

Lord, Teach Us to Pray
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Lesson 2

Hallowed Be Thy Name: Praying with an Eye to God's Name

Objective: To answer the question, "What are we requesting when pray, 'Father in heaven, hallowed be your name'?" In answering this we will consider what is meant by God's name, our relation to that name, and how this name is to be hallowed in us and through us.

1. What's In a Name?

a. A name refers to one's uniqueness as a person, i.e. their particular personality

A person's name is usually more or less unique. Names such as John Goldingay Jr. and John Goldingay III prove the rule, for where two people bear the same name, we find ways of making clear that the name refers to different people. A name such as "John Goldingay" refers to a person in his or her uniqueness (John Goldingay, *Old Testament Theology: Israel's Gospel*, p. 337-338)

b. In Scripture, more times than not, a person's name defines them and/or sets the course for their particular future

- Examples:
 - Abram means 'Exalted Father'
 - Abraham means 'Father of a Multitude of Nations'
 - Sarah means 'Princess'
 - Isaac means 'Laughter'
 - Jacob means 'Deceiver or He Cheats'
 - Moses means 'To Draw Out'
 - Jesus means 'God saves'

c. A name entails certain associations and connotations

- When one hears a person's name that name carries with it certain connotations and associations for good or bad, specifically regarding one's relations, character and ways i.e. 'He's an Eggar'; 'Tiger Woods'

2. What Is God's Name?

a. Exodus 3.13-15

Then Moses said to God, "If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?" God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM (or I AM WHAT I AM or I WILL BE WHO/WHAT I WILL BE)." And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'" God also said to Moses, "Say this to the people of Israel, 'YHWH, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' This is my name forever, and thus I am remembered throughout all generations."

- A Mysteriously Difficult Name yet a Tremendously Personal Name
 - From the Hebrew verb 'to be'
 - Range of Meaning: 'Become, Happen, Be, Come to Pass'. It could mean either of the following:
 - 'I AM WHO/WHAT I AM'
 - 'I WILL BE WHO/WHAT I WILL BE'
- YHWH/Yahweh (LORD)
 - Causative Reference – YHWH is the uncreated God who creates and sustains all things, i.e. I AM the one who causes all things to be; I WILL BE the one who makes all things new

God is the eternal, self-sufficient, all sufficient one, not a god who came into being or can die (Goldingay, p. 336)

- A Past Reference – YHWH is the same God who has always been there, i.e. 'I WILL BE WHO I'VE ALWAYS BEEN (Faithful, Good, Forgiving, Saving)

I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob (Ex. 3.6)

- A Future Reference – YHWH, the God who will be with you, i.e. 'I AM the one who will be with you and for you in whatever circumstance you find yourself in

He said, "But I will be with you..." (Ex. 3.12)

God has the capacity to whatever Israel needs God to be. Whatever happens in the future, God will be there with Israel and out of an infinitely resources Being, God will be what the situation requires (Goldingay, p. 337)

- A Present Reference – YHWH, the God who is with you in the moment

And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. God saw the people of Israel – and God knew (Ex. 2.24-25)

Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of YHWH, which he work for you *today*. For the Egyptians whom you see today you shall never see again. YHWH will fight for you, and you have only to be silent (Ex. 14.13-14)

- Other Examples regarding God's Personal Name:

Ex. 15.3 – YHWH is a *warrior*, YHWH is his name

Ex. 15.18 – YHWH will *reign (be King)* forever and ever

Ex. 34.14 – YHWH, who's name is *passionate*, is a passionate God

b. John 8 and Matthew 28, YHWH fully uttered

Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly I say to you, before Abraham was, **"I AM."**" (Jn. 8.58)

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them **in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit**, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you. And behold, *I am with you always*, even unto the end of the age (Matt. 28.18-20)

3. Created to Bear the Name of God

Psalm 8

O YHWH, our Lord, **how majestic is your name in all the earth** (Psalm 8.1, 9)

- God created and commissioned humanity to bear his name, that is to reflect his glory (his character and ways) in the world

4. Making a Name for Ourselves

Genesis 3; Genesis 11; Exodus 20

For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and **you will be like God**, knowing God and evil (Gen. 3.5)

“Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top to the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves...” (Gen 11. 4)

‘You shall not take the name YHWH your God in vain, for YHWH will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain (Ex. 20.7)

5. Restoring the Name of God

Genesis 12.1-3

“Now YHWH said to Abram, ‘Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land I will show you. I will make of you a great nation and I will bless you and **make your name great**, so that you will be a blessing.”

John 12.28

“Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven: **“I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.”**

- Jesus is the one sent by the Father to bear the name of God perfectly and to restore it through his life, death and resurrection

6. Baptized Into the Name of God

Matthew 28.19

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit...”

- As disciples of Jesus we are given the task of bearing the name of God in such a way that he is honored and others are blessed.

7. Praying, ‘Hallowed Be Thy Name...May Your Name Be Honored/Made Holy’

a. The Heidelberg Catechism Question 122, ‘What does the first request mean?’

Answer: Help us to really know you, to bless, worship, and praise you for all your works and for all that shines forth from them: your almighty power, wisdom, kindness, justice, mercy and truth. And it means, help us to direct all our living – what we think, say and do, so that your name will never be blasphemed because of us but always honored and praised.

- Acknowledge God’s Good and Saving Kingship in our lives (Thanksgiving)
- Ask God to show us all the areas of our lives that don’t match up with the honoring of his name (Repentance)
- Ask God to reveal his name for what it is (glorious, saving, beautiful, worthy of worship) in every nook and cranny of this world where it’s not presently acknowledged (Longing)
- Ask God to show us what it means “to get in on” the story of God honoring his name...for this is his passion...and therefore it is to be our passion as well! (Mission)

b. Taking Our Queues from Heaven, ‘In heaven so on earth.’

- Revelation 4 and 5

“Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come” (Rev. 4.8)

“Worthy are you, our Lord and God to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created” (Rev. 4.11)

“Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth” (Rev. 5.9-10)

“Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!” And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, “To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!” (Rev. 5.12-13)