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Christians

A People Who Revere Their God

PSALM 99:1-3

Introduction

1. Listen for just a moment to these different passages ask yourself what do they have in common:

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- a. "Worship the Lord with reverence and rejoice with trembling." (Psalm 2:11, NASB95)
- b. "Come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker. For He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand." (Psalm 95:6–7b, NASB95)

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- c. "He has sent redemption to His people;
He has ordained His covenant forever;
Holy and awesome is His name.
The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;
A good understanding have all those who do His commandments;
His praise endures forever." (Psalm 111:9–10b, NASB95)
2. There are two things I would like for you to notice about these passages:
 - a. They exalt our God.
 - b. They call upon us to revere Him.
 3. This morning as we sit together in worship, we do so in the very presence of God Himself and His holy angels.

4. Near the conclusion of the N.T. book of Hebrews, the writer, in an effort to encourage the Jewish Christians of his day who were in danger of drifting away from the faith, presented them with two scenarios:
 - a. One from a time 1500 years earlier when their ancestors having recently been delivered by God from their bondage in Egypt were encamped around Mount Sinai.
 - b. The other from the present as they gathered each Lord's Day as Christians to worship the same God who had sent His only Son to bring them salvation.

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5. Notice the difference between the two scenarios here in Hebrews 12:18-24.

- a. First, the Mount Sinai encounter:

“For you have not come to a mountain that can be touched and to a blazing fire, and to darkness and gloom and whirlwind, and to the blast of a trumpet and the sound of words which sound was such that those who heard begged that no further word be spoken to them. For they could not bear the command, “If even a beast touches the mountain, it will be stoned.” And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, “I am full of fear and trembling.””
(Hebrews 12:18–21, NASB95)

- 1) Though the mountain was a physical mountain which could be touched, God had instructed them through Moses not to touch it lest they die.

“You shall set bounds for the people all around, saying, ‘Beware that you do not go up on the mountain or touch the border of it; whoever touches the mountain shall surely be put to death.’” (Exodus 19:12, NASB95)

- 2) What the people saw, felt and heard produced such fear that they begged Moses to speak to them himself, rather than God.

“All the people perceived the thunder and the lightning flashes and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they trembled and stood at a distance. Then they said to

Moses, “Speak to us yourself and we will listen; but let not God speak to us, or we will die.”” (Exodus 20:18–19, NASB95)

Slide 5**b. Second, what happens as we worship (Hebrews 12:22-24).**

“But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel.” (Hebrews 12:22–24, NASB95)

- 1) As we began our worship this morning, we entered into the very presence of God Himself.
 - 2) Present all around us are an innumerable host of angels.
 - 3) Brothers and sisters in Christ from all around the world are meeting this day in worship and our spirits are joined with theirs to praise our Father.
 - 4) Earlier, in verse 1 of this chapter, the author said we have “a great cloud of witnesses surrounding us;” here he calls this gathering, “the spirits of the righteous made perfect.”
 - 5) Jesus is also present.
6. What should this provoke in all of us? A deep sense of reverence.
 7. What is reverence? How does it affect us?

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I. The Concept of Reverence

A. WHAT IS REVERENCE?

1. Reverence is the honor or respect which we feel or show toward someone.
2. We practice it almost every day.

- a. We lower our voices when we walk into a funeral home out of respect for the person who has passed.
- b. We pull over to the shoulder of the road as the funeral procession passes.
- c. We stand and cover our hearts when the National Anthem is played.

Slide 7**B. OUR RECOGNITION OF WHO GOD IS SHOULD PROMPT PROFOUND REVERENCE**

1. Long ago when King David stepped outside and looked up at the night sky, he wrote . . .

“When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers,
The moon and the stars, which You have ordained;
What is man that You take thought of him,
And the son of man that You care for him?”

(Psalm 8:3–4, NASB95)

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2. What he saw prompted him to declare,

“O Lord, our Lord,
How majestic is Your name in all the earth,
Who have displayed Your splendor above the heavens!”

(Psalm 8:1, NASB95)

3. Over 700 years before Christ came to this earth, the prophet Isaiah had a vision of God sitting on a throne in the temple in Jerusalem.
4. In chapter six of the book which bears his name, he tells us about his experience.
 - a. He saw angels known as Seraphim standing above God.
 - b. One was calling out to the other,

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“Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts,
The whole earth is full of His glory.”

(Isaiah 6:3)

c. Isaiah tells us that his voice was such that it caused the foundations of the threshold of the temple to tremble.

d. How did Isaiah respond to all this? The same way we probably would.

“Woe is me, for I am ruined!

Because I am a man of unclean lips,

And I live among a people of unclean lips;

For my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.””

(Isaiah 6:5, NASB95)

5. Such humility in the presence of our God is reverence.

6. A little more than 100 years after Isaiah penned these words, another prophet comes on the scene, a man named Habakkuk.

7. The nation of Judah is just about to fall to Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian army.

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8. He challenges his people for their trust in idols which they have made with their own hands.

“What profit is the idol when its maker has carved it,

Or an image, a teacher of falsehood?

For its maker trusts in his own handiwork

When he fashions speechless idols.

Woe to him who says to a piece of wood, ‘Awake!’

To a mute stone, ‘Arise!’

And that is your teacher?

Behold, it is overlaid with gold and silver,

And there is no breath at all inside it.”

(Habakkuk 2:18–19, NASB95)

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9. Then Habakkuk says this,

“But the Lord is in His holy temple.

Let all the earth be silent before Him.”

(Habakkuk 2:20, NASB95)

10. It is the Lord that you and I have gathered here today to worship and revere.
11. But the question we must each ask ourselves is how does my reverence for God affect my daily life?

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II. Reverence for God Affects . . .

A. OUR ATTITUDE

“and be subject to one another in the fear (reverence) of Christ.” (Ephesians 5:21, NASB95)

1. Instead of seeking to dominate our brothers and sisters in Christ or exalting ourselves, our reverence for our Lord causes us to willingly serve them.
2. Our reverence for Him prompts us to show respect for all those for whom He gave His life.

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“Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.” (1 Peter 2:17, NASB95)

3. In 1 Peter 2:17, the apostle Peter commands us to “honor [value] all people . . . the king” and to “love [ἀγαπάτε] the brotherhood”.
4. The motivation behind all this is our profound reverence and respect for God.

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5. It causes us to honor the older members of this congregation and society in general.

“You shall rise up before the grayheaded and honor the aged, and you shall revere your God; I am the Lord.” (Leviticus 19:32)

Slide 15**B. OUR BEHAVIOR**

1. Reverence for God keeps us from mistreating others around us.

“So you shall not wrong one another, but you shall fear your God; for I am the Lord your God.” (Leviticus 25:17, NASB95)

2. This includes those who have some handicap in life.

“You shall not curse a deaf man, nor place a stumbling block before the blind, but you shall revere your God; I am the Lord.” (Leviticus 19:14, NASB95)

3. In 2 Kings 2:23-24, as the prophet Elisha was beginning his ministry, he was on his way to Bethel.

- a. Some boys came out of the city of Bethel and began mocking him, saying, “Go up, you baldhead; go up, you baldhead!” (2 Kings 2:23).
- b. Because their treatment of Elisha showed disrespect for God, the Lord sent two female bears who came out of the woods and forty-two of the boys (2 Kings 2:24).

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4. Even in our older years, our reverence for God is seen in the way we live our lives (Titus 2:2-3).

“Older men are to be temperate, dignified, sensible, sound in faith, in love, in perseverance. Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good,” (Titus 2:2-3, NASB95)

Slide 17**C. THE VALIDITY OF THE GOSPEL**

1. Women, if you are trying to win your husband to Christ, Peter says that it is your “chaste and respectful behavior” which may ultimately bring him to Christ.

“In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that

even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior.” (1 Peter 3:1–2, NASB95)

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2. Later, in this same chapter, Peter said that is it our “gentleness and reverence” which makes our defense of the gospel persuasive.

“But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. And do not fear their intimidation, and do not be troubled, but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence;” (1 Peter 3:14–15, NASB95)

Conclusion

1. It is vitally important to who we are and what we are doing that we show the utmost reverence for God.
2. Satan seeks to lower God in the world’s estimation of Him so that He is no longer treated as holy.
3. He deserves our praise and adoration until the day we die.
4. This same God who is awesome in holiness and exalted above all that exists calls you to Himself.
5. His only Son came to this earth to die for our sins so that we might have an eternal relationship with His Father.
6. Will you come to Him today?