



God is spirit, and those who
worship him must worship in spirit and truth.

John 4:24

On Worship
with Pastor Steve

Name Above All

When my wife and I were deciding on what names to give our children, we determined that at least one of each of their names would be the name of one of their relatives. We thought it would be good for each of those names to be carried on to the next generation. Little did we know that each of their names would correspond with either a physical or character trait that each of them would possess. We named our first born daughter Amber. We used the name Amber because of the description Ezekiel gives of the brightness in which God appeared to him (Ezekiel 1:4, 27; 8:2). Imagine the surprise when she was born with amber colored hair. No one in either of our families has that color of hair.

What's in a name? In Old Testament times a person's name revealed their character or physical characteristics. For example, Isaac had twin sons, Jacob and Esau. The bible says that when Esau was born he was hairy all over; Esau means hairy. Jacob was born second and his hand took hold of Esau's heel. His name means supplanter. We know from scripture, that when the brothers were older, Jacob stole Esau's birthright and blessing (Genesis 27:36). A few years later Jacob manipulated his uncle Laban's flock of sheep and gained for himself a stronger flock (Genesis 25-31).

The word most used for name in the Hebrew is *shem*. According to Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, *shem* has the idea of definite and conspicuous position. In other words it is easy to notice or attracts attention by being unusual or remarkable. *Shem* also means an appellation, as a mark or memorial of individuality. An appellation is a name or title. Thus, *shem* gives us the idea of a name or title that is set apart from everything else. *Shem* also implies honor, authority and character.

Throughout the scriptures God revealed himself to those whom he chose. The following is a sample of God's names revealed in his word.

Adonai – Master, Lord – Genesis 15:2

El-Elyon -- The Lord Most High – Genesis 14:17-20

El-Olam -- The Everlasting God – Isaiah 40:28-31

El-Shaddai -- The God Who is Sufficient for the Needs of His People – Genesis 17:1, Psalm 91:1

Elohim – Creator, Preserver, Mighty, Strong, Transcendent – Genesis 17:7

Jehovah – Self-Existent, Eternal – Exodus 3

Jehovah-Jireh -- The Lord our Provider – Genesis 22:13-14

Jehovah-Nissi -- The Lord our Banner – Exodus 17:15

Jehovah-Rapha -- The Lord our Healer – Exodus 15:26

Jehovah-Shalom -- The Lord our Peace – Judges 6:24

Jehovah-Tsidkenu -- The Lord our Righteousness – Jeremiah 23:6

Jehovah-Mekaddishkem -- The Lord our Sanctifier – Exodus 31:13

Jehovah-Sabaoth -- The Lord of Hosts – Isaiah 6:1-3

Jehovah-Shammah -- The Lord is Present – Ezekiel 48:35

Jehovah-Rohi -- The Lord our Shepherd – Psalm 23:1

Along with the names God revealed other biblical writers have added adjectives to describe the name of God. Words such as excellent (Psalm 8:9), good (Psalm 52:9), glorious (Psalm 72:19), great (Jeremiah 44:26; Ezekiel 36:23), awesome (Psalm 99:3), and holy (Psalm 111:9).

When the psalmist declared God's name to be excellent he was saying that God's name is wide, large, powerful, famous, gallant and worthy. When David declared God's name to be good he was declaring God's name to be good in the widest sense; beautiful, best, bountiful and pleasant. By declaring that God's name is glorious the psalmist was saying that God's name carries weight, splendor and honor. In revealing his name to be great, God was saying his name is exceeding, high, mighty and noble. To say that God's name is awesome is to declare that it is to be dreadfully feared and revered. When the psalmist proclaimed God's name to be holy he was saying the God's name is sacred.

There is no other name that can compare to God's. His name embodies all that he is and defines his character and authority. And all that he is was poured out into flesh. John declared in his gospel that the Word was God (John 1:1) and the Word became flesh and dwelled on earth in the form of the Son of God; Jesus Christ (John 1:14). God's name, his character and authority, became flesh which is why Paul could write, *Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.* (Philippians 2:9-11)

Because God's name carries weight or clout, because his name is exceedingly high and mighty and noble, because his name is powerful, famous and worthy, sacred and to be dreadfully feared and revered, we should handle it honorably and respectfully, esteeming it precious; not only in what we say but also in how we live. As the Apostle Paul wrote, *Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: The Lord knows those who are His, and, Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.* (2 Timothy 2:19)

God is jealous for his name and he disciplines those who are called by his name yet do not live a life that is worthy of his name. This concept is clearly seen in his dealings with Israel. God spoke the following words to the prophet Ezekiel.

Son of man, when the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it by their own ways and deeds; to Me their way was like the uncleanness of a woman in her customary impurity. Therefore I poured out My fury on them for the blood they had shed on the land, and for their idols with which they had defiled it. So I scattered them among the nations, and they were dispersed throughout the countries; I judged them according to their ways and their deeds. When they came to the nations, wherever they went, they profaned My holy name — when they said of them, These are the people of the LORD, and yet they have gone out of His land. But I had concern for My holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations wherever they went. Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord GOD: I do not do this for your sake, O house of Israel, but for My holy name's sake, which you have profaned among the nations wherever you went. And I will sanctify My great name, which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst; and the nations shall know that I am the LORD, says the Lord GOD, when I am hallowed in you before their eyes.

Ezekiel 36:17-23

Paul had a similar message for the teachers of law who believed that justification came by keeping the law yet they broke the very law that they preached others should live by. He quotes a passage from Ezekiel when he writes; *For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you, as it is written.* (Romans 2:24)

We are exhorted by King David in Psalm 29:2 to, *Give unto the LORD the glory due to His name.* The Hebrew word for glory in this passage means weight. How do we give the Lord the weight that is due his name? David completes this verse with another exhortation; *Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.* Though the second part of this verse may be a totally separate exhortation, my perception is that it completes the first part of the verse. We might say that one way to give the Lord the weight or glory due his name is to worship him in the beauty of holiness.

The Amplified Bible renders this portion of Psalm 29:2 this way; . . . *worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness or in holy array.* The Hebrew word for beauty in this passage means decoration. So it could be read, worship the Lord decorated in holy array. For the believer today this is not speaking of outer ceremonial garments but a holy life before God. Jesus rebuked the Laodicean church for being lukewarm and counseled them to clothe themselves in white garments (Revelation 3:18) which represents purity and holiness.

Most likely you have heard someone say, "He's the splittin' image of his father." When we worship our heavenly father decorated in holy array, living holy lives before others, they get an image of what our father looks like. This is one way our father receives the glory due his name. The objective of our life is to point to him, to magnify him, to make him known, to make much of him. This must have been the idea Jesus had in mind when he said, *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.* (Matthew 5:16) The Greek word for glorify in Matthew 5:16 is doxazo. Doxazo means to render glorious, honor and magnify.

Our passion for God's name to be exalted will most likely result in some form of outward expression. We always seem to find a way of displaying to others the things in which we place the most value. Thus, our outward expression of God's worth is another avenue of giving him the glory due his name. This was the heart of King David when he wrote, *I will praise You, O Lord my God, with all my heart, And I will glorify Your name forevermore.* (Psalm 86:12) The Hebrew word glorify in this scripture means to be heavy or make weighty, honorable, glorious, to boast or promote. In this verse David might be saying that the way he will glorify God's name forever is by praising him with all of his heart.

The Hebrew word David uses for praise in Psalm 86:12 is yadah. Yadah means to use or hold out the hand; to revere or worship with extended hands; to make a confession or give thanks. David not only desired to declare or speak of the greatness of his God but accompany that declaration with outward expression. He most likely wrote Psalm 30:4; a song which was sung at the dedication of his house. *Sing praise to the LORD, you saints of His, And give thanks (yadah) at the remembrance of His holy name.*

In Psalm 63:4 David says, *Thus I will bless You while I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name.* In this passage he uses the Hebrew word barak for the word bless. Barak means to kneel or to bless God as an act of adoration. It was customary in David's day for common people to pay homage to royalty by kneeling before them. David displayed the worth of his king by kneeling and raising his hands in adoration. Another psalmist rendered this exhortation; *Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, And into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless (barak) His name.* (Psalm 100:4)

The chief end of our lives is to exalt God's name above all others. By living holy, obedient lives accompanied with outward expressions of adoration, we can demonstrate the supremacy of God in all things and give him the glory due his name.