

# Notes for the Ekklēsia Meeting

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## Walking in Holy Devotion

by Dan Trygg

“That He would grant that we, being rescued from the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear,<sup>75</sup> in holiness and righteousness before Him all our days.” Luke 1:74-75

“Because You will not abandon My soul to Hades, nor allow Your Holy One to undergo decay.” Acts 2:27

“For it was fitting for us to have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens” Hebrews 7:26

“And we bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers,<sup>33</sup> this He has fulfilled to us their children by raising-up Jesus, as also it is written in the second Psalm, ‘You are My Son, today I have begotten You.’<sup>34</sup> But because He raised Him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, He has spoken in this way, ‘I will give to y’all the holy and trusting things of David.’” Acts 13:32-34

“...put on the new self, the one created according to God in righteousness and holiness of the truth.” Ephesians 4:24

“I want the men in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and dissension.” I Timothy 2:8

“For it is necessary for the overseer to be... devout...” Titus 1:7,8

I have been studying NT Greek for almost 40 years now, and I am continually learning or noticing new things. In researching the notes for last week’s study, I came across the Greek word, *hosios*, and its derivatives. These words occur ten times in the NT, and are often translated as “holy”, as in most of the passages listed above. There is a more common Greek word for “holy”, *hagios*, which means to “set apart from common use, and dedicate to a special purpose”. This root, and its derivatives, occur more than 260 times in the NT. It would be easy to skim over the top of these passages at the top of this page, and assume that the word “holy” in them is the same as this more common word. I have been doing it for over 40 years. It is not *hagios*, however. In each of these passages, the word translated as “holy”, “holiness” or “devout” is from *hosios*. **Instead of emphasizing separation from what is unclean or common, *hosios* is more descriptive of the devotion of the heart.** The half dozen lexicons I researched indicate that it refers to a heart of piety, to people who are faithful to apply themselves to honor, obey and draw near to God. **It refers to an “inner piety” expressed in a faithful drawing near to God in reverence and dependence**, a person who is faithfully *attending to the means and exercises that will promote intimacy with Him*. While “*hagios*” refers to *separation from sin and uncleanness*, “*hosios*” refers to *drawing near to God and living to please Him*. In the OT, God’s covenant love, translated as “steadfast love” or “lovingkindness”, is a translation of the Hebrew word, *hesed*. The word normally used to describe a healthy, pious, respectful and faithful response to God is the Hebrew word, *hasid*. Today’s Hasidic Jews took their name from this word. They consider themselves to be “the devout” or “the faithful”. The word, *hasid*, was regularly translated by “*hosios*” in the Greek Septuagint translation of the OT.

**The father of John the Baptist, Zacharias the priest, had been unable to speak for nine months**, after being told of John’s birth, because he had doubted the angel, Gabriel (Lk. 1). **After the angel’s words came to pass, Zacharias’ mouth was opened, and he began to praise God and prophesy.** He clearly understood that God was bringing about the salvation promised from ancient times. The Lord was raising up the Messiah, a powerful “horn of salvation”, in the house of David. This Messianic king would bring about “salvation from our enemies, and from the hand of all who hate us; to show mercy ...and to remember His covenant, the oath which He swore to Abraham... That He would grant that we, being rescued from the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear, in holiness (‘faithful piety’) and righteousness before Him all our days” (Lk. 1:67-75). **Zacharias was thinking of more than Jewish nationalism. He was thinking of the fulfillment of promises regarding a “new covenant” God intended to make with the house of Israel.** The Jews had failed miserably to keep the covenant God had made with them at Mt. Sinai. Their history was filled with chapter after chapter of idolatry and unfaithfulness. As God was warning of impending judgment, He also promised to establish a new covenant, a writing of His law upon the hearts of His people. **Because they would receive a new heart, and a new spirit, they would be able to keep God’s commandments.** Because their hearts would no longer be cold and stony, but alive toward God, the promise was that His Spirit would *cause* them to walk in His commandments (Ezk. 36:25-27). **Zacharias looked forward to the time when God’s people will indeed serve Him with true devotion and righteousness.**

**The next two passages describe the heart attitude of Jesus.** Acts 2:27 was a quotation from Psalm 16:10. This entire Psalm is one of my favorite passages. It really expresses the heart of faith and devotion to Yahweh. Verse 8 says, “I have set Yahweh continually before me; because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.” This is the basis for the peace and confidence in God expressed in verses 10 and 11. **Jesus knew that God would not abandon His soul to the grave, or let His body decay, because He had developed a walk of faith, intimacy and trust with**

**the Father.** This is an important lesson that comes from this study: **Jesus Himself was a devoted, faithful seeker after God.** In His human state, He was obligated to become like us in every respect (Heb. 2:17). This was so that He could be a merciful and faithful high priest, and so that He could offer Himself in our place as an atoning sacrifice to remove sin. This means that **Jesus Himself had to develop a relationship with His Father in heaven. He utilized the same methods and disciplines other people of devoted hearts employed to draw near to God,** and ready their hearts to be instructed by Him. **What methods did He use? He studied the scriptures.** It is clear that it was deeply imbedded in His conscious mind. He had read it, studied it, committed it to memory, and pondered and ruminated over it. This is clear from His teachings, which not only quote extensively from them, but clearly reflect an understanding and ease with them. **He gathered with others for corporate worship and instruction.** We know it was His custom to attend the synagogue. He attended the annual feasts, consistently remembering and acknowledging the acts of God in history. **He developed a deep, personal, consistent prayer life.** It was His custom to get alone for private prayer, regularly in the early mornings, and also at times of special need or significance. He also talked with God in the midst of daily activities, indicating a lively interaction with the Father about all aspects of life. **He fasted,** and **waited upon His Father** for guidance and empowerment. **He humbly subjected Himself to human authorities** in His life, **and faithfully carried out the responsibilities of a productive life of work.** Submission, integrity and hard work were key characteristics that were developed in life experience, and were later demonstrated in His ministry. As a righteous, obedient Jew, **He believed in and practiced the disciplines and obligations of tithing, paying the temple tax, and giving to the poor.** These disciplines were part of the covenant all Jews were to observe. Jesus certainly would have followed these prescriptions, and would have been more than generous, giving sacrificially and in faith. Because Jesus was devoted to God, He gave Himself to honor and pursue Him by these and other acts of service to God and people. The passage in Hebrews 7 describes Him as “devout, without evil-intent or fault, having separated Himself from sinners...”. In Psalm 1 fashion, **Jesus chose to separate Himself from the company and counsel of others who would be a negative spiritual influence.** This was a discipline in order to grow and mature. **He also surrounded Himself with serious-minded followers of God, for the purpose of healthy interaction and training.** Because Jesus was God the Son, the incarnate Word of God, we mistakenly suppose that He had some kind of natural uplink with the Father in heaven, and had no need to discipline Himself, order His life or His mind, or struggle to develop His spiritual life. This is not true. While He had no sin, He experienced human weakness and was tempted in every way as we are. **Jesus endured testing and hardship, and kept choosing to submit Himself to God in the midst of trials.** The Bible says, “Although He was a Son, He learned obedience through the things which He suffered” (Heb. 5:8). **It was the application of Jesus’ heart devotion into specific areas for discipline and growth, ...the endurance and consistency of this in the face of the difficulty and tests of human experience..., that enabled and prepared Him for His life’s work,** and makes Him a compassionate and fitting High Priest and Intercessor on our behalf today.

**The passage in Acts 13 declares the good news that God has fulfilled the covenant promises.** Not only did He raise up Jesus as the Messiah, but **because of Christ’s death and resurrection, an inner transformation of heart is available to us in Him. This is another way of speaking of the new covenant.** Attending the synagogue in Antioch in Pisidia, Paul was offered an opportunity to speak a word of exhortation to the congregation. He recounted their common Jewish history, the story of the exodus, the taking of the land under Joshua, the period of the judges, Samuel, Saul, and finally came to focus on David. **God had called David “a man after My heart, who will do all my will” (vs. 22). He was an outstanding man of devotion and faith,** and God had promised to bring the Messiah and Savior through his lineage. Jesus *is* this Messiah, and because God raised Him from the dead, no longer to decay, a new thing has been introduced into history. The promise to David is fulfilled, ...and *more* besides! **In Isaiah 55:1-3, God invites everyone who is thirsty to come to Him and find fullness and satisfaction.** Instead of pursuing vain things that do not satisfy, He exhorts us to listen *to Him*, and we will find life. **He promises to make an eternal covenant with those who respond. What is this covenant? “The devotion-things and the faith-things of David.” What does this mean? Part of it refers to the devout heart David had.** This is like the new covenant heart Ezekiel had described. **The other aspect is described in the following verse. Because of the obedience of his great faith, God had made David a witness to the nations.** David had boldness and confidence in God. Through these characteristics, he accomplished great things, in partnership with God. **Paul is saying that these same qualities are available to us, because of the resurrection power of Jesus.** This is confirmed in Ephesians 4:24. Our newly-created self is characterized by that holy-devotion and righteousness. We, too, are called to be a sign and witness to the world. With God, we can do great things, and the world will recognize His activity in our lives.

This inner devotion is so important. **Accept it as a birthright-gift by faith, learn to express it, walk in it and develop it.** Let the Spirit lead *you* in this inner longing for God to **design your life to know and serve Him better.**