

“THE NAME ABOVE ALL NAMES.”

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First Christian Reformed Church

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Heidelberg Catechism: Lord’s Day 36, Q99-100

Scripture Texts: Exodus 20:7; Philippians 2:9-11

Introduction.

What’s in a name?

All the gods of history and religion have been named by men. Only the one true living God has revealed His true name to us and told us what it is, what He is to be called.

Last week I mentioned that God’s OT name is Yahweh, sometimes shown in our Bibles as LORD. Yahweh is God’s personal name. “I am, or I am who I am” (Ex. 3:14; John 8:58).

God gave us His name as an act of grace. By giving us His name, God wants us to use it. He wants us to call on His name and to invite Him into our presence through prayer. He wants us to lift up His name in worship and to have personal fellowship with Him. He wants us to call on Him when things are good and when we are in great need.

Psalm 50:15 Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me.

Proverbs 18:10 The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous man runs into it and is safe.

Psalm 20:1 May the Lord answer you in the day of trouble!

May the name of the God of Jacob protect you!

7 Some trust in chariots and some in horses,
but we trust in the name of the Lord our God.

“God gave them His name in order that they might use it boldly and freely, regularly and reverently” (Ronald Wallace, *The Ten Commandments*, p. 53).

The NT names of God.

In the NT God does something new and even more wonderful. He brings to fulfillment the revelation of His name. He reveals Himself in the flesh as the God/Man *Jesus*. This is the new name of God, His NT name. It means Yahweh saves. It expresses the character and nature of the person of Jesus, who He is as Savior, and what He has come to do, to save His people from their sins.

And Jesus reveals to us the name of God as *Father*. God's full name is now fully revealed. He is no longer just Yahweh, but "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." God's name is forever bound to the name of Jesus.

In the NT, Jesus replaces Yahweh as the name His people call upon. This is the name in which help and blessings are sought. This is the name by which we enter into the presence of God.

Matthew 18:20 Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.

John 14:13 Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.

The Name that is Above All Names.

There is one more revelation, one more name, the Name that is above all names.

What is this name that is above every name that is named and is more excellent than all others?

The Spirit reveals it to Paul in Philippians 2.

Philippians 2:9 Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him *the name that is above every name*, **10** so that *at the name of Jesus every knee should bow*, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, **11** and every tongue confess that *Jesus Christ is Lord*, to the glory of God the Father.

What is this name that God bestowed on Jesus? It's not Jesus, that's the name by which He was known on earth. What name did Jesus receive after His resurrection and ascension that He didn't have before?

Colossians 2:15 He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

Jesus Christ is Lord forevermore. This is the name of God. This is the name God has made known. This is the name that cannot be denied, cannot be ignored or explained

away. This is the name that is above all names, this is the name you cannot say in faith without the help of the Holy Spirit (II Corinthians 12:3).

Ephesians 1:20 ... he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, **21** far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and *above every name that is named*, not only in this age but also in the one to come. **22** And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, **23** which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

Hebrews 1:3 He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, **4** having become as much superior to angels as *the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs*.

Jesus Christ is Lord. This is the name that created the heavens and the earth, the name that called into existence the stars and galaxies, the mountains and the oceans and all that fills the earth. This is the name that speaks and it is done, the name the wind and the waves obey. This is the name that redeems people and the name that makes demons shutter.

Jesus doesn't just have the name Lord Jesus Christ, not just a title, but everything that goes with that title, universal authority, sovereign supremacy, almighty power, holding supreme authority over everything in the cosmic realm, in heaven and on earth and below the earth.

If you know this name, you know the name that is above every other name.

If you know this name, you know the full and true name of God.

If you know this name, you can call on the power and presence of God anytime from anywhere.

If you know this name, you know the secret to all wisdom, knowledge and power.

If you know this name, you can enter into the Holy of Holies, into the very throne room of God.

If you know this name, you need not fear anything.

If you know this name, and call on this name and seek forgiveness in this name, then your sins will not accuse you and you will be able to stand before the judgment seat of God without fear.

If you know this name, and believe on this name by faith, you know everything you need to know and have everything you need to have.

Why did God exalt Jesus?

Two reasons, so that at the name of Jesus every knee bow and so that at the name of Jesus every tongue confess.

God exalted Him; God enthroned Him; God conferred on Him the superlative title, because from before the foundations of the earth He desired His greatest glory be revealed in Jesus, and for every intelligent being in His universe to bow and confess His name.

All principalities and powers, angels, and demons; and all people from every tribe, people, nation and language. All creation in universal worship.

When we bow and confess and offer our worship to Jesus, the Father is pleased and He is glorified, and His purpose in sending His Son is fulfilled and His hope for the world is realized.

What should we do with the name that is above all names?

What should you do with this name of God? What reward is Jesus worthy of for taking the form of a servant, becoming man and dying and pouring out His blood for our deliverance from death and hell and for your redemption and eternal salvation? That we just not take His name in vain? Or that we be like the Jews and take care never to say His name lest we abuse it?

Hallowed be thy Name.

Do we not regularly pray, “Father, hallowed be thy name.” What are we asking God to do when we pray hallowed be thy name? To hallow simply means to treat as holy. Name is who He is, so this means hallowed be you, honored, glorified be you.

So when we pray this petition, in the words of one pastor, we are asking “the most important person in the universe to do the most important act in the universe” (John Piper).

When we pray, “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be thy name,” we are praying that God would cause us to honor His name and that He would cause all people to do that.

When we pray this request we can be certain that nothing is more pleasing to God and that He delights to answer this prayer. This is His favorite prayer request, for the sake of His name.

All the other petitions point back to this. God gives bread and forgives and delivers for the sake of His name, that His name is hallowed, honored, praised, glorified.

That petition is first in the Lord's Prayer for two reasons.

First, hallowing and glorifying God is the greatest desire, it is to be preferred before all things, before life, before daily bread, before deliverance from sin and temptation.

What does the Psalmist say, "Your steadfast love is better than life" (Psalm 63:3). God is supreme, He is the first and great commandment.

Second, hallowing His name is the first and great petition because it is concerned with the weightiest thing in all religion, the glory of God. God's glory is the highest and greatest end.

One day all the other petitions will be useless. We will not ask for daily bread because there will be no hunger; we will not ask for forgiveness, there will be no sin; we will not ask for deliverance from temptation because there will be no more tempter. But it will be our glory and joy forever in eternity to hallow His name. It will be our desire to exalt and adore Him.

Revelation 7:10 With the great multitude of all the saints that no one could number from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, ... crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

Revelation 7:12 With angels and archangels and the four living creatures saying, "Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen."

Implication and application.

Jesus is the final revelation and fulfillment of the Third Commandment. In Jesus is revealed that name above all names that we are never to take in vain.

So great and high and lifted up and holy is this name that he who takes it in vain, he who profanes it, who blasphemes with it, he shall come under great judgment.

In Jesus also we receive His Spirit enabling us to name His name and to hallow His name.

The first time we did that was when we confessed His name and made it our own.

We hallow His name when we bend our knee in worship.

We hallow His name when we esteem Him in our thoughts.

We hallow His name when “whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him” (Colossians 3:17).

We hallow His name when we trust in Him for all we need. Unbelief stains God’s honor and makes Him to be a liar (I John 5:10).

We hallow His name when we love His name the way a husband loves the name of his wife (cf. Psalm 5:11).

We hallow His name when we obey Him. How does a son most honor his father, but by obedience?

We hallow His name when we grieve to hear His name abused, mocked, cursed, or laughed at.

We hallow His name when we stand up for His truth, and are not afraid to profess His Word.

We hallow His name when we esteem and honor His holy things, those things which bear His name, His Word, His sacraments, His Church, and His day.

We hallow His name when we delight to gather corporately with fellow believers to worship His name.

We hallow His name when we give gratitude to Him in good times and in hardship, like Job who said, “The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord” (Job 1:21).

We hallow His name when we pray with all sincerity and earnestness, “Hallowed be thy name.”

No greater privilege and honor can be bestowed upon you than to know the name of the only true living God of the universe and to bear that name and to be able to call on that name and hallow that name. God’s name is our life and our salvation.

When you pray, whatever else is on your mind, whatever else is demanding your attention, start here, start looking up, start focused on God and see if that doesn’t start to transform your vision and your prayer and your desires. “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.”

Psalm 72:19 Blessed be his glorious name forever; may the whole earth be filled with his glory! Amen and Amen!

Prayer: Holy Father, we bow before you and we freely and gladly acknowledge Jesus as Lord and Christ. Forgive us for taking your name in vain in sins of commission and omission. Reform us from within, starting with our hearts, for out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. Create in us a clean heart from which we might honor you and hallow your name and exalt the name of Jesus and confess Him boldly. Jesus, intercede for us to this end and come now and dwell in us and reign over us by your Holy Spirit.