

The Greatness and Glory of God's Name

by T. Austin-Sparks

The sermon explores the profound significance of God's Name as a reflection of His character, work, and purpose, emphasizing the responsibility of believers to honor it in their lives.

Scripture: Exodus 20:7, Joshua 7:9, Psalm 9:10, Psalm 20:5, Psalm 91:14, Proverbs 18:10, Ezekiel 20:9, Matthew 28:19, Romans 8:28, James 2:7

Topics: "God's Character", "The Name of God"

Description

T. Austin-Sparks emphasizes the profound significance of God's Name, which encapsulates His character, works, and eternal purpose. He explains that the Name of the Lord is not merely a title but a representation of who God is, and it carries immense weight in the life of believers. Sparks highlights God's jealousy for His Name, illustrating how it is central to His actions and the trust placed in His people to honor it. The sermon calls Christians to recognize their role as custodians of God's Name, urging them to live in a manner that reflects His character and purpose. Ultimately, the Name of the Lord serves as a source of strength and assurance for believers, reminding them of God's unwavering commitment to His reputation.

Transcript

There are certain truths and concepts which dominate the whole Bible, and which are gathered into a single word. They are like a bunch of keys which, if you possess them, unlock the entire revelation of the mind of God. The most inclusive of these is the word 'Name' as relating to God. You have only to look at the pages of a concordance where the word occurs and you will feel overwhelmed by the number of occurrences in every book. And not just the number of occurrences, but the immense associations and connections of the Name. I wonder how many books would be needed to write something on all these statements about the Name! Here is indeed a theme that would keep preachers going for years! It is not only the titles of the Lord; that is wonderful enough; but it is what is meant by the Name of the Lord. We can do no more than approach it; never exhaust it.

WHAT IS THE NAME OF THE LORD?

1. The Name of the Lord is the full content of His character. It is what He is by nature and constitution.

This has always been an idea in naming. Sometimes it is prophetic. The Lord led to the giving of a name because the named would be what the name meant or implied. The Bible has much on that line, both as to

people and places. Sometimes He changed names with the implication of a changed nature. Without giving a specific designation, such as Jehovah, El Shaddai, etc., on numerous occasions it is just: "the name of the Lord", "My name", "My great name", "My holy name", and so on, meaning just what and who God is.

Allied to this concept God is shown to be exceedingly jealous for His Name. Indeed, the great things which God is on record as having done for or against those concerned are said to have been acts of jealousy for His Name. The effectual ground of appeal to God for intervention and help has been that of His Name, His very character. God MUST be true to His character. To 'take the Name of the Lord in vain' is to use it out of harmony with His character. God has a reputation and He cannot allow that reputation to be injured. He called a people out of the nations for His Name, which meant showing forth what God is like. When that people, in character and conduct, violated the principle of the Name, He flung them from Him and no more called them "My people".

This was the one and sole burden of the Prophets. They were raised up and anointed for the sole purpose of dealing with what was contrary to the Name - the character of God. The Name of the Lord is a solemn and glorious trust, a trust to be guarded and honoured. But we must remember that it is not only the TITLE of a Person, but the very character of the Person, which is to be guarded as a most sacred deposit or entrustment!

This is the clue to Jesus Christ. Note His jealousy over His Father's Name! Note how that affected His own walk in this world. He came in and for His Father's Name, reputation, honour, glory and rights. His life and His work had His Father's vindication as all-governing. God has taken two thousand years to answer the discrediting of His Name as embodied in His Son. Israel has been, and is, God's terrible example of God's jealousy over this fact: that Jesus Christ bore, lived, died and wrought for the Name of God. He was a revelation of what God is like and THEY SLEW HIM! This is a clue to Christianity. Christians are said to be "baptized into His Name", and to have His Name called upon them. (Matthew 28:19 James 2:7). Hence, God is jealous over those who TRULY bear His Name. To touch them is to touch Him!

But this is a trust and it should be an incentive to life and conduct worthy of Him. It should be the motive in our attitude toward ANY situation which involves His honour. A proof of this principle of the Christian life is that ANY TRUE Christian cannot hurt the Lord's Name and character without the Holy Spirit giving a sense of grief. The Holy Spirit is the present custodian of the Lord's Name and honour, and He is VERY sensitive to His trust. A mark of spiritual maturity is an increasing sensitiveness to the pleasure or displeasure of the Lord; just as a mark of immaturity is that things contrary to the Lord - in speech, act, conduct, dress, appearance, discourtesy, vulgarity, rudeness, etc. - can be indulged in and repeated without that inward sense of shame. To bear the Name of the Lord means a jealousy on our part for the honour of the Lord, and "They that honour me, I will honour, saith the Lord". As Christians who carry the Name of the Lord, to be true to that Name we ought to be progressively taking on the character of the Lord. Paul said: "And they glorified God in me." The Name, therefore, is a challenge to character.

It must be ever remembered that the one greatest object of the great adversary is to dishonour the Lord's Name, and this brings the Lord's people into the great battle of the ages.

Both the individual Christian and the Christian Church are the trustees of the Lord's Name. What a lot of history of suffering and adversity is associated with this truth! It explains a whole mass of the troubles which the assemblies experience. If Christians were more awake to what is involved in their troubles -

individually and collectively - how much more would their jealousy for the Lord's honour make them act and react differently! Their motive would be: "For the Lord's sake!"

2. The Name of the Lord is the embodiment of His work.

For the sake of His Name He has worked and does work. He makes Himself a Name by His works, and we can count on Him to work for His Name's sake. His works are many: He saves for His Name's sake; He keeps; He gives grace; He sanctifies; He corrects; He delivers; He chastens; He leads in the paths of righteousness for His Name's sake'.

What a Rock of confidence, assurance, comfort, is the Name of the Lord when we view it in this light! What a ground of appeal we have when we really hold an issue to His Name! "What will you do for your great name?" was the appeal in a very difficult and threatening situation long ago (Joshua 7:9).

"I wrought for my great name", said the Lord (Ezekiel 20:9).

All the mighty work of Christ by His Cross is now gathered into His Name. All the power and ability to work by His servants is in virtue of His Name. (See the book of Acts.) All the ultimate overthrow of the adversary's kingdom, and the bowing of every knee will be in His Name. His Name is called... because He SAVES! Effectual work is when the workers correspond to, and stand upon the Name.

3. The Name of the Lord is the embodiment of His Purpose.

God is the God of eternal purpose. To that purpose He has committed Himself. Being Who and What He is, He could never undertake anything that He could not finally accomplish. To be defeated in, or cheated of His purpose would mean losing His Name, His reputation, His character. This can never be! Hence, infinite persistence, patience, pains, are components of His Name, and if He is finally resisted by an instrument and vessel of His purpose, He will make another vessel. The first generation that came out of Egypt resisted Him unto death - their death - but He raised up another generation and realized His purpose through them. He is the God of Hope because He cannot be ULTIMATELY defeated. The valley may be full of bones, very many, very dry, and very scattered; God holds the key of hope in the power of resurrection. Resurrection is God's unique answer to otherwise utterly hopeless situations. Hence He is called "the God who raiseth the dead". He will eventually stand possessed of His purpose for His Name demands it.

For the weakest soul who pleads His Name He will show His jealousy, if only and truly it is for His Name's sake! His Name stands or falls with such, and it cannot fall!

We are very deeply conscious of how utterly inadequate our effort to extol the Name has been and we can only hope that, as a part of this ministry, it will serve to make some impression. Our common and familiar language and phraseology concerning the Name of the Lord needs redeeming from the commonplace. To say: "hallowed be thy name", and "In the name of the Lord Jesus" to every prayer needs to have the immense significance of what we say restored and recovered. Indeed, the numerous mentions of the Name in Scripture need to have a new impact and meaning as we come on them.

"The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth in and is raised above" (Proverbs 18:10).

"They that know thy name will put their trust in thee" (Psalm 9:10).

"In the name of our God we will set up our banners" (Psalm 20:5).

"I will set him on high, because he hath known my name" (Psalm 91:14).

"Dear Name! The rock on which I build,

My shield and hiding-place;

My never-failing treasury, filled

With boundless stores of grace."

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