SESSION 15 – REVELATION CHAPTER 4 – PART II

[4]Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and seated on the thrones were twenty-four elders, clothed in white garments, with golden crowns on their heads… [8]And 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 4:4, 8 ESV)

I. THE HEAVENLY THRONE ROOM AND DIVINE WORSHIP

A. John observers the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders around the throne. These continue the visionary unfolding of Yahweh's Divine Council. In the last session we looked into the mysterious Cherubim as seen by Ezekiel. Here we see the six-winged living beings and the twenty-four elders.

B. We see an enigmatic reference to Yahwe's *elders* in Isaiah 24:23
[23]Then the moon will be humiliated and the sun ashamed, For Yahweh of hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, And His glory will be before His elders. (Isa. 24:23 LSB)
Taken together with the ascent passage from Exodus 24 that included the Seventy Elders (see last session), the heavenly pattern unfolds that in the Divine Council there are 24 Elders around the throne, and the 70 Elders of Israel reflected that pattern on earth. This is clear from the Greek *gerousia (council of elders)* used in the LXX of Exodus 24:9. The Hebrew root is *zaqen* and is the parallel to the Greek *presbyteros* translated *elder* in Acts 14:21:

[21]And after [Paul and Bar-Nabba] had appointed elders for them in each church, with prayer and fasting they entrusted them to the Lord in whom they had come to believe. (Acts 14:21 NRSVue)

We see then the twenty-four elders around the throne, the seventy elders of Israel (reflective of the Seventy Nations under the leadership of the Israel of God in their ascension), and each church having elders appointed for them. The word later was transliterated to presbyters, but the meaning is the same. It is part of the patter of the Divine Council in heaven. (See: Acts 15:2,4,6,22,23:16:4;20:17;21:18;1Tim. 5:17,19; Titus 1:5; *James 5:14*; 1 Pet. 5:1,5). There is a direct place for Elders in the New Covenant Church – without which the assembly is incomplete. *One implication* is the connection to the Divine Council in Heaven. Beale notes this very idea,

Remembering that in the letters the angels were identified as representatives of the seven churches and that in Daniel 10–12 angels represent nations, the elders here are to be identified as angelic beings representing the church as a whole, including the saints of the OT.[1]

[1] G. K. Beale and David H. Campbell, Revelation: A Shorter Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2015), 102.

To be part of the Family of God means *more* than we have ever considered (especially in the Evangelical-Charismatic wing/faction of the *Church*). There is *majestic influence* we have been bereft of. We do not pray to these beings. But if Yahweh Himself permits by His own will, decisions and actions through them, *then are they not all ministering spirits, sent to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation* (Heb. 1:13)?

C. Beale further points to the Tabernacle of David and the *order of worship* he instituted in the 24 orders of priests that led worship before Yahweh,

> There have been a variety of identifications of these elders. The number twenty-four is significant. As the picture here is of the throne room in the heavenly temple, the elders may be based on David's twenty-four orders of priests (1 Chron. 24:3–19), twenty-four Levitical gatekeepers (1 Chron. 26:17–19), and twenty-four Levitical worship leaders (1 Chron. 25:6–31), in which case they represent the church at worship. In light of Rev. 21:12–14 (where the apostles and patriarchs are mentioned together in relation to the new Jerusalem), it likely also refers to the sum of the twelve patriarchs and the twelve apostles who, taken together, represent the church in its character as a universal priesthood of believers. The elders cannot be classified as actual redeemed saints, however, for they are clearly distinguished from the multitude of the saved in 7:9–17 (see on 7:13–14). And the fact that they present the prayers of the saints in 5:8 and sing of the redeemed in the third person also distinguishes them from believers.[2]

D. Beale then unpacks more insight and provides tremendous understanding of the holistic nature of the relationship of the Assembly in Heaven and corresponding one on earth,

> > If the four living creatures are heavenly representatives of all animate life throughout creation (as most interpreters think), then the elders are probably heavenly representatives of God's people. The four living beings represent general creation and the elders the elect of God's special creation. Also suggesting an angelic identification of the elders is the fact that the angel who reveals the visions of the book to John is referred to as "a fellow-servant of yours and of your brethren the prophets and of those who heed the words of this book," all of whom are to worship together (22:9).
> > Therefore, the reality being conveyed is that the church is represented in heaven by powerful heavenly beings who attend the throne of God, and who therefore hold great power (they have their own thrones and wear golden crowns), which they exercise on our behalf. The elders are angels who operate in a priestly capacity by presenting the prayers of the saints to God (compare 5:8 and 8:3) and by interpreting heavenly visions to people (compare 5:5; 7:13 and 10:4, 8; 19:9; 22:8). This further reflects their Levitical priestly identification noted above, especially since the throne room vision of chs. 4–5 is also to be understood as occurring in the heavenly temple (note that the visions of Ezekiel 1 and Isaiah 6, both alluded to throughout chs. 4–5, are set within the context of a heavenly temple). In this light, v. 4 is a development of the ideas of the previous chapters concerning the saints' participation in a heavenly temple (1:13, 20; 2:12) and possession of crowns, white clothing, and

[2] G. K. Beale and David H. Campbell, Revelation: A Shorter Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2015), 101–102.

> dominion, which in their fullness will be granted them if they persevere (cf. 2:10, 26–27; 3:4–5, 11, 18, 21). As in chs. 1–3, the church is pictured in such angelic guise to remind its members that already a dimension of their existence is heavenly, that their real home is not with the unbelieving "earth-dwellers," and that they have heavenly help and protection in their struggle to obtain their reward and not be conformed to their pagan environment. One of the purposes of the church meeting on earth in its weekly gatherings (as in, e.g., 1:3) is to be reminded of its heavenly existence and identity, and this to occur in part apparently as it models its worship on the angels' and the heavenly church's worship of the exalted Lamb, as vividly portrayed in chs. 4–5.[3]

E. Within close proximity to the Twenty-Four Elders are the Four Living Creatures. They each have six wings and are full of eyes around and within. Beale hints that these particular divine beings are a different order from the Cherub and Seraph. While this is possible, it is also within scope John combines both characteristics from the two.

There are both similarities and differences between John's vision and the related visions of Ezekiel and Isaiah. Ezekiel saw similar creatures (cherubim); each had four faces with many eyes but only four wings, which formed part of the base of the throne (Ezek. 1:1–28; 10:1–22). Isaiah saw six-winged creatures called seraphim which stood above the throne (Isa. 6:1–7). The living beings here are said to be in the center and around the throne or in the midst of the throne, which probably means that they stood near it. This is elucidated further by noticing that later in the book the living beings fall down in worship before the throne (5:8; 19:4). The cherubim/seraphim-like angels and the creatures here would seem to represent a similar high order of angelic beings.[4]

F. What are we to make of the *eyes* of these beings being referenced twice (Rev. 4:6, 8). The point is to draw attention to this facet of their description in relation to their description as a lion, an ox, a man, and an eagle. Heiser points to Old Testament scholar Daniel Block's commentary on Ezekiel,

That "eyes" are part of the description of the wheels and/or cherubim is an important interpretive clue as to the meaning of Ezekiel's vision and John's use of that vision. Old Testament scholar Daniel Block notes that the word translated "eyes" (ʿayin) in Ezekiel 1:17–18 "had been used earlier for 'sparkle, gleam' (vv. 4, 16), and this may point the way to its interpretation here."34 "Sparkling" and "gleaming" are of course familiar descriptions for stars throughout ancient literature. Block elsewhere makes the important observation that the four faces of the cherubim in Ezekiel's vision correspond to the four signs for the cardinal direction points.35[5]

G. One truth we can extract from *'ayin* (gleaming, or eyes) when applied to Ezekiel's description of the Cherubim and their relationship to the Throne, is they are gleaming in the brightness of the glory of the multi-faceted jewels and the wheels on the throne. This describes the all-encompassing vision in every

[3] G. K. Beale and David H. Campbell, Revelation: A Shorter Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2015), 102–103.
[4] Ibid., p. 104
[5] Heiser, Michael. John's Use of the Old Testament in the Book of Revelation: Notes from the Naked Bible Podcast (pp. 102-103). Naked Bible Press. Kindle Edition.

direction and the direct relationship to the Seven Lampstand Assemblies that are the *eyes of Yahweh that travel to and fro among the earth:*

10"For who has despised the day of small things? But these seven will be glad when they see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel—these are the eyes of Yahweh which roam to and fro throughout the earth." (Zech. 4:10 LSB)

H. The four living beings or creatures follow a day-and-night timeframe in which they do not cease to offer the Qĕduššah, in Hebrew or the trisagion in Greek, "Holy, Holy, Holy." We see this high praise as the Seraphim call out to each other in Isaiah's vision in Isaiah 6:3:

3And one called out to another and said, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is Yahweh of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory." (Isa. 6:3 LSB)

Compared with John's recording we see *Yahweh of hosts* is the equivalent to *the Lord God Almighty*. Motyer makes the point in the language of *high and exalted* applies not only to Yahweh, but also His Servant: "God's sovereignty is real; he sits on a throne, in the seat of authority and power, high and exalted. In 52:13 the same paired words refer to the Lord's Servant; in 57:15, to the eternal God himself."[6]

Paul expounds this truth in his letter to the Philippian Assembly in speaking of Yahweh's Servant, Jesus,

9Therefore God exalted him even more highly and gave him the name that is above every other name, 10so that at the name given to Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Phil. 2:9-11 NRSVue)

I. John Oswalt writes,

> The statement that the seraphim were calling to each other is probably an indication that the singing was antiphonal, but it may also be a way of saying that they were delighting with one another in the glory of God (Ps. 145:11). The significance of the verbal element here ought not to be overlooked. The content of this experience is not merely numinous, emotive, and nonrational. Had God only wished to convey his otherness to Isaiah, that could have been done without words. But here the cognitive and rational element is introduced, providing one more indication that revelation does not come merely through raw experience, but also through divinely given cognitive interpretation of that experience (see also v. 7). Thus it is interesting that it is in response to the calling that the doorposts shook and the house filled with smoke.[7]
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> He continues in the ascribing of the word "*holy*" to Yahweh,

[6] J. Alec Motyer. The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary (Kindle Locations 2995-2996). InterVarsity Press. Kindle Edition.
[7] Oswalt, John N. The Book of Isaiah. Chapters 1/39 ... Grand Rapids, Mich. Eerdmans, 1986.

> But what did holy mean for him? …They all use the term as an adjective of deity, and they all use it to define that which pertains to the deity, but they do not define the term itself. It is evident, however, that what is holy is distinct from whatever does not pertain to deity. Thus, holiness is distinctness, the distinctness of the divine from all other things. …The remarkable thing about the OT conception of holiness is a function of the OT understanding of God's character. What was distinct about this deity was not so much his origin, his essence, or his numinous power. Rather, it was his attitude toward ethical behavior. Other nations had laws and they saw those laws as deriving from the deity…yet none of them saw those laws as being an essential expression of what made God to be God. But this is exactly what the OT says. The entire nation will be holy to God (Exod. 19:6), and they will manifest that special relationship through a particular species of ethical behavior. This is the meaning of the so-called Holiness Code in Leviticus. "You shall be holy as I am holy" (Lev. 19:1) does not refer to ritual purity but rather to ethical behavior. Thus for the Hebrews, holiness came to have a very particular ethical cast. To oppress the helpless was to profane God's name (Jer. 34:16). …To be holy was to behave ethically and to be unholy was, in an ultimate sense, not to be cultically impure, but to be ethically impure (Ezek. 36:22–32). So for Isaiah the announcement of God's holiness meant that he was in the presence of One distinct from—other than—himself. But for Isaiah as a Hebrew, it also meant that the terrifying otherness was not merely in essence but in character. Here was One ethically pure, absolutely upright, utterly true.
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> But was this statement merely about a god, or was it about the God? If this experience was the cause of Isaiah's emphasis upon God's holiness, may it not also be the cause of his emphasis upon God's uniqueness? Who is this sovereign who sits enthroned in a temple? He is the thrice holy, the holiest of all. He is the holy one. There is no other to whom that appellative can be justly given. This is the function of the threefold holy, the trisagion.34 It is the strongest form of the superlative in Hebrew. Its use here indicates that Israel's God is the most "godly" of all the gods.
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> Indeed, he alone deserves to be called holy, for as the second half of the poetic phrase indicates, his glory fills the entire earth.35 This statement indicates that God's presence (his glory, Exod. 40:34) is not restricted to a temple. But it is also a way of saying that the earth's abundance is merely a reflection of this God's being. As was said above, his being is profoundly ethical. Thus, where God's glory is manifested, there is judgment for sin, for the two cannot exist side by side (Ps. 29:1–9; 89:6–19 [Eng. 5–18]; Isa. 6:5; Josh. 7:19; Jer. 13:15–17; Amos 4:13; 5:8, 9; 9:5, 6).36 Micah makes a similar statement when he says that the Lord will come out of his temple to tread the high places of the earth (Mic. 1:2–3).[8]

J. The declaration of Yahweh's Holiness, and by virtue of *His Holiness*, His complete and absolute *Other-than-ness*, required a strict adherence to *ritual purity* both among the Levites and His people. This extension of *other-than-ness* and by virtue of His attribute of Holiness is to be an integral part of His people's life. Holiness results in purity; the attribute in action.

[8] Ibid. verse 3

[15] Instead, as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct, [16] for it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy." (1 Pet. 1:15-16 NRSVue)

Excursus: Holiness and Ritual Purity in Torah

Dr. Jennifer Rosner writes in her book *Finding Messiah* the connection of holiness and the Holiness of Yahweh and the established Torah Commandments regarding ritual purity and how the *unclean* were to be identified and treated. She writes,

> First, it now becomes clear that Matthew 9: 18-26 (and its parallel passages, Luke 8: 41-56 and Mark 5: 22-43) is focused on issues of ritual purity. What the English translation subtly conceals is that the woman's "bleeding" is an issue of abnormal genital discharge, which has rendered her impure (and thus unable to enter the temple courts, and possibly the city of Jerusalem) for its entire duration. What a loss, given the Jerusalem temple's significance for worship and religious life! What are we to make of this woman touching Jesus' tassels? According to the laws of ritual purity, such contact should have resulted in Jesus entering into a state of ritual impurity. In reality, the exact opposite happens. Rather than her impurity transferring to him, he restores her to a state of ritual purity. Similarly, the synagogue leader's daughter represents corpse impurity and thus another force opposing Israel's life and well-being. And again, this portion of the passage is rife with touch language. In Matthew 9: 18, the synagogue leader beckons Jesus to come "put his hand" on his daughter, who has just died. When Jesus finally reaches his house, Jesus raises his daughter by "taking her by the hand" (Matthew 9: 25 author's translation). As if to prepare us for this episode, Jesus' healing of a man with lepra precedes this passage in all three Synoptic Gospels. There it is: Jesus confronting all three main sources of ritual impurity in the Gospels' unfolding story of his extraordinary ministry. In Matthew, the healing of the man with lepra is recounted in Matthew 8: 1-4, and it is notably the first recorded miracle in Matthew's Gospel (and, therefore, in the entire New Testament!). While Jesus' healings do not have a standard format, Matthew is intentional to note that, in this case, he "reached out his hand and touched the man" (Matthew 8: 3). Again, according to the Levitical purity system, this action should have resulted in Jesus contracting the man's ritual impurity. However, in what must have been a shocking and scandalous surprise for Jesus' Jewish onlookers, Jesus' holiness and purity flows outward and heals the man; in him, God's holiness is beginning to expand outward. Once the man is healed, Jesus commands him to follow the purification ritual specified in Leviticus 14. This detail makes it clear that Jesus wasn't disregarding the purity system and its intricacies; he was working within its parameters even as he was introducing something strikingly new. Ritual purity was a cornerstone of Second Temple Jewish life, and Jesus' actions reveal that he embodies a kind of contagious holiness that overcomes the sources of impurity that contaminate God's people. Without understanding how the ritual purity system works, and how Jesus' actions evidence the inbreaking of God's holiness into the world, we miss part of the New Testament's remarkable witness.

> Matthew is showing us that the tension between Israel's divinely commanded separateness (or guardedness) and Israel's vocation to bring God's holiness to the ends of the earth finds its resolution in the life and work of Jesus. In him, holiness overpowers the sources of impurity; abundant life overpowers the forces of death. The kingdom of God is breaking in, and this is what it looks like. Understanding the purity system gives us language for understanding how God's incarnation in Jesus represents both the continuation of God's story with Israel and a radically new chapter in that story. As demonstrated by his life and ministry, Jesus embodies a "concentrated and intensified form of the divine presence," 6 which is made especially evident through the invasive quality of his holiness. While contact with ritually unclean objects and persons threatened to defile Israel's holiness, Jesus' holiness flows outward into the impure world. Through him, the holiness embodied by Israel begins to ripple throughout creation, as it was always intended to do.[9]

When Jesus called His twelve to Himself in Matthew 10, He sent them out (*apostello)* and their message was the same as His: *"As you go, proclaim good news, 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.' Heal the sick; raise the dead; cleanse the lepers; cast out demons."* Among those to be addressed were those who were the most outcast; the lepers.

This disease in an especial manner rendered its victims unclean; even contact with a leper defiled whoever touched him, so while the cure of other diseases is called healing, that of leprosy is called cleansing… In Dt 24:8 there is a reference to the oral tradition concerning the treatment of lepers, without any details, but in Lev 13, 14 (PC) the rules for the recognition of the disease, the preliminary quarantine periods and the ceremonial methods of cleansing are given at length. It is worthy of note that neither here nor elsewhere is there any mention of treatment or remedy.[10]

> Among the Levitical commands in both determining if a person had leprosy and the corresponding actions, if found to have the disease, a life of isolation was the result of being declared *unclean* by the priest. And the *unclean* had no part of the community nor any part in the Tabernacle, nor worship, nor synagogue. They were *unclean*. It is this that is opposite of what is Holy. Heiser points out in his notes on Leviticus, the priest was not a doctor and was not making a medical diagnosis. Rather, this was an issue of ritual purity:
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> The priest is not a doctor. He's not even an ancient doctor. This should be one clue to tell us that since this is a concern of the priest, this has nothing to do with medical practice, principles, and diagnosis for us today. It has all to do with ritual impurity and being unfit to occupy sacred space.[11]
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> The person who was pronounced unclean would be sent outside of the camp into isolation so that he would not pollute others. The isolation protected sacred space. The unclean person had to tear their clothes and leave their hair unkempt. They were supposed to cover the lower part of their face and warn others to stay away by shouting "Unclean!"

[9] Jennifer M. Rosner. Finding Messiah (Jennifer M. Rosner) (Z-Library) (Kindle Locations 740-775). Kindle Edition.
[10] Alexandrian Macalister, "Leper, Leprosy," in The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, ed. James Orr et al. (Chicago: The Howard-Severance Company, 1915), 1867.
[11] S. Heiser, Michael. Notes on Leviticus: from the Naked Bible Podcast (p. 181). BlindSpot Press. Kindle Edition.

It's interesting that tearing one's clothes, covering one's face, and leaving one's hair unkempt were all actions performed in mourning rituals. We see this elsewhere in the Old Testament as signs of mourning someone's death. In this case, it's as if the person that has the skin disease is morning his or her own death. They considered themselves as the walking dead, but it's not that they would to die. Read through Leviticus 13. This wasn't something that would cause one to drop dead.

What these skin diseases in Leviticus 13 meant was that the afflicted would have to be permanently cut off from the Israelite camp, from sacred space, from the priesthood, and from the blessings of the covenant. The mourning rituals make sense because a life blessed by the true God was effectively made impossible for those who had this disease and were permanently isolated by it. This is another indication that when the person was healed, when it looked like he no longer had the skin condition, he would perform the ritual of cleansing to be readmitted to the community. He's not being forgiven for sin. The "cure" has nothing to do with medicine. The cure is to let this Israelite live among God's people so that he (or she) could partake of the blessings of the covenant. It was religious in nature. It was ritual that focused on sacred space and being part of the covenant community.

But what about the rationale? Leviticus' laws and rituals were about marking sacred space, maintaining the sanctity of that space, and protecting the presence of God from impurity. This is why you people were isolated. This is why people had to go through some of the sacrifices and offerings so that they would be "atoned" for, not for sin but they are made right in God's eyes to participate in sacred space by bringing their offerings to the priest. For order to be restored, the person afflicted had to be made correct through these rituals. If he resisted them, then he didn't want to do them, and that would prevent a right relationship between God and that person and, really, God and his people. We've seen other people suffer for not doing things the correct way, and it affected the whole community. But why would a person with a skin disease be a threat to sacred space? Why do they have to be removed?

Bodily discharges, contact with the dead, and the skin disease are all lumped into that one verse, and none of them are inherently unnatural or are about sin. They're all natural and largely unavoidable. The rationale for it has nothing do with God being displeased. The issue is an issue of imperfection. It's an issue of not being whole, of not being the way God made this person. There's something amiss with the body's function, as with blindness, lupus, or loss of a limb—physical handicaps. People are excluded from sacred space when there is something amiss about their wholeness as a person which involves their body. The idea is not to condemn that person, but to teach positively the perfection and completeness of God and the original creation order as the ideal. It's what God is to be associated with—Eden, the sacred space of the tabernacle. It's the cosmic mountain where God lives, and the space that is marked off as his must be associated with life and not death; with wholeness, not incompleteness…But life in this physical world, embodied world is never going to be all that it could be in relationship to the perfection of God. So these conditions of impurity, incompleteness, and un-wholeness are designed to teach that distinction.[12]

[12] S. Heiser, Michael. Notes on Leviticus: from the Naked Bible Podcast (pp. 184-190). BlindSpot Press. Kindle Edition.

The truth of separation of the *holy* from that which is impure or unclean is found in the New Testament and applied to the believer and the assembly in terms of words and actions as well as remaining free from those things that would prevent access to God.

[16]What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God, as God said, "I will live in them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. [17]Therefore come out from them, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch nothing unclean; then I will welcome you, [18]and I will be your father, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty." (2 Cor. 6:16-18 NRSVue)

Proximity to Yahweh requires an acknowledgement of separation from that which is *unclean* or *impure*. James applies Psalm 24:3-6 when he writes,

[7]Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. [8]Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. (James 4:7-8 NRSVue)

[3]Who may ascend into the mountain of Yahweh? And who may rise in His holy place? [4]He who has innocent hands and a pure heart, Who has not lifted up his soul to worthlessness And has not sworn deceitfully. (Psalm 24:3-4 LSB)

Drawing *near to God* is *ascending into* His Holy Mountain. It is rising or standing in *His Holy Place*. Both James and King David make it clear the boundary is *ritual purity*. It requires a cleansing of the hands and a purifying of the heart. David sets the image in contrast of either rising into Yahweh's Mountain, and thus into His Holy Place or having the soul rise or be lifted toward that which is worthless and profane; that which deceives or is counter(feit). In both cases, it is innocent or clean hands and a pure heart in which those who desire to approach God must have.

Purity of heart is *revealed* in thoughts and through speech and the actions that follow. Jesus said,

[10]Then he called the crowd to him and said to them, "Listen and understand: [11]it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but it is what comes out of the mouth that defiles." …[18]But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this is what defiles. [19]For out of the heart come evil intentions, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. [20]These are what defile a person, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile." (Matthew 15:10-20 NRSVue)

Mark expounds the inward defilement,

[21]For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come: sexual immorality, theft, murder, [22]adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, debauchery, envy, slander, pride, folly. [23]All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person." (Mark 7:21-23 NRSVue)

These correspond to the *works of the flesh* Paul outlines in Galatians 5,

[19]Now the works of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity, debauchery, [20]idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, [21]envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these. I

am warning you, as I warned you before: <u>those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God</u>. (Galatians 5:16-21 NRSVue)

James also provides insight into the process of becoming defiled,

[14]But one is <u>tempted by one's own desire</u>, being <u>lured and enticed by it</u>; [15]then, <u>when desire has conceived</u>, it <u>engenders sin</u>, and <u>sin, when it is fully grown, gives birth to death</u>. (James 1:14-15 NRSVue)

The conception of the thing desired is a product of temptation and lure by enticement. A good example is the fisherman drops the lure into the water to catch the fish. The fish, by nature, will be *enticed* by the right lure because it *desires* to eat the thing the lure represents. When the desire or drive to take the lure and the resulting entrapment produces the engagement of the fish with the lure and the desire is conceived as it takes it in. And then the trap is set and the fisherman reels it in.

In the same way a person has a desire for something and in this case, something that will result in defilement and separation from God and the community of believers. It becomes a lure and when the desire is acted on beginning with the thought it is conceived it produces sin, the result of which is death. And as we have seen, that which is dead is not to be touched lest it become *unclean*. Therein is the separation from the holy. Sin leads to ritual impurity.

The *only* solution is to come to Jesus and His infectious Holiness. One cannot remain in two simultaneous states. That person will either remain in sin, death, and separation, or come to Yahweh, through Yeshua and be made holy by His Holiness. In the eternal age, His Holiness will prevail over all creation.

[22] And I saw no temple in the city [the New Jerusalem], for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. [23] And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. [24] By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, [25] and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. [26] They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. [27] <u>But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life</u>. (Rev. 21:22-27 ESV)

The critical issue between the holy and the profane is then resolved in the sanctifying power of Yahweh's Word and Spirit and the application of the truth in the soul. Recognizing the process of *being saved* (1 Cor. 15:2; 2 Cor. 2:15) is a progressive experience throughout the life of the believer is important. Sanctification is not a *one-time* event. Rather, it is the result of the present tense work of the Holy Spirit and cooperating with Him as He washes the soul with Yahweh's Word (John 17:17,19; 16:13-15).

[25]Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her [26]<u>in order to make her holy by cleansing her with the washing of water by the word</u>, [27]so as to present the church to himself in splendor, <u>without a spot or wrinkle or anything of the kind</u>, so that <u>she may be holy and without blemish</u>. (Eph. 5:25-27 NRSVue)

Sanctification is the end or result of the action of faith in the means by which Yahweh's holiness is appropriated to *us* as we draw near to Him through Yeshua the Messiah.

43 I will meet with the Israelites there, and it [the Tent of Meeting] shall be sanctified by my glory; 44 I will consecrate (qds – Kadesh) the tent of meeting and the altar; Aaron also and his sons I will consecrate to serve me as priests. 45 I will dwell among the Israelites, and I will be their God. 46 And they shall know that I am the LORD their God, who brought them out of the land of Egypt that I might dwell among them; I am the LORD their God. (Ex. 29:43-46 NRSVue)

This leads us back to the *trisagion (Holy, Holy, Holy)* of Revelation 4:8. The Tent of Meeting, or the Tabernacle, is again the pattern of heaven on earth. The place of sacred space. The dwelling place of God. The reality of this truth is believers are now the Temple of God. The place of His indwelling Holy Spirit. John ascends into this reality he first saw when Messiah was Transfigured before him, James, and Peter, Elijah, and Moses. Yet here he is participating in the grand narrative and documenting it for all to read. Yahweh's desire is to dwell with men on planet earth. It began there; it will end there and resume the eternal state. And only those who actively participate in sanctification and holiness, eschewing ungodliness and worldly lusts can enter.

2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. (Rev. 21:2-3 ESV)