

July 6, 2008 (LS)

**THE LORD'S PRAYER:
HALLOWED BE THY NAME
MATTHEW 6.9C**

When God's people pray for God's name to be hallowed we are calling upon God to be faithful to his own holiness and fulfill his promises of deliverance for his people. This petition is also a commitment to holiness of life for those praying.

1. GOD'S NAME

Concern for God's name: This is *petition* not an *ascription* (i.e., we are not praying, "... you are holy," but "may your name be holy/sanctified").

The primary focus of our praying realized in the first petition: we are concerned for the honor of God's name above our own personal comforts and individual needs. We begin with our larger purpose for living.

Understanding our needs within this larger context aids us in dealing with our anxieties properly. We don't become self-absorbed, rather we begin to see that even our needs and sufferings are part of God's larger kingdom purposes.

God's name and God's Person: Why are we to be concerned with God's *name*? Why didn't Jesus just teach us to pray, "May you be hallowed?" Answer is in the Scriptures that Jesus came to fulfill.

Cf. The 3rd Word/Commandment ("You shall not take the *name* of YHWH your God in vain," Ex 20.7). Also Pss: our trust and help are in the *name* (Pss 20.7; 124.8). God puts his *name* in Jerusalem/Temple (1 Kg 5.3; 9.3; 11.36; 21.4; 2 Chr 33.7 *et al.*).

Name is not merely letters and syllables. Name = the revelation of who he is. To know God's name is to know him (Isa 52.6).

Name/Naming is the way we comprehend/understand people and things and learn how to approach/relate to them. E.g., not being able to name an illness causes great anxiety. Naming it gives you some direction.

We can't know the fullness of God's name because it is beyond our comprehension (cf. Gen 32; Jdg 13). But God does give us his name so that we can go on the journey of knowing him.

God's name revealed = Jesus, the Word of God. He is the Angel of YHWH in the wilderness. In him was God's name (Ex 23.21). He is *the name* by which we must be saved (Ac 4.12). He is *the name of God* incarnate. In him we know God.

God's name is holy: Cf. Ps 33.21; Lev 20.3; 22.2; 1 Chr 16.10; Pss 30.4; 33.21; 97.12; 99.3; 103.1; 105.3; 106.47; 111.9; 145.21; 57.15; Ezek 39.25; Lk 1.49)

What does it mean for God to be holy? John Frame, *The Doctrine of God*: "Holiness, then, is God's capacity and right to arouse our reverent awe and wonder. It is his uniqueness (Ex. 15:11; 1 Sam 2:2), his transcendence. It is his majesty, for the holy God is like a great king, whom we dare not treat like other persons."

Holiness = "separateness." That is, God is unlike us. He is unique. He is the Creator and we are the creatures. Another aspect of this separateness would also involve what we might call his ethical purity; that is, he is without sin

Names in Scripture tell us about character and actions. Joshua = YHWH is salvation; Joshua leads people to their inheritance.

Cf. Ex 3 - God reveals his holy name to Moses: "I am" (which I believe is related to YHWH). Also, Ex 6: God tells Moses that he revealed himself to the patriarchs by the name "God Almighty" (*'el shaddai*), but by the name YHWH they did not know him. That doesn't mean that they didn't know the word "YHWH." It means that God is about to reveal something new-to-them about himself.

Revelation of the name YHWH = deliverance of his people from Egypt. God Almighty = one who makes promises and has power to fulfill them. YHWH = the one who fulfills the promises. Fuller revelation of God through history/historical events.

Exposition of God's name: Ex 33, 34 (cf. esp. 34.6-7). God's name is holy. To be holy means to be merciful and gracious, longsuffering, abounding in goodness and truth, keeping covenant mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, not clearing the guilty, and visiting the sin of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and fourth generations. That is holiness expounded.

God's holy name involves his acting in accord with his character. Holiness is not an abstract attribute of a distant deity, but an active character who fulfills his promises.

2. GOD'S NAME AND GOD'S PEOPLE

The name that God revealed to Moses in Ex 3 and then later more fully expounded in Ex 34 is the name that the people of God take on at Sinai in Ex 19-24. They "take" the name of YHWH at Mt. Sinai (that becomes their "family name").

Note the 3rd Word/Commandment again. Taking the name of YHWH means that this becomes your name; thus, this is how you are defined; this is how you are now known. (E.g., woman taking the name of her husband in marriage)

God's people are called by his name; cf. 2 Chr 7.14; Jer 14.9; 15.16. Name of God is put on them in benediction (Num 6.22-27)

Revelation of the Name, Jesus. God's people are defined by him. Mt 28.19: baptized into the *name*; take the name.

God's name is bound up in the way that he fulfills his obligations to the one(s) baptized. This is a covenant in which the baptized and God himself have particular responsibilities and consequences that flow from the faithfulness or lack of faithfulness to those responsibilities.

3. GOD'S NAME IS HALLOWED IN HIS PEOPLE

God is not ego-centric. He is the self-giving God who defers to the needs of his people. Relationship of Trinity: The Father glorifies the Son (e.g., Jn 17.5) and the Son glorifies the Father (e.g., Jn 17.4). They both glorify the Spirit and the Spirit points back to the Father and the Son (e.g., Jn 16.14).

When God's people enter into that divine family, united through Christ, we are to act in the same type of humility toward one another and toward God himself. It is the way we are to bear the name properly.

(1) God's name is hallowed through the salvation of his people. We, God's people, bear his name because he has given it to us. If he is holy (and he is) and he is to be revered as holy in all the earth (and he will be), then he must do for his people what he own name requires him to do.

Cf. Ezek 36.21-23: "But I had concern for *My holy name* ... 'Thus says the Lord YHWH: "I do not do *this* for your sake, O house of Israel, but for *My holy name's sake* ... And *I will sanctify My great name* ... and the nations shall know that I *am* YHWH, says the Lord YHWH, *when I am hallowed in you before their eyes.*"

Israel is in captivity. But they bear God's name. God has obligations because his name is at stake. If his name is holy, then he must do what he has said he would do. Through this his name will be hallowed. (Cf. e.g., also Ex 32.11ff.)

Cf. also e.g., Ex 32.11ff. God delivered his people and destroyed his enemies to make his name known: Ex 9.16, "But indeed for this *purpose* I have raised you up, that I may show My power *in* you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth."

This was the intention from the beginning of the process when God revealed his holy name to Moses. God's name is hallowed or sanctified when his people are saved from their enemies and the enemies that persecute or enslave them are destroyed.

Resurrection of Jesus, the Name of God incarnate = the hallowing of God's name. God's name will be hallowed in us at our resurrection when the last enemy is destroyed (1 Cor 15.26).

(2) God's name is hallowed through the holiness of his people

Note: we *are* holy. Saints = holy ones = those who are named as God's people.

We are *to be* holy (Lev 11.44; 1 Pt 1.15-16). We can profane God's name, causing it to be blasphemed when we don't live consistent with the name (Lev 18.21; 22.32; Rom 2.17-24). (For living consistently with the name, see Lev 10 & Ex 34).

1. *Our purpose in life and thus the direction of our prayers should be concern for God's name.*
2. *We must put feet to this petition in our lives as individuals and as a church.*
3. *If you trust Christ, God's holiness assures your final deliverance from death.*