

## The Greatness of God



"O may Your glorious name be blessed and exalted above all blessing and praise!"  
Nehemiah 9:5b

The Hebrews made much of names. They believed that names showed character. One of the reasons for their conviction was that God chose to reveal His nature, His heart, and His character in the revelation of His names. In other words, to know God's name is to know something of His nature. His names reveal His personal perfections. F.J. Delitzsch put it this way, "God's name is God himself in revealed holiness." <sup>1</sup>

Jesus said, "I have manifested Your name to the men whom You gave Me out of the world..." (John 17:6a). Again, He said, "and I have made Your name known to them, and will make it known..." (John 17:26a).

### God's Name Reveals His:

- Greatness. (Ps.86:10-11)
- Majesty. (Ps.8:1)
- Wonder. (Is.9:6; Judg.13:18)
- Hallowed Nature (set apart). (Matt.6:9)
- Worthiness of praise. (Ps.100:4, 96:2)
- Holiness. (Ps.105:3)

In Nehemiah 9:5, we are told that God's name is glorious (Cf. Ps.96:8, 115:1). In the Old Testament, the primary Hebrew word for "glory" or "glorious" is "*kabod*," which means a heavy weight, such as a rich man's possessions. In the ancient world, the greater the weight of a man's gold and silver, the richer he was. With this wealth came clout—or a powerful influence on others. Thus, glory came to represent the greatness of a man that commanded the respect of others.

As it relates to God, God's glory is His weightiness that commands respect. It is the manifest display of His worth and beauty that provokes and promotes a response in us. Glory is holiness on display! His glorious character is so rich and so great that the moment we see it, it immediately influences and impacts us. God is so glorious that no man can encounter Him without being deeply affected by the awesome weight of who He is. God's glory is so immeasurably heavy that it is beyond man's ability to calculate—"...who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?" (Ex.15:11b KJV). The only appropriate term to use in describing the impact of God's glory at this point is awesome.

- In Psalm 72:17 we read, "May his name endure forever; may his name increase as long as the sun shines; and let men bless themselves by him; let all nations call him blessed."
- Then in verse 19, "And blessed be His glorious name forever; and may the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen, and Amen." (Cf. Deut.28:58)

### How does the greatness of God's name lead us to renewal?

**First, understanding the greatness of God's name is dependent on a prior and divine operation of God's Spirit in the**

## heart.

In the New Testament, the Apostle Paul said that in order for us to know spiritually and experientially "...the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe" (Eph.1:19), we must first be given "...a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him" (Eph.1:17). In other words, it is possible to have a superficial or intellectual knowledge of God and still remain alienated from Him. Nevertheless, if a personal acquaintance with God or a heart apprehension is to be made, then nothing less than the miracle of saving grace must be performed in your heart. This is the new birth, of which Jesus spoke in John 3. Without this prior divine operation, a man may be religious, but he is powerless to perform any spiritual act in a spiritual way. The Apostle asserts that the unsaved man is devoid of any spiritual desires and aspirations—for he is dead in sin (Eph.2:1).

Once this divine work of the Spirit through the Gospel takes place, then the sinner comes to see not only that God is great, but that life is found in the greatness of His name. "But these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:31; Cf. Acts 3:16, 4:12).

### **Second, understanding the greatness of God's name leads us to trust Him.**

- Psalm 9:10—"And those who know Your name will put their trust in You..."

We know the names of many people whom we have never met. However, when the ancients spoke of *knowing* someone by name, it indicated a distinct friendship and a particular familiarity. Just as God said He knew Moses "*by name*" (Ex.33:11-12), under grace we have a similar privilege. Jesus not only calls us "*by name*" (John 10:3), but He has also revealed the nature and character of God's great name to us to show us that He is to be thoroughly depended on.

What this means for us is that those who know God best will trust Him most, and those who trust Him most will bear witness that God is faithful, trustworthy, and reliable. Can you testify to this fact? "Great is the LORD, and highly to be praised, and His greatness is unsearchable" (Ps.145:3).

### **Third, understanding the greatness of God's name leads us to love Him.**

- Psalm 69:36—"The descendants of His servants will inherit it, and those who love His name will dwell in it."
- Psalm 5:11—"But let all who take refuge in You be glad, let them ever sing for joy; and may You shelter them, that those who love Your name may exult in You."

To *know* God is to *trust* God; to trust God is to love God; and to *love* God is to *rejoice in Him*. If we trust His love, then surely we can surrender ourselves to His leading. He is worthy of our praise, He is worthy of our trust, and He is worthy of our love—for it is He who first "...loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10).

- In what area of your life do you need to trust Him today? Is it the area of your *family*, your *finances*, your *future*, or your *foes*?

The greatness of God's name calls for the completeness of your trust. It calls for the highest praise and the deepest love in the heart. This is why we sing with the hymn writer:

*Praise my soul, the King of Heaven, to His feet thy tribute bring.  
Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven, evermore His praises sing*

*Praise Him for His grace and favor to our fathers in distress;  
Praise Him still the same as ever, slow to chide, and swift to bless.*

*Fatherlike He tends and spares us; well our feeble frame He knows.  
In His hands he gently bears us, rescues us from all our foes.*

*Alleluia! Alleluia! Praise with us the God of grace.<sup>2</sup>*

The greatness of His name!

**Application:** Here are some of the names of God given to us in Scripture. Find which revelation of God's nature is most suited for your life today. Check it and ask God, in faith, for the sake of His own name, to be glorified in your life right now.

- Jehovah Jireh: The Lord Our Provider (Gen.22:14)
- Jehovah Shalem: The Lord Our Peace (Judg.6:24)
- Jehovah Tsidkenu: The Lord Our Righteousness (Jer.23:6)
- Jehovah Rapha: The Lord That Heals (Ex.15:26)

- Jehovah Nissi: The Lord Our Banner (Ex.17:15)
- Jehovah Qadash: The Lord That Sanctifies (Lev.20:8)
- Jehovah Shammah: The Lord Is There (Ezek.48:35)
- Jehovah Sabaoth: The Lord of Hosts (1 Sam.1:3)
- Jehovah Raah: The Lord My Shepherd (Ps.23:1)
- El-Elyon: The Most High God (Gen.14:18)
- El-Olam: The Everlasting God (Gen.21:33)
- El-Shaddai: God Almighty (Gen.17:1)
- El-Ro'I: The God Who Sees (Gen.16:13)
- Adonai: The Lord Our Master (Gen.18:3)

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> John Blanchard, Gathered Gold, p.243

<sup>2</sup> Henry F. Lyte, Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven

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