that is coordinate with this understanding of the fundamentalist movement, see John E.

historic fundamentalism apart from new evangelicalism is not necessarily the core doctrines,<sup>6</sup> but a militant defense of these doctrines, one of which is the consistent practice of ecclesiastical separation. In short, what makes fundamentalism distinct is the doctrine of ecclesiastical separation. Article 15 of DBTS's doctrinal statement clearly affirms this doctrine: "Ecclesiastical separation is the refusal to collaborate with a church, ecclesiastical organization, or religious leader which does not hold to the fundamental, cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith, and a like refusal concerning those who maintain connections or are content to walk with those who do not hold to the fundamental, cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith."<sup>7</sup> As this article affirms, the doctrine of ecclesiastical separation focuses upon local churches and ecclesiastical organizations in the church age.

If ecclesiastical separation pertains to the New Testament church and if there is a consistent distinction between the theocratic nation of Israel and the church,<sup>8</sup> does this mean that the Old Testament has no bearing on the subject? It is my contention that ecclesiastical separation is based upon an on-going theological principle transcending all dispensations: God's holiness is the foundation for his people's growth in holiness.<sup>9</sup> My purpose in this article is to demonstrate that the Old Testament teaches this theological principle. This principle lends itself to a twofold treatment: the foundation of God's holiness and the development of holiness in his people.

---

Ashbrook, *Axioms of Separation* (Painesville, OH: Here I Stand Books, n.d.), p. 10.

<sup>6</sup>McCune, "The Self-Identity of Fundamentalism," pp. 19–22. For a discussion of doctrinal issues that are not part of the major doctrines, see Rolland D. McCune, "Doctrinal Non-Issues in Historic Fundamentalism," *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 1 (Fall 1996): 171–85.

<sup>7</sup>*Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary Catalog 2002–2005*, p. 97.

<sup>8</sup>As this article will show, Israel does have illustrative purposes for the church (e.g., 1 Cor 10), though there is a basic theological distinction between the theocratic nation and the church. McCune has summarized this distinction between Israel and the church: "The nation Israel was a political/racial entity uniquely related to God in what is called a theocracy. The nature, purposes, and destiny of Israel are distinct from those of the church. The church is not a theocratic kingdom as was Israel (Exod 19:6). The church has no political/religious alignment with God theocratically as did Israel. There is no racial preference in the body of Christ as there was in Israel" (Rolland D. McCune, "An Inside Look At Ecclesiastical Separation" [Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary, pamphlet, n.d.], p. 8). While I have developed this paper, I am indebted to McCune's pamphlet in addition to his journal articles and a number of DBTS chapel sessions on this subject.

<sup>9</sup>Ernest Pickering, *Biblical Separation: The Struggle for a Pure Church* (Schaumburg, IL: Regular Baptist Press, 1979), p. 169. This book has also shaped my thoughts on biblical separatism.

## THE HOLINESS OF GOD

The biblical doctrine of separation is predicated upon the holiness of God.<sup>10</sup> While we wish to avoid unwarrantedly exalting one of God's attributes to the exclusion or subordination of any of his other attributes,<sup>11</sup> God's holiness reflects the excellence of God's moral purity that permeates his essential nature and work.<sup>12</sup> In perfect coordination with all of his other attributes, God's holiness is coextensive with everything that can be attributed to God<sup>13</sup> and, consequently, has far-reaching implications in understanding his work in all creation. In this sense, holiness "defines the godness of God."<sup>14</sup> God "is holy in everything that reveals Him, in His goodness and grace as well as in His justice and wrath."<sup>15</sup> Therefore, a biblically informed understanding of God's holiness is an absolute prerequisite for comprehending and applying the doctrine of separation.

### The *Qdash* Word Group and Holiness

In the Old Testament, the complex of words most often associated with the concept of holiness is the *qdash* word group.<sup>16</sup> This complex of words is related to the verb  $\text{קָדַשׁ}$ , to "be holy, removed from common use."<sup>17</sup> This verb along with its derivative forms is found in the

---

<sup>10</sup>This is the thesis of the helpful book by Fred Moritz, *"Be Ye Holy": The Call to Christian Separation* (Greenville, SC: Bob Jones University Press, 1994), p. 7.

<sup>11</sup>C. Samuel Storms, *The Grandeur of God* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984), p. 37.

<sup>12</sup>Stephen Charnock, *The Existence and Attributes of God*, 2 vols. in 1 (reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 2:112–13.

<sup>13</sup>Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948), p. 266.

<sup>14</sup>*Holman Bible Dictionary*, s.v. "Holiness," by John D. W. Watts, p. 661.

<sup>15</sup>L. Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1941), p. 73.

<sup>16</sup>While there are other concepts that could be discussed in a paper dealing with the subject of Old Testament holiness, a discussion of these concepts is beyond the scope of this paper. For more information on the issues of purity and impurity, see Jacob Milgrom, *Cult and Conscience*, Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity, ed. Jacob Neusner (Leiden: Brill, 1976), pp. 16–21, 35–44, 86–89.

<sup>17</sup>Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, 2 vols., rev. W. Baumgartner and J. J. Stamm, study ed. (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 2:1072–73 (hereafter cited as *HALOT*); see also Francis Brown, Samuel R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, eds., *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (reprint ed., Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1972), pp. 872–73 (hereafter cited as *BDB*).

Old Testament 842 times.<sup>18</sup> While there are some different explanations about the etymological background for the root word  $\text{שָׁדַד}$ ,<sup>19</sup> these differences are insignificant since etymology has limited value in demonstrating the semantics of a word. Because of the frequent use of the *qadash* group of words, these words have a range of nuances. On a general level, this range reflects the concepts of separation from evil to good, separation from common to holy use, and the basic nature of holiness.<sup>20</sup> Because of the importance of this word group in delineating the Old Testament concept of God's holiness, we will presently survey the general uses of the verb  $\text{שָׁדַד}$  and its cognates with specific attention given to its use with Israel's God.

The verb  $\text{שָׁדַד}$  (to "be holy, removed from common use") is found 11 times in the Qal stem and delineates "that which belongs to the sphere of the sacred."<sup>21</sup> This state of holiness was a result of Levitical ritual. In Exodus 29:21, 37; 30:29, "certain objects used in the Levitical service were consecrated to God and were thus recognized as belonging to the realm of the sacred."<sup>22</sup> Generally speaking, when the verb is used in the Piel and Hiphil stems, it presents the activity used to set apart a person or object from common to sacred use.<sup>23</sup> In the Piel stem of  $\text{שָׁדַד}$ , God "set apart" the Sabbath for his own purposes (Gen 2:3; Exod 31:13). For his own purposes, God also "set apart" the tent of meeting and the Aaronic priestly line (Exod 29:44). In the Hiphil stem of this verb, God "set apart" for himself the firstborn from men and animals (Num 8:17). He also "set apart" the temple for his name (1 Kgs 9:3).<sup>24</sup> When this verb is used in the Niphal stem and God is its subject, the verb may denote God's "self-representation of his holiness in Israel."<sup>25</sup> In Leviticus 10:1–3, God "proves his holiness

---

<sup>18</sup>My count is based on statistics derived from *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament*, s.v. "שָׁדַד," by H. -P. Müller, 3:1106–7 (hereafter cited as *TLOT*).

<sup>19</sup>See *HALOT*, 2:1072–73; Norman H. Snaith, *The Distinctive Ideas of the Old Testament* (London: Epworth Press, 1944), pp. 24–32; for a summation, see Moritz, *Be Ye Holy*, pp. 105–7.

<sup>20</sup>John Randolph Jaeggli, "An Historical-Theological Analysis of the Holy One of Israel in Isaiah Forty through Sixty-Six" (Ph.D. dissertation, Bob Jones University, 1987), pp. 40–41, n. 30.

<sup>21</sup>*Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, s.v. "שָׁדַד," by Thomas E. McComiskey, 2:786 (hereafter cited as *TWOT*).

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, 2:787.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*, 2:786.

<sup>24</sup>*BDB*, pp. 872–73; see also *HALOT*, 2:1073–74.

<sup>25</sup>*New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, s.v. "שָׁדַד," by Jackie A. Naudé, 3:884 (hereafter cited as *NIDOTTE*).

by judging sin.... His holiness is also demonstrated in his adherence to his promises” (Ezek 20:41, 28:25, 39:27).<sup>26</sup> Thus, the verbal uses reflect what is properly holy or the activity that separates a person or an object from the realm of common use to the sacred.

### Three Cognates in the *Qdash* Word Group

The verb קָדַשׁ also has other significant cognate words such as מִקְדָּשׁ (“sanctuary”),<sup>27</sup> קְדוֹשׁ (“holy”),<sup>28</sup> and קְדוּשָׁה (“holiness”).<sup>29</sup> We will briefly examine each of these three cognates. First, the noun מִקְדָּשׁ (“sanctuary”) is used 74 times in the Old Testament,<sup>30</sup> and is most often used as a designation for either the tabernacle or the temple,<sup>31</sup> each one a divinely appointed place set apart for worship. Second, the adjective קְדוֹשׁ (“holy”) is found 116 times in the Hebrew text,<sup>32</sup> and “denominates that which is intrinsically sacred or which has been admitted to the sphere of the sacred by divine rite or cultic act.”<sup>33</sup> This adjective may be used in connection with people (Deut 14:2), things (Exod 29:31), “the day on which Ezra read the law (Neh 8:9, 10, 11) and the water used to test the woman suspected of adultery (Num 5:17).”<sup>34</sup>

When this adjective “holy” (קְדוֹשׁ) is used in connection with God, it has great theological significance. The divine title “the Holy One of Israel” is used 32 times in the Old Testament, with 25 uses in the book of Isaiah and 7 uses outside of Isaiah.<sup>35</sup> Isaiah uses this title to contrast the morally defective Israelite community of his day with God’s absolute moral perfection (Isa 30:11) and separation from sin (Isa 17:7), his moral holiness. This adjective may also be used to refer to God’s absolute separation from the created order, his transcendent holiness. In Isaiah’s vision of the LORD, he summarizes this vision in 6:1–5. In this context, Isaiah’s three uses of קְדוֹשׁ in v. 3 reflect both God’s

---

<sup>26</sup>*TWOT*, s.v. “קָדַשׁ,” 2:787.

<sup>27</sup>*NIDOTTE*, s.v. “קָדַשׁ,” 3:877.

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup>*HALOT*, 2:1076.

<sup>30</sup>From count in *TLOT*, s.v. “קָדַשׁ,” 3:1107.

<sup>31</sup>*TWOT*, s.v. “קָדַשׁ,” 2:789.

<sup>32</sup>From count in *TLOT*, s.v. “קָדַשׁ,” 3:1107.

<sup>33</sup>*TWOT*, s.v. “קָדַשׁ,” 2:787.

<sup>34</sup>*NIDOTTE*, s.v. “קָדַשׁ,” 3:877.

<sup>35</sup>For more information on these statistics, see Jaeggli, “The Holy One of Israel,” p. 8.

transcendent and moral holiness.<sup>36</sup> In v. 1 Isaiah describes God's majestic splendor as being "lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple."<sup>37</sup> When the LORD speaks in v. 4, "the foundations of the thresholds trembled at the voice of him who called out, while the temple was filling with smoke." Isaiah's description pictures a God who is majestically separate from his creation. In v. 2 the seraphim respond to God's glorious presence by covering themselves with their wings. What should not be missed is that the seraphim are sinless angelic creatures, and, consequently, their response is not one of a sinful creature recognizing the absolute separation between the Holy and the unholy but a response recognizing the absolute separation between the Creator and his creation. As a result of their sinless creaturely submission, they feel compelled to respond by covering themselves.<sup>38</sup> As a continuous act of worship, the seraphim cry out in v. 3: "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory."<sup>39</sup> Since the seraphim are not tainted with sin, as is the case for fallen humanity, their worship is not their reaction to God's moral purity but their reaction to his transcendent holiness.<sup>40</sup> Thus, Isaiah's use of קדוּשָׁה reflects this aspect of God's holiness. Berkhof refers to God's transcendent holiness as his "majesty-holiness," and describes this as God's absolute "distinction from all His creatures."<sup>41</sup>

While Isaiah was undoubtedly overwhelmed by God's majestic holiness, his worship in v. 5 is an expression of God's moral holiness, the separation of the Holy from the unholy: "Then I said, 'Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.'" Isaiah's worship is a submissive response to God's moral holiness, his absolute separation from anything evil and commitment to his own moral purity and goodness.<sup>42</sup> Strong refers to God's moral

---

<sup>36</sup>See John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of God* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 2002), p. 28.

<sup>37</sup>All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are taken from the 1995 edition of NASB.

<sup>38</sup>Robert L. Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith* (Nashville: Nelson, 1998), p. 194.

<sup>39</sup>Other passages that use קדוּשָׁה in connection with God's transcendent holiness include a few of these: 1 Sam 2:2; Ps 99:3; Isa 40:25; 57:15; Hos 11:9.

<sup>40</sup>R. C. Sproul, *The Holiness of God* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1985), p. 35.

<sup>41</sup>Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, p. 73; see also Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), p. 311.

<sup>42</sup>NIDOTTE, s.v. "קדוּשָׁה," 3:883.

holiness as his “self-affirming purity.”<sup>43</sup> Berkhof refers to God’s moral holiness as “ethical holiness” and provides this definition: “that perfection of God, in virtue of which He eternally wills and maintains His own moral excellence, abhors sin, and demands purity in his moral creatures.”<sup>44</sup> Therefore, when קדוּשׁ is used in connection with God, it has two aspects: majestic transcendence and moral purity.<sup>45</sup>

Finally, the noun קְדוּשָׁה, “holiness,” is used 469 times in the Old Testament.<sup>46</sup> It focuses on “the essential nature of that which belongs to the sphere of the sacred and which is thus distinct from the common or profane.”<sup>47</sup> In Leviticus 10:10 and Ezekiel 22:26, the distinction between the common and the sacred is apparent from the antithetical relationship between the “profane” (חל) and “holy” (קְדוּשָׁה). Thus, “holiness” (קְדוּשָׁה) involves a separation of the holy from the common. An inherent aspect of the Israelite theocracy involved maintaining an inviolable distinction between the realm of holiness and the realm of the common.<sup>48</sup> This fundamental distinction was seen in the Sabbath observance. Restrictions were set up to maintain the distinction between this “holy day” and the other six days of the week (Exod 16:23–26; Isa 58:13–14). This distinction is further seen in the priesthood. Since priests were set apart for God’s service, restrictions governed them to avoid violating their distinction (Lev 21:16). On a more general level, this distinction is apparent in that things set apart to God were considered within the realm of the sacred. They were regarded as “holy.” The “holy things” included objects set apart for worship (Lev 5:15–16), the produce from the land (Lev 19:24), and spoil acquired from war (Josh 6:19).<sup>49</sup> Whatever the holy God set apart as קְדוּשָׁה was separated from common use and consecrated for his own holy purpose.

The fundamental reason why anything set apart by God entered into the realm of the sacred is that it was an expression of the holy purpose of Israel’s holy God. In contrast to the pagan deities of the ancient Near East whose basic natures were consumed by the same

---

<sup>43</sup>Augustus Hopkins Strong, *Systematic Theology* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1907), p. 268.

<sup>44</sup>Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, p. 74.

<sup>45</sup>For beneficial theological discussions of God’s holiness, see Frame (*The Doctrine of God*, pp. 27–29) and John S. Feinberg (*No One Like Him* [Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2001], pp. 340–42).

<sup>46</sup>Statistics taken from *TLOT*, s.v. “קדוּשׁ,” 3:1107.

<sup>47</sup>*TWOT*, s.v. “קדוּשׁ,” 2:787.

<sup>48</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup>*Ibid.*

unholy passions as man, God's basic nature is one of intrinsic moral purity: God is absolutely separated from all evil and is totally consecrated to his own inherent purity and goodness. When Habakkuk compared the decadent Judean society of his day to God's moral holiness, his response to God was "*Your eyes are too pure to approve evil, and You can not look on wickedness with favor*" (1:13). This text reflects that God is constitutionally separated from any form of evil. It is then no surprise that the noun שְׁדָּרָה ("holiness") is used to stress God's absolute separation from any syncretistic connection with ancient Near Eastern religions. In Leviticus 20:3, any Israelite who sacrifices his child to Molech profanes God's "holy [שְׁדָּרָה] name," and must be cut off from Israel: "I will also set My face against that man and will cut him off from among his people, because he has given some of his offspring to Molech, so as to defile My sanctuary and to profane My holy [שְׁדָּרָה] name." In Amos 2:7–8 God indicts Israel for their idolatrous immorality: "A man and his father resort to the same girl in order to profane My holy [שְׁדָּרָה] name. On garments taken as pledges they stretch out beside every altar." Because of Israel's compromise with apostasy and violation of God's moral law, God would completely destroy Israel's northern kingdom (2:6): "Thus says the LORD, 'For three transgressions of Israel and for four I will not revoke its *punishment*.'"

Compromise with pagan religious practices is a violation of God's own self-affirming moral purity. Because religious compromise is antithetical to God's holy character, his "holy [שְׁדָּרָה] name," it brings his holy judgment. God's holy constitutional reaction to sinful compromise issues forth in radical separation. Furthermore, God's holiness is coupled with his holy omnipotence. The contrast between the unholy impotence of the Egyptian pantheon of gods and the holy omnipotence of the Lord is poetically highlighted in the Mosaic song of victory (Exod 15:11): "Who is like You among the gods, O LORD? Who is like You, majestic in holiness [שְׁדָּרָה], awesome in praises, working wonders?" In this verse Moses exalts the Lord's majestic holiness. Additionally, we should note that "holiness," שְׁדָּרָה, is sometimes a virtual synonym for God. Returning again to the eighth century prophet Amos, he reflects this synonymous nature in two passages: Amos 4:2, "the LORD God has sworn by His holiness [שְׁדָּרָה]," and 6:8, "the LORD God has sworn by Himself." Through this synthesis, Amos's theology reflects that God's very nature is paralleled by God's holiness. This close connection is also seen in Psalm 89:35: "Once I have sworn by My holiness [שְׁדָּרָה]; and I will not lie to David."<sup>50</sup> Thus, swearing by

---

<sup>50</sup>Ralph L. Smith, *Old Testament Theology* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1993), p. 191.



God's holiness in this text is tantamount to swearing by God himself.<sup>51</sup> This biblical data indicates that God is intrinsically holy, and God's own holiness requires separation from anything that is contrary to his moral character.<sup>52</sup>

We have attempted to survey the general uses of the verb קָדַשׁ and three other cognate words with specific attention focused on their significance for the holiness of God. An important aspect of the semantics of this word group revolves around the nuance of separation. This separation involves the removal of an object or being from common use or evil and consecration to the sphere of holiness. When קָדַשׁ and its cognates are applied to God, we have seen that God's holiness relates to his transcendent holiness and his moral purity. Both of these aspects of God's holiness appear in Psalm 99. Three times in this psalm God is extolled as "holy," קָדוֹשׁ (vv. 3, 5, 9). In vv. 1–3 God is pictured in his transcendent holiness. He is separated in his role as king over all the earth. In vv. 4–5 God loves justice and does what is right and just. This is to say God is consecrated to his own absolute moral purity.<sup>53</sup> Thus, because God is majestically and morally holy, he "is the great Separatist."<sup>54</sup> God's perfection of holiness is the necessary foundation for the development of holiness in his people.<sup>55</sup> With this as the basis, we need to consider how this has an impact on his people.

#### THE HOLINESS OF GOD'S PEOPLE

Predicated upon his own holiness, God has been separating out for himself since creation a people to follow, in faith, his pattern of holiness. God's concern for a holy people is concisely commanded in 1 Peter 1:16: "You shall be holy, for I am holy." What at times may be missed is that Peter is applying an Old Testament principle taken from passages like Leviticus 19:2: "You shall be holy [קָדוֹשׁ] for I the LORD your God am holy [קָדוֹשׁ]" (see also Lev 11:44). God's command to follow his pattern of holiness is of necessity a call to imitate his moral holiness, and God's people must separate from anything that hinders them from pursuing after moral holiness. Thus, God's desire was to

---

<sup>51</sup>Gordon R. Lewis and Bruce A. Demarest, *Integrative Theology*, 3 vols. in 1 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 1:225.

<sup>52</sup>See McCune, "The Self-Identity of Fundamentalism," p. 29; see also *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, s.v. "Holiness," by A. S. Wood, 3:174.

<sup>53</sup>Lewis and Demarest, *Integrative Theology*, 1:225.

<sup>54</sup>Pickering, *Biblical Separation*, p. 163.

<sup>55</sup>See McCune, "The Self-Identity of Fundamentalism," p. 29; and Moritz, *Be Ye Holy*, pp. 7–19.

call out a people who were separated from anything that God prohibited and exclusively devoted to God's moral character and will. This call to imitate God's moral holiness is the Old Testament principle that is foundational for the New Testament doctrine of ecclesiastical separation. In setting forth the Old Testament development of holiness in Israel, God's elect nation, we will draw upon the *qadash* word group, though not exclusively, and briefly show what God's expectations were for his "holy nation." The holiness of God's people may be organized into two theological units: God's election of Israel and God's prescribed requirements for Israel's holiness.

### God's Theocratic Election

God's theocratic election of Israel is an expression of separatism. God's holiness is reflected by his unconditional choice of Israel to be uniquely separated unto the LORD. Based upon his own holy and good pleasure (Deut 4:37), God separated Israel from all the peoples of the earth to make them his "holy people." This point is lucidly given in Deuteronomy 7:1–11. The basis of God's election is stated in the middle of this text in vv. 6–8: "For you are a holy [קִדְשִׁי] people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for His treasured possession<sup>56</sup> out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but because the LORD loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers, the LORD brought you out by a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt." The LORD's desire in his election of Israel was to separate Israel from all peoples of the earth in order to demonstrate that they were his "holy people," God's "treasured possession" (see also Exod 19:5–6).

What did God's desire with his election of Israel as his holy nation involve? This desire is stated negatively in vv. 1–5 and then positively in vv. 9–11. The negative aspect of God's desire, vv. 1–5, was militant and radical separatism:

When the LORD your God brings you into the land where you are entering to possess it, and clears away many nations before you, the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and

---

<sup>56</sup>The translation "his treasured possession," as found in the NIV, is preferable to NASB's "His own people." Support for a translation of the Hebrew text along the lines of the NIV may be found in Peter C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), p. 179.

stronger than you, and when the LORD your God delivers them before you and you defeat them, then you shall utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them and show no favor to them. Furthermore, you shall not intermarry with them; you shall not give your daughters to their sons, nor shall you take their daughters for your sons. For they will turn your sons away from following Me to serve other gods; then the anger of the LORD will be kindled against you and He will quickly destroy you. But thus you shall do to them: you shall tear down their altars, and smash their *sacred* pillars, and hew down their Asherim, and burn their graven images with fire.

If the idolatrous nations residing in Canaan were not exterminated, Israel would form alliances with them and Israel's sons and daughters would enter into marital relationships with idolaters. This would result in the holy nation becoming an unholy nation of apostates. The only way to avoid becoming apostate was to repudiate "inclusivistic" alliances. To avoid the implantation of the seeds of apostasy, the enemy had to be completely eradicated. The negative side of holiness is complete separation from whatever God prohibits.

The book of Numbers indicates how inclusiveness leads to the ruination of holiness. In response to the king of Moab's offer of riches, the false prophet Balaam attempted to pronounce a curse on Israel. However, God sovereignly intervened and Balaam consequently pronounced a blessing on Israel (Num 22–24). To acquire Balak's offer of riches, Balaam devised a subtler plan to eliminate Israel as a threat to Moab. By associating with the Moabites, developing improper relationships with their women, and worshipping false gods (Num 25:1–9; 31:1–24), God's holy nation was corrupted "through the counsel of Balaam" (Num 31:16). While Balaam could not pronounce a curse upon Israel, he was able to corrupt them through his inclusivistic approach. On three different occasions in the New Testament (2 Pet 2:15–16; Jude 11; Rev 2:14), Balaam's type of ministry is condemned. God's separatistic holiness is incited against the inclusivistic approach of mixing true religion with false religion.<sup>57</sup>

Having examined the negative aspect of God's election of Israel, we need to look at the positive aspect in Deuteronomy 7:9–11:

Know therefore that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments; but repays those who hate Him to their faces, to destroy them; He will not delay with him who hates Him, He will repay him to his face. Therefore, you shall keep the commandment and the statutes and the judgments which I

---

<sup>57</sup>Pickering, *Biblical Separation*, p. 170.

am commanding you today, to do them.

To persevere as God's holy nation, Israel had to love their covenant LORD and to keep his commandments. The positive side of holiness was consecration to their holy God and his moral law.

In the final analysis, Israel's election is a separation from the nations unto the Lord. Based upon God's electing purposes, the theocratic nation "is a separated people—separated unto the Lord—and therefore is holy not first of all because of any virtue but simply because of its set-apartness."<sup>58</sup>

### God's Requirements for Holiness

Because God's electing purposes separated Israel from the other nations to be his holy nation, Israel was to demonstrate God's electing purposes by following his prescribed will for holiness. God's prescriptive requirements for holiness were written in the Mosaic Covenant. If the separated nation was to faithfully follow their Covenant Lord who is majestically and morally holy, they must necessarily approach God in terms of the holiness that he requires. God prescribed his standards of holiness in the Mosaic Covenant. God gave the Mosaic Covenant to symbolize his election of Israel. The Mosaic Covenant is a suzerain-vassal treaty, expressing the conditions that the Suzerain offered his vassal Israel. If Israel would follow the Mosaic Covenant, then they would be God's "treasured possession," "a kingdom of priests and a holy [קִדְוָה] nation" (Exod 19:5–6). In Exodus 19, Israel positively responded to the LORD's covenant offer: "all that the LORD has spoken we will do" (v. 8). In effect, Israel was formally acknowledging that they were willing to follow all of God's admonitions and prohibitions set forth in the Mosaic Covenant.

The Mosaic Covenant has two expressions in the Pentateuch. The first expression is known as the Sinai Covenant, and it is the written expression of the Mosaic Covenant for the first generation of Israelites who left Egypt. In its strictest sense, the Sinai Covenant is found in Exodus 20–23, but it is extended to include the remainder of Exodus through Leviticus 26, with Leviticus 27 serving as an appendix and the book of Numbers as a historical recounting of Israel's life under the Sinai Covenant during their wilderness wanderings. The connection of Leviticus 26 with the preceding material is precisely stated in v. 46: "These are the statutes and ordinances and laws which the LORD established between Himself and the sons of Israel through Moses at Mount Sinai." This conditional covenant with its detailed regulations and

---

<sup>58</sup>*Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, s.v. "Holiness," by J. R. Williams, p. 515.

restrictions was given to Moses at Mount Sinai.<sup>59</sup> The second expression is the Deuteronomic Covenant and is the application of the Mosaic Covenant for the second generation of Israelites who would live in the promised land of Canaan. This conditional covenant is found in the book of Deuteronomy. Both expressions of the Mosaic Covenant were intended to make Israel a “kingdom of priests and a holy nation.” Therefore, excluding the introduction to the Pentateuch, Genesis, the Pentateuch focuses on God’s elect nation living under the prescribed conditions for holiness as outlined in the Mosaic Covenant.

Of specific interest for this essay is that, out of the 842 Old Testament uses of the *qadash* word group, approximately 350 are found in those books containing the Mosaic Covenant, Exodus to Deuteronomy.<sup>60</sup> While some of these reflect truth about God’s holy character, many of the 350 uses of the *qadash* family of words focus on the cultic and moral requirements for Israel to develop as a holy nation. Under the Mosaic Covenant, rituals of holiness were prescribed when sacrifices were offered. Israel had many holy occasions, such as the Sabbath and holy feasts. The priests had holy garments, and the high priest’s breastplate was inscribed with “Holy to the LORD.” Israel had holy water and holy money. A dominant use of the *qadash* word group pertains to cultic and ritual aspects of holiness presented in the Mosaic Covenant.<sup>61</sup> While Leviticus 17–25 includes cultic aspects of holiness, the context focuses on the moral aspects of holiness.<sup>62</sup> In these chapters Israel is called upon to obey all of God’s law in every aspect of life in order to be “be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy” (Lev 19:2). Thus, at the beginning of the Old Testament canon, we can see that God had a significant concern for producing a people who would reflect his moral holiness.<sup>63</sup> This suggests that a substantial reason for God electing Israel and giving them the Mosaic Covenant was to produce a people who reflect his holiness. Thus, the message of the

---

<sup>59</sup>For a concise discussion of the Sinai Covenant, see Eugene H. Merrill, “A Theology of the Pentateuch,” in *A Biblical Theology of the Old Testament*, ed. Roy B. Zuck (Chicago: Moody Press, 1991), p. 35.

<sup>60</sup>Statistics taken from *TLOT*, s.v. “קִדְּשׁ,” 3:1107.

<sup>61</sup>*New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, s.v. “ἅγιος,” by H. Seebass, 2:226.

<sup>62</sup>See *Holman Bible Dictionary*, s.v. “Holiness,” p. 661. It is beyond the parameters of this article to deal with the complexities associated with the differences between the “holy” and “common” as well as “clean” and “unclean.” For a treatment of these issues, see *NIDOTTE*, s.v. “Clean and Unclean,” by Richard E. Averbeck, 4:477–86.

<sup>63</sup>*Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, s.v. “Holy, Holiness,” by M. William Ury, p. 342.

Mosaic Covenant is “be holy, because I am holy” (Lev 11:44).

The holy God’s separation of Israel from all other nations was to be mirrored in Israel’s separatistic holiness. Along a similar line, Frame has indicated that “Israel’s holiness, like God’s, involves both separation and moral purity. They are separated from all other nations as God’s people (Deut. 7:1–6), and they are to image God’s ethical perfection (Lev. 19:1).”<sup>64</sup> The holy regulations and restrictions built into the Mosaic Covenant were designed to make a statement about Israel’s separation to God. As the Mosaic Covenant was set up to reflect God’s separation of Israel, so his law was designed to reflect Israel’s separation to God. If Israel were committed to the God of holiness, then they would consistently separate from the forms of evil God prohibited and show devotion to the forms of holiness God commanded. In fact, the principle of separation provides a rationale that harmonizes the diverse laws found in Exodus to Deuteronomy.

Why does God prohibit planting two different kinds of seed in a vineyard? What is so sinful about wearing clothes woven together from two different kinds of material (Lev 19:19)? When fruit trees were initially planted in a vineyard, why were Israelites forbidden to eat any fruit from the trees during their first three years of fruit bearing and then required to dedicate the fourth year of fruit to their Covenant Lord (Lev 19:23–24)? To the modern reader, these types of laws may seem rather arbitrary and even ridiculous. To complicate this scenario even further, why were some animals considered clean and others unclean? Leviticus 11 provides a list of clean and unclean animals. In this list, the Lord established criteria to determine whether an animal was clean or unclean. Animals that have split hoofs and chew their food thoroughly<sup>65</sup> were considered clean. Since sheep and cattle meet this requirement, they were considered clean and therefore could be eaten. However, animals that did not have one or the other were considered unclean. Rabbits chew their food thoroughly, yet do not have split hoofs. Therefore, rabbits were considered unclean and could not be eaten. Pigs have split hoofs, yet do not chew their food thoroughly. Therefore, pigs were regarded as unclean and could not be eaten. However, what ultimately makes an animal that has split hoofs and

---

<sup>64</sup>Frame, *The Doctrine of God*, p. 28.

<sup>65</sup>The expression translated throughout Lev 11 as “chews the cud” is generally interpreted in light of its current use to describe an animal, like the cow, that swallows its food very well, swallows it, temporarily stores it, regurgitates it, re-chews it, swallows it and finally digests it. This interpretation is more precise than what the Hebrew expression suggests. The Hebrew expression is best taken as a reference to animals that thoroughly chew their food (see the helpful discussion by Gordon J. Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus*, NICOT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979], pp. 171–72).

chews its food thoroughly clean? What makes an animal lacking in one or the other unclean? Various explanations have been suggested to explain the differences reflected by these types of laws, especially the laws related to clean and unclean animals.<sup>66</sup>

While aspects of these various explanations may have some merit, the segment of the Mosaic Covenant found in Leviticus 19–20 provides an explicit rationale for correlating these laws. At the beginning and end of these two chapters, the Lord sets parameters for his various laws with “be holy, for I, the LORD...am holy” (Lev 19:2, 20:26). At various points in these chapters God punctuates his various laws with “I am the LORD your God” (19:2, 3, 4, 10, 25, 31, 34, 36; 20:7, 24). God’s repeated emphasis certainly gives the impression that Israel’s covenant relationship with their Lord required them to mirror his holiness in their lifestyle. At the conclusion of Leviticus 20, Moses develops this more fully in his theological explanation in vv. 22–26:

You are therefore to keep all My statutes and all My ordinances and do them, so that the land to which I am bringing you to live will not spew you out. Moreover, you shall not follow the customs of the nation which I will drive out before you, for they did all these things, and therefore I have abhorred them. Hence I have said to you, You are to possess their land, and I Myself will give it to you to possess it, a land flowing with milk and honey. I am the LORD your God, who has separated [בָּרַדְל] <sup>67</sup> you from the peoples. You are therefore to make a distinction [בָּרַדְל] between the clean animal and the unclean, and between the unclean bird and the clean; and you shall not make yourselves detestable by animal or by bird or by anything that creeps on the ground, which I have separated [בָּרַדְל] for you as unclean. Thus you are to be holy [קָדוֹשׁ] to Me, for I the LORD am holy [קָדוֹשׁ]; and I have set you apart [בָּרַדְל] from the peoples to be Mine.

The laws enumerated in Leviticus 19–20 reflect on Israel’s position as a nation separated unto their Covenant Lord. Israel’s sovereign and holy Suzerain despised the wicked lifestyle of the Canaanites and desired that Israel’s lifestyle reflect a holy separation unto him. Therefore, as McCune has said, “Separatism was *a way of life*, not just a matter of food, seed, animals, and garments. Their relationship to God and the other nations was depicted in these graphic visual aids. What probably provoked scorn and ridicule from others was a badge of honor for them. The principle of separation was woven by God into

---

<sup>66</sup>For a discussion of these, see *ibid.*, pp. 165–71.

<sup>67</sup>The verb בָּרַדְל, to “be separate,” is used four times in Lev 20:24–26. This is somewhat synonymous with the verb קָדַשׁ (see *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, s.v. “Holiness,” by David P. Wright, 3:237).

their social structure, into the very warp and woof of everyday life.”<sup>68</sup> Consequently, Israel’s lifestyle was to be characterized by a separatistic holiness: separation from all that God prohibits and a devotion to all that God commands.

How involved were God’s requirements for separation? And how involved was devotion to God’s commands? God’s prohibitions that required separation may range from touching an unclean object that made a person unclean until evening to those activities that required permanent separation by death. A commitment to follow the detailed commands for holiness as outlined in the Mosaic Covenant reflects a full devotion to God.<sup>69</sup> Some forms of uncleanness lasted for only a day. If any person sat on an object, such as a bed, that had become unclean from contact with a bodily discharge, the person who sat on the unclean object became unclean. The person made unclean through contact with an unclean object was required to wash his clothes and bathe in water. This person was considered “unclean until evening” (Lev 15:1–5), and this state of uncleanness prohibited him from going to the Tabernacle until the evening.<sup>70</sup> Leviticus 15 describes more extensive forms of uncleanness that could last for longer periods of time and also require sin and burnt offerings. More severe forms of uncleanness, such as infectious skin diseases (Lev 13–14), required an infected person to live outside the camp. There are other forms of uncleanness that required cleansing procedures and other prohibitions. In Leviticus 12, after an Israelite woman gave birth to a boy, she was prohibited for 40 days from touching any thing holy and from going to the Tabernacle. An Israelite woman followed the same pattern of separation with the birth of a daughter but this period of separation lasted 80 days rather than the 40 for a boy. When the period of her

---

<sup>68</sup>McCune, “Ecclesiastical Separation,” p. 9.

<sup>69</sup>My purpose in this article has not been to deal with an Israelite’s initial surrender in saving faith to the God of the Covenant and how this is tied in with the Old Testament sacrificial system. In light of Paul’s comments in Romans 4 about the role of saving faith in the life of Abraham and David (Paul draws from Gen 15:6 and Ps 32:1–2), I understand that genuine Old Testament believers were initially saved by faith and this was accompanied by the theocratic requirement for bringing an animal sacrifice. God viewed this type of faith in light of Christ’s vicarious atonement. Predicated upon Christ’s infinite sacrifice, the Old Testament believer was eternally saved. For genuine Old Testament believers, the overall emphasis of the Mosaic sacrificial system and ritual requirements for holiness is analogous to progressive sanctification in the New Testament believer’s life. For a helpful article on this subject, see John S. Feinberg, “Salvation in the Old Testament” in *Tradition and Testament: Essays in Honor of Charles Lee Feinberg*, ed. John S. and Paul D. Feinberg (Chicago: Moody Press, 1981), pp. 39–77.

<sup>70</sup>NIDOTTE, “Clean and Unclean,” 4:485.



uncleanness was complete, she was required to present a burnt offering and a sin offering to a priest at the Tabernacle. Moses precisely describes this procedure, and he even associates the uncleanness with the discharge of blood. While we clearly see in Leviticus 12 that the difference between 40 days and 80 days is a gender issue, Moses never provides a theological explanation for the difference.<sup>71</sup> In contrast to other nations, these types of distinctions reflect that separatism was a way of life for godly Israelites (Lev 20:24–26), and godly Israelites had a Spirit-given desire to follow all of God’s commands because they were devoted to their holy Suzerain.<sup>72</sup>

To protect the moral and theological integrity of God’s holy people, God required capital punishment for gross sexual and religious violations of the Mosaic Covenant. Moral violations requiring capital punishment include some of these: cursing or striking one’s parents (Exod 21:15, 17), violations of the Sabbath (Exod 31:14–17; 35:2), adultery and other immoral sexual perversions (Lev 20:10–21), a false witness in a capital case (Deut 19:16–21), blasphemy (Lev 24:14, 16, 23), witchcraft (Lev 20:27), false pretension to prophecy (Deut 13:1–15, 18–20), and others.<sup>73</sup> We will briefly look at three examples of capital crimes to show their connection with Israel’s practice of separatistic holiness.

First, according to Deuteronomy 13:1–5, if an Old Testament prophet’s predictions come to pass yet he encourages fellow Israelites to worship false gods (“Let us go after other gods, whom you have not known, and let us serve them,” v. 2), the prophet has shown his true nature and consequently must be executed. This very point was made in v. 5: “But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he has counseled rebellion against the LORD your God

---

<sup>71</sup>See Wenham, *Leviticus*, pp. 187–88.

<sup>72</sup>Since all genuine Israelite believers possessed a sinful nature, they were still prone to follow sinful practices and in fact did sin constantly. However, their holy God instituted the sacrificial system to provide sacrifices to atone for their sinful actions. Believing Israelites followed God’s sacrificial requirements. When an Israelite genuinely repented and his repentance was accompanied by the right sacrifice, God forgave his sins. Thus believing Israelites were forgiven sinners who followed God’s requirements set up in the sacrificial system to atone for sin. For an Israelite who rebelliously rejected the Mosaic Covenant, God made no provisions for sacrifice; and even if a covenant-rejecting Israelite would be in a position to offer a sacrifice, perhaps as a result of his position in the theocracy—as was the case with Saul—God did not accept his sacrifice (e.g., Ps 51). Those who defiantly rejected the Covenant were to be cut off from the covenant community without any hope of redemption, as was the case when Nadab and Abihu were permanently cut off in Lev 10.

<sup>73</sup>*International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, rev. ed., s.v. “Punish,” by J. K. Grider and G. L. Knapp, 3:1052–53.

who brought you from the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of slavery, to seduce you from the way in which the LORD your God commanded you to walk.” If Israel was God’s separate nation, why did he ultimately raise up this type of prophet? He did this to give Israel a barometer to test their holiness. Verses 3–4 state it like this: “you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams; for the LORD your God is testing you to find out if you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. You shall follow the LORD your God and fear Him; and you shall keep His commandments, listen to His voice, serve Him, and cling to Him.” While God speaks in human terms, he does not need to know what was in Israel’s heart, he already knew. Rather, his intention is to show Israel what was in their own hearts (cf. Jer 17:9–10), and to challenge Israel to be completely devoted to him. Idolatrous practices are an insidious religious cancer and as such it must be completely eradicated: “So you shall purge the evil from among you” (v. 5). How much did Israel love their Suzerain? Their response to apostate prophets gave an answer. Because of the incipient danger in allowing a conducive milieu for apostasy, God required a permanent separation from apostate prophets.

Second, a lifestyle of separatism needed to be practiced among those most intimately associated with an Israelite. What if an Israelite’s closest friends and loved ones became involved in some form of false worship? The answer is provided in Deuteronomy 13:6–11. A source of temptation for idolatry may come from those an Israelite loved the most: “If your brother, your mother’s son, or your son or daughter, or the wife you cherish, or your friend who is as your own soul, entice you secretly, saying, ‘Let us go and serve other gods’ (whom neither you nor your fathers have known, of the gods of the peoples who are around you, near you or far from you, from one end of the earth to the other end)” (vv. 6–7). In this type of situation, the Israelite being enticed had to make sure that his loved one was stoned and, in fact, the tempted Israelite had to lead the way in the actual execution of his loved one: “You shall not yield to him or listen to him; and your eye shall not pity him, nor shall you spare or conceal him. But you shall surely kill him; your hand shall be first against him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people. So you shall stone him to death because he has sought to seduce you from the LORD your God who brought you out from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery” (vv. 8–10).<sup>74</sup> To lead the way in executing an apostate loved

---

<sup>74</sup>Some have argued that, though the Old Testament prophets vociferously attacked the apostasy within Israel, they nevertheless did not separate from Israel with its

one is an acid test of one's love for God. While we have seen in Deuteronomy 13:5 that execution was necessary to purge out the evil, Moses provides a practical reason why public stoning was necessary: "Then all Israel will hear and be afraid, and will never again do such a wicked thing among you" (v. 11). This type of public execution puts the fear of God into the heart of weaker professing believers who are more prone to be lead astray. From the human perspective, if Israel had consistently practiced this type of separation, they might have avoided becoming an apostate nation.

Third, when an Israelite was aware of a fellow Israelite worshipping Molech by offering child sacrifices and he did nothing to expose his sinning friend's idolatrous aberrations, he put himself in the position to be judged by God. This is the situation described in Leviticus 20:1–5. If an Israelite was involved in this type of false worship, the people of the community were to stone him. Molech worship was a detestable practice found in Palestine that required children to be offered to Molech.<sup>75</sup> According to v. 3, this practice defiled the LORD's sanctuary and profaned his "holy [שֶׁדָּם] name." Since prosecution was left to the initiative of individual Israelites, it was easy to look the other way, "and let sleeping dogs lie. Indeed, those most likely to know about someone's apostasy to Molech would be close neighbors and members of the family, who would naturally be most loath to prosecute. But loyalty to God must override ties of blood and friendship."<sup>76</sup> An Israelite who had been regenerated by God's Spirit would demonstrate his absolute devotion to the Lordship of his God by practicing whatever form of separation God required and to whomever it had to be applied.

Having surveyed our second theological argument about God's standards for holiness as prescribed in the Mosaic Covenant, we have attempted to demonstrate that the Mosaic requirements involved every

---

apostate tendencies in order to remain as witnesses within Israel. In my understanding this compares apples and oranges, as Pickering has stated: "It proves nothing, however, with regard to the validity of Biblical separation. The prophets were members of a theocracy, a state governed by God. In such an entity the political and the religious were bound together. Today, however, there is no comparable body.... The New Testament church is a free society, composed of those who voluntarily unite with it in response to God's saving grace and to His instruction through His Word. No New Testament mandate binds bodies of believers to one another in a visible organization" (*Biblical Separation*, p. 173).

<sup>75</sup>For more information on Molech worship, see Wenham, *Leviticus*, p. 259. Molech worship is strongly condemned a number of times in the Old Testament: Lev 18: 21, 1 Kgs 11:7; 2 Kgs 23:10; Jer 32:35.

<sup>76</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 278.

fabric of life for the Israelite. What links together the various aspects of the Mosaic Covenant is Israel's "set-apartness." Israel's prescribed way of life was one of separatism.

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this article was to present the Old Testament evidence affirming that God's holiness is the basis for the development of holiness in Israel. In developing this purpose, we initially examined the holiness of God. The argumentation about God's holiness revolved around an examination of the *qadash* ("holiness") family of words. The range of uses in this word group reflects the concepts of separation from evil to good or from common to holy use and of the basic nature of holiness. It was seen from the semantic analysis that God is majestically and morally holy. God's majestic holiness refers to the inviolable distinction between the Creator and the creation. God's moral holiness is his "self-affirming purity." Since it is impossible for anything in the created realm to imitate God's majestic holiness, God's elect nation was called to imitate his moral holiness.

In the explication of this article's purpose, we next examined the development of holiness in God's theocratic nation around two theological principles: God's election of Israel and his prescribed requirements for Israel. Based primarily upon Deuteronomy 7:1–11, the argument was that God's theocratic election of Israel was an expression of separatism. As God's elect nation, Israel was God's "treasured possession" and a "kingdom of priests and a holy nation." Israel's election was a separation from the nations unto the Lord. With the second theological principle, attention was given to God's prescriptive requirements for holiness being written in the Mosaic Covenant, as expressed in Exodus to Deuteronomy. Based upon Leviticus 20:24–26, a proper understanding of separatism links together the diverse cultic and moral aspects of the Mosaic Covenant. The holy regulations and restrictions built into the Mosaic Covenant were designed to make a statement about Israel's separation to God. Though the Israelite nation as a group living under the dispensation of law ultimately rejected their separatistic position, God still redeemed his own, individual Israelites that faithfully separated from anything that hindered their pursuit of the moral holiness that their God desired. Because Old Testament believers genuinely loved their Covenant Lord, they were devoted to whatever the LORD prescribed as holy and separated from whatever he prohibited. They were a people marked by this type of holiness, because God said "be holy for I the LORD your God am holy" (Lev 11:44). A principle that transcends all dispensations is that God's holiness is the basis for the development of holiness in his people.