

# Exalt the Holy King

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**Bible Verse:** Psalm 99  
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Psalm 99 is our text for tonight and I'd like to read it to you as we start, a psalm about the holiness of God and exalting God for his holiness. Psalm 99, beginning in verse 1 says this,

1 The LORD reigns, let the peoples tremble; He is enthroned above the cherubim, let the earth shake! 2 The LORD is great in Zion, And He is exalted above all the peoples. 3 Let them praise Your great and awesome name; Holy is He. 4 The strength of the King loves justice; You have established equity; You have executed justice and righteousness in Jacob. 5 Exalt the LORD our God And worship at His footstool; Holy is He. 6 Moses and Aaron were among His priests, And Samuel was among those who called on His name; They called upon the LORD and He answered them. 7 He spoke to them in the pillar of cloud; They kept His testimonies And the statute that He gave them. 8 O LORD our God, You answered them; You were a forgiving God to them, And yet an avenger of their evil deeds. 9 Exalt the LORD our God And worship at His holy hill, For holy is the LORD our God.

Well, at Psalm 99 we find ourselves coming to the end of what's called the theocratic psalms in Psalm 93 through 100. Theocratic being God-centered psalms, worshiping God as King, and this psalm, Psalm 99, is a summons to those who read it, to those who hear it, to worship God in response to his holiness. The greatness of God and the majesty of God compel a humble response of ascribing greatness to his name and that is the proper response to the character of God, and we see this emphasis on worship in the threefold use of the term "exalt" throughout the psalm. You can see that this is the theme of the psalm, the exaltation of God for his holiness.

If you look at verse 2, it says, "The LORD is great in Zion, And He is exalted above all the peoples." Verse 5, "Exalt the LORD our God And worship at His footstool; Holy is He." And then in a manner of speaking, the refrain is repeated at the end of the psalm, "Exalt the LORD our God And worship at His holy hill, For holy is the LORD our God." And when we say that God is to be exalted, we are saying that his greatness means that his people should lift him high in praise and we see this emphasis on holiness also throughout this brief psalm, you see the repetition of the words showing you what the

themes are that the psalmist has called us to focus on. In verse 3 it says, "Holy is He"; in verse 5, "Holy is He"; verse 9, "holy is the LORD our God." And so there is this call to exalt God for his holiness.

Now one theologian, Bruce Milne, in the older version of his book, "Know the Truth," which I like, I don't like the newer expanded version, but in his older book, "Know the Truth," Bruce Milne said this about God's holiness, he said, "God's holiness means that He is utterly pure and perfect without any sin or evil. His very being is the outshining and outpouring of purity, truth, righteousness, justice, goodness and every moral perfection." So when we talk about the holiness of God, we realize that we are talking about someone who is lofty and this attribute, this perfection of holiness that belongs to him, is high and lofty, far beyond the thoughts and imaginations of man and that has an implication for us. The reality that God is so lofty, so separate from us, separate from us as much as an uncreated being is separate from creation, so separate as a perfect being is separate from sinful creations, there is this great gulf between God and sinful man, it's understandable why Scripture calls us to recognize this great aspect of God's character and to worship him in response. God is great and high and exalted and that means that we as his people come and respond to him by exalting him, by ascribing praise and honor to his name.

In this psalm, we're going to see the psalm in two sections based on the nature of the refrain in verse 5 and verse 9, taking those as marking out the structure for us, and the first section of the psalm in the first five verses is the recognition of God's holiness. The recognition of God's holiness and I suppose it would be worthwhile to just, to contemplate for a moment that when we talk about God, we're not using the name God in a generic sort of way to refer to whatever idea comes to anybody's mind in a given moment about their god or who God might be. When we talk about God, we are talking about God as he has revealed himself to be in the Scriptures, God as he has revealed himself in the Incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ. We are speaking about a very specific God, we're speaking about the one true God, and we are speaking of him as he has revealed himself and made himself known in his word. That's the God that we are speaking of. We must know him in truth to worship him in truth.

So with those thoughts in mind, let's look at this recognition of God's holiness in the first section of the psalm beginning in verses 1 through 3. Look at it again with me where it says,

1 The LORD reigns, let the peoples tremble; He is enthroned above the cherubim, let the earth shake! 2 The LORD is great in Zion, And He is exalted above all the peoples. 3 Let them praise Your great and awesome name; Holy is He.

Now this phrase "the LORD reigns" is something that we have seen open others psalms in this section of the theocratic psalms. Look at Psalm 93, for example, "The LORD reigns, He is clothed with majesty; The LORD has clothed and girded Himself with strength. The LORD reigns," Psalm 93:1. In Psalm 97:1 you see it again, "The LORD reigns, let the earth rejoice; Let the many islands be glad." Then we come to Psalm 99

and we see it again, "The LORD reigns, let the peoples tremble; He is enthroned above the cherubim, let the earth shake!" And so what we see here and one of the things that I've loved about teaching through the psalms over the course of several years now, is one of the things is seeing how the psalms are often grouped together and express a theme across several different psalms. One of the things that I hope that we've learned together as a result of that is that it's not the best way to study a psalm by simply seeing it in isolation without consideration of the psalms that surround it because it's obvious that the psalter was created in specific points, in specific areas, specific groupings, in order to communicate a theme across several different psalms and that's what we see here in these psalms, we see this theme of the reign of God being repeated and the aspect that we see is that this is calling forth a response.

In Psalm 97, it calls forth a response of joy. Psalm 97:1, "let the earth rejoice; Let the many islands be glad." One of the reasons that we're glad and we're joyful over the reign of God. One of the reasons that we find contentment and satisfaction in our souls is recognizing that a great God is King over all the universe. That means that we can trust him, we can be confident no matter what is happening around us either in our culture, our society, or in our personal lives, we always step back and look up and remember that however things may seem to be disjointed or out of control from our human perspective, the great reality is that God reigns no matter what we think we're seeing happen around us. So we take joy in that and that gives us a glad heart in the midst of difficulties, is to recognize that this great God is sovereign over it all, he has a plan, and he is working it out even if it doesn't seem that way from our limited perspective on any given day. We always come back to the fact, we always come back, this should be settled as a bedrock fundamental principle of our worldview that we are always able to step back whatever is happening, and remind ourselves as Scripture testifies so clearly, the Lord reigns. I may not be able, I'm completely out of my element, you might say, circumstances are spinning out of control, I don't know what's happening but rather than getting sucked into that human emotional vortex, beloved, you must have it in your mind and come back and step out again and again to come back and remind yourself, "Ah, yes, the Lord reigns. God is in control. God is King over all. He is King over kings and therefore I can have confidence and my heart can be at rest no matter what else may be happening."

This undergirds the doctrine of providence that we're going to be studying on Sunday and a couple of times together after that. This is vital for you to have a proper view of God. I would daresay that you cannot begin to worship God properly until you have some kind of sense in your mind of his utter, complete, transcendent sovereignty over all. God is sovereign over Satan. He is sovereign over you. He's sovereign over your families. He's sovereign over the nations. He's sovereign over our circumstances. When Scripture says the Lord reigns, it states it in the most unqualified sense, God is over all. God is over all and that doesn't change when the doctor's report is bad. That doesn't change when your marriage is crumbling. It doesn't change in the midst of transitions. God reigns over it all and, beloved, I ask you, I ask you whether that is settled in your mind as fundamental to the way that you view all of life. That is a most serious question for you to be able to answer. Do you see life from that perspective? And it's not a perspective that the world is

going to teach you. This is what is revealed in the word of God and so we need to have that firmly established in our minds.

So when we come to Psalm 99, then, Psalm 97 we've seen it as a source of joy but now in Psalm 99:1 there's another aspect of our response to the reign of God that we see and there is this sense of holy reverence, of holy fear, that takes place in Psalm 99:1. Look at it with me, "The LORD reigns, let the peoples tremble; He is enthroned above the cherubim, let the earth shake!" This is introducing a different aspect of our response. Joy, yes, but joy that is reverential, not superficial, not flippant, not just treating this as something light, the reality of the majesty of God and the severe nature of his holiness calls for respect and fear.

One of the ways that you can know that, many charismatic claims to having seen visions of the Lord are false and not true, which is kind of redundant, I guess, but you can know that none of these people that are claiming that they've had visions of God have really seen the one true God is because they never describe it as a matter where they are falling down in fear and trembling before him because, "My eyes have seen the Lord and I'm a man of unclean lips and I live among a people of unclean lips," like Isaiah 6 said. When people saw the glory of the Lord in Scripture, they were frightened by it. They were undone by it, as Isaiah said. And whatever people are thinking that they're seeing in their own imaginations is not the real God because they're far too flippant about it. I remember reading long ago about a guy who said, "Yeah, I saw God in the mirror while I was shaving and we had a little conversation." Well, you considered God was your own reflection. The scriptural picture of recognizing the reign of God is one that responds in trembling. It is the Lord and no other god who reigns in glory. He is separate. He and he alone rules over all. He is exalted in heaven and he has made his presence known on the earth.

Now look at the end of verse 1 there with me where it says, "He is enthroned above the cherubim, let the earth shake!" The cherubim are beings, spiritual beings who dwell in heaven with God. They were symbolically represented in the artwork placed above the ark of the covenant in the Old Testament that was sitting in the tabernacle and later in the temple. Exodus 37, you can see where these beings were symbolically represented over the ark as the symbol of God's presence on earth. The ark was kept in the Holy of Holies and we're building up to something here. As you know, the ark was kept in the Holy of Holies, only the high priest could enter that sacred area, only once a year, and even he, the high priest, could only enter after first having made a sacrifice, a blood sacrifice for himself and for the people. So you had this remote, almost mysterious presence where the ark of the covenant was kept, the symbolic representation of God's presence, cherubim pictured over the ark there, all of this creating this place of separate majesty and unique holiness that made the understanding of God as being something separate from the common people, and the majesty of the setting taught them that they were to praise and reverence him. Look at verse 2 with me, "The LORD is great in Zion, And He is exalted above all the peoples." And their response to that manifestation of his holiness was to be one of praise. Verse 3, "Let them praise Your great and awesome name; Holy is He."

And so, beloved, the holiness of God as we've defined it here and described it here, what Scripture is teaching us is that the holiness of God becomes a grounds, becomes a summons to worship him. When you recognize his separate majesty, when you recognize how high and lofty he is and you see his greatness, you by comparison start to see your own smallness; in light of infinity, you feel the weight of your finiteness; in the light of holy perfection, you feel the weight of your own sinfulness. And in that context, you're driven to worship. It becomes the grounds of worshiping him and ascribing honor to him that he possesses that you do not. Worship is ascribing greatness to God that you do not possess, recognizing his superiority over you and honoring it in an appropriate way in response.

Exodus 15:11 says this, it says, "Who is like You among the gods, O LORD? Who is like You, majestic in holiness, Awesome in praises, working wonders?" Who is God like that? There's no one like that. There is only one and it is the God revealed in Scripture.

The commentator Derek Kidner says this, he says, "Holy is a word to emphasize the distance between God and man not only morally, as between the pure and the polluted, but in the realm of being between the eternal and the creaturely." So there is this moral distance between God and us. We defiled by sin, God undefiled. There is this aspect of the very essence of being. God eternal and uncreated, us finite and creatures of time and dependent on him even for our very existence.

So as you start to meditate on these realities, meditate on the realities of who God is and how Scripture reveals him to be, and you start to recognize your own smallness by comparison, then worship becomes the natural response to that. Holiness, we can state it this way, holiness is communicating to us the transcendent majesty of God. Holiness includes his abiding wrath against sin, it includes his righteousness in every possible moral realm, and so to make this really simple, God is really really great and his greatness becomes the grounds for our response of worship in response. He is unique. He is free from sin. He is free from unrighteousness and the different manifestations of God that were made in the Old Testament all reinforce that fact.

Now this aspect of God's holiness has other implications as well. Look at verse 4 with me.

4 The strength of the King loves justice; You have established equity; You have executed justice and righteousness in Jacob.

You know, God is a King and he is a mighty King and he is a mighty King with power. Now if you read through the course of kings in biblical times or even in modern history, a man could hold the title of king but actually be in a position of weakness. This was certainly the case for the Shah of Iran at the end of his reign in the late 70s; as the revolt and the revolution was taking place against him, his position of power was increasingly vulnerable and he was not able to exercise control over the situation in part because of his declining health. He had the title of Shah, the Persian word for king, he had the title of king but he was losing, he was losing control over his realm. Sad to read about. Sad to

understand as that one-time friend of the United States lost his realm of power, but with God there's never going to be that problem with God. His reign is a mighty King and he always has power over his realm, and he uses his power, as we see here in verse 4, he uses that power to bring about justice, when he exercises his power and holiness, he does so in justice and he loves justice, it says in verse 4, and it tells us that God, the God of the Bible, is right and he is fair in everything that he does. There is no unrighteousness with him. Everything that God does is right, it is holy, and as a response to that, this psalm, having laid forth the majesty of God, the justice of God, the holiness of God, the righteousness of God, in verse 5 having laid out this recognition of God's holiness, it gives this call in verse 5. Look at it with me,

5 Exalt the LORD our God And worship at His footstool; Holy is He.

Now if you look at this metaphor, footstool, and look at it throughout Scripture, you'll find that footstool is used as a metaphor for the earth, the temple in Jerusalem, the ark of the covenant, and even the enemies of God. All of these different things referred to as a footstool for God indicating this, indicating that the realm of earth, the realm even of his enemies, the realm of anything else that you could contemplate, the idea of the footstool is communicating this: all of these locations and all of these men are under his holy reign with such great majesty and power that God can just lift up his foot and place it on them. He so thoroughly possesses them and is so thoroughly sovereign over them that they're like a footstool to a man in his home.

So, beloved, what Psalm 99 has done is it's given us these glimpses of the majesty of God as a grounds to respond to him in believing worship in response. The fact that God is like this has consequences. It means that when you and I or anyone else, are confronted with the nature of this God, the only proper response is to worship him. Even indifference is a sin against his majesty, let alone to talk about rebellion, conscious rebellion against him, conscious defiance of his reign and his law. How can we think as men, how can we think that we could defy holiness and not suffer consequences as a result? How do we think that a King of such great majesty would forever tolerate such an insult to his intrinsic greatness? God's holiness demands vindication in the end and for us at this time, we recognize that the way to respond to this God is in humble worship, and the fact that God reigns over all tells you something implicitly about the nature of your response to him. A God who reigns over all is entitled to an entirely wholehearted response in response to who he is. In other words, the God who is over all requires all of you in response. We don't partition God into one compartment of our lives and ignore him in everything else, the God who is over the universe who reigns even over his enemies, who reigns over time, reigns over every aspect of your life as well. There is a searching omniscience and a searching power to the recognition of the reign of God and his holiness that leaves a man, as Isaiah said in Isaiah 6, it leaves a man thoroughly undone and that leads us to the second section of the psalm to consider the response to God's holiness. The first five verses we've recognized God's holiness, in verses 6 through 9 we see the proper response to God's holiness.

Now as we go to verse 6, it seems like a very abrupt transition to us but what the psalmist is doing here is he's illustrating three men familiar to readers of the Old Testament, three men who knew what it was to worship. Look at verse 6 with me,

6 Moses and Aaron were among His priests, And Samuel was among those who called on His name; They called upon the LORD and He answered them. 7 He spoke to them in the pillar of cloud; They kept His testimonies And the statute that He gave them. 8 O LORD our God, You answered them; You were a forgiving God to them, And yet an avenger of their evil deeds.

Now Moses and Aaron and Samuel – watch this – they were all men that in one way or another mediated between the people of Israel and God. Moses went onto Mount Sinai and received the law as a representative of the people. Aaron stood as high priest and ministered in that capacity, mediating between the people and God. Samuel was a mediator of like sense, receiving revelation from God, even ultimately anointing Saul and then David as king, representing God to the people and representing the people to God. They stood in that position of mediation. They prayed for the people and they called on the name of God and twice in this brief section, it says that God answered them. Look at verse 6, "They called upon the LORD and He answered them." Verse 8, "O LORD our God, You answered them."

Now this brings out a whole other aspect of the reality of worship as you contemplate the holiness of God. It is not simply that God is separate and high and lofty that compels our worship in response to him, although it certainly does that. This God who is holy is a God who makes himself known to his people. This is incomprehensible. This is utterly beyond the realm of human comprehension, of human thought, to think that a God like that, a God that is transcendent is, to use the theological term, the God who is transcendent is also a God who is imminent, in other words, a God who is near. God is transcendent and yet he is a God who is near to his people and the reality that a God who does not need us would be a God to us brings out a whole other dimension of worship, a response of worship not of fear and trembling but a worship of gratitude and love in response. "God, You're a God like that and yet You're a God to me like You were to Samuel, Aaron and Moses? O God, I thank You! O God, I bow before You, I worship You!" Such a great God being such a good God as well.

You see this dual aspect of worship. Psalm 100, "Shout joyfully to the LORD, all the earth. Serve the LORD with gladness." Verse 3, "Know that the LORD Himself is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves." The greatness of God being a grounds for worship, and yet there's another aspect to it, there's another dimension in which we worship and approach God in gratitude. Verse 4, "Enter His gates with thanksgiving And His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him, bless His name." Why? "For the LORD is good." He is great and transcendent and yet he is good and a God to his people.

Now beloved, I want to tell you, a God like that is worthy of wholehearted worship, of wholehearted praise and there's another aspect to this reality and this summons to

worship that we see in Psalm 99:6 and the verses that follow. Remember in verse 5 it said, "Exalt the LORD our God And worship at His footstool." Moses, Aaron, Samuel, they called on his name and in worship we lift high, we magnify, we give weight to the name of God and we call upon him. We pray to him. We seek him. We seek his hand. We seek his blessing. And in referring to Moses, Aaron and Samuel and telling us two times that God answered them, what is it saying to us as we read that psalm here today, as we read it even now 2,000-3,000 years later after it was written? What does it tell us? What does it say to you? It is attaching a promise to this call to worship that is meant to incite you and invite you to obey the call to worship. In other words, what is happening here is this, is that attached to the command to worship is a promise that God will respond, that God will bless you as you seek him in this way; that a man does not seek God and worship him in vain. Moses, Aaron and Samuel illustrate the fact that God answers the men who call upon him and, therefore, inviting us to follow in the example of these men of like human flesh to us and to recognize that the God who answered them is a God that will answer us. Beloved, beloved, beloved, no one truly worships this God in vain.

Look at Hebrews 11:6. In fact you could say that intrinsic in true biblical faith is an understanding of that very principle. Hebrews 11:6, while not quoting this psalm specifically, is telling us in New Testament language the very principle that we are discussing here. Hebrews 11:6 says that "without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him." You see, the call to biblical faith, the call to biblical worship is not simply to project thoughts onto God but to recognize that God blesses the people who seek him in spirit and in truth. John 4:24 says that he is seeking those who will worship him in spirit and in truth and part of your responsibility as a believer is to realize that when you are seeking him, to have a sense of expectation that he will bless you as a response. This seeking of him and worshiping of him is not a vain empty exercise but it is a reality to which God blesses those who seek him in spirit and in truth.

And so, beloved, I need to ask you a pastoral question: do you believe God like that? Do you believe that when you seek him in his word, when you pray to him, that when you gather together as the people of God, do you have a sense of conscious anticipation and expectation that God will bless you as a result of your obedience to that? You see, I realize and I understand it's really easy to just kind of slip into a routine and just kind of go through the motions and not really contemplate what it is that we're doing. Well, one of the blessings of Scripture in studying through the Scriptures together like we do, is that it stirs us up and it reminds us of who God is, of the way that he responds to the faith and worship of his people, and that we are not doing this in vain. We are not doing an empty ritual here. We are not simply going through motions and genuflecting at the altar of flour and wine, as the Catholics do. When we approach God through the Lord Jesus Christ, we are engaging in the ultimate act of reality and we have an expectation for God to bless us, protect us, and help us as we do. That's who God is, he rewards those who seek him and, beloved, if you've come here today with faltering faith and the trials of life are just about to pull you under, let these words from Psalm 99 be an encouragement to you to persevere and to renew your faith once more.

Look at it there again in verse 6, "They called upon the LORD and He answered them." Verse 8, "O LORD our God, You answered them." And beloved, what I encourage you, what I invite you to, what I call you to in light of these Scriptures is for you to aim your life and to aim your faith at being this kind of worshiper, one who calls upon the Lord expecting him to honor you for that, and that your life would bear witness and testimony to the fact that God was faithful to you just as much as he was to those men of old in biblical times. We do not worship him in vain. God is a rewarder of those who seek him. Believing that is intrinsic to faith, the faith without which it is impossible to please him.

Now this God has made himself known through his revelation. Look at verse 7. To Moses, Aaron and Samuel in this context in verse 7 he spoke to them in the pillar of cloud. God made himself known. He revealed himself to them. They responded in obedience. They kept his testimonies and the statute that he gave to them. God spoke to them, he gave them his testimonies, he gave them his statutes, and they responded in belief and in submission to that, and what was God to them as they responded to him in that kind of faith? Look at verse 8 with me, "O LORD our God, You answered them; You were a forgiving God to them, And yet an avenger of their evil deeds." God forgave them even as he dealt with their sin.

And beloved, beloved, there's just so much here as there is in every aspect, every part of Scripture. I'm just kind of reinforcing what I said earlier. The fact that God answered their prayers, the fact that God forgave their sins tells us something about what this transcendent God is like, what this holy God is like. Yes, he is transcendent. Yes, he is majestic in holiness. Yes, he is perfect in all of his attributes. Yes, he is uncreated. And yet what this tells us is that he is such a good God, the fact that he answered their prayers and forgave them shows that he is good.

And it seems like we come back to this point a lot again and again and again and I'm glad for that. Beloved, I just want to reinforce to you again what we've said many many times is that it is just so vitally crucial for you to worship God truly and to grow in your sanctification, it is vital for you to have settled in your mind, yes, his sovereignty but also, yes, his goodness. God is a good God to you and you cannot let yourself entertain doubts that question the goodness of God or his intentions for you. If you know God truly through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, he is a good God to you and that must be settled in your mind.

So he is a forgiving, kind God without contradicting his holiness and what does that mean, beloved, when we put these things together? This great holiness of God, this great goodness of God, his great holiness, his great justice, his great mercy means that you should consciously and wholeheartedly submit to him by exalting him, by praising him, by worshiping him, and it is our privilege and it is our responsibility as the people of God to lead the way in worship so that all the people of the earth could see.

Yet another writer said this, said worship is an act of submission to his kingship and a proper response to his awe-inspiring presence. "God, I honor You. God, I worship You. I ascribe greatness and majesty and goodness and mercy to Your name and Your name is

Your character. I ascribe to You all that You are." And that there is a sense in which that that is our highest calling in life no matter what our vocations may be. Our greatest, your greatest highest calling in life is to respond to God like that in response to his revelation of himself.

So with all of those things in mind, the psalm concludes with another summons to worship. Look at verse 9 with me. Having recognized his holiness, having illustrated through biblical men the nature of God's interactions with his people, the psalm concludes with another summons to worship. In light of all of these things that we've seen in the first eight verses, it says,

9 Exalt the LORD our God And worship at His holy hill, For holy is the LORD our God.

Now the holy hill is a reference to the temple hill in Jerusalem. Follow me here, beloved, the temple hill in the Old Testament was a place where God had made himself known, where he had revealed himself, where his presence was manifested, and in response to that, there is this statement of intimacy that worship involves. Look at it, go to verse 9, "Exalt the LORD our God, holy is the LORD our God." Do you see the word "our" there? He is our God. He belongs to us. We are his people and he is our God. There is an intimacy here to this indicating that this transcendent God can be known through faith and where God has made himself known is where his people are to gather and to worship in response to it.

Now stay with me here. I'm about to make a really important transitional point, okay? In the Old Testament, God made himself known in Jerusalem. For us now in the New Testament era, he has made himself known in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, where God became man, came to earth and displayed the works and the words of God as God himself lived among us in human flesh. We gather today now to worship this God where he has made himself known and where he has made himself known now in light of the fullness of all biblical revelation in the 66 books of the Bible is in the person of Christ. We don't go to a physical location to find his presence manifested, we go to the Lord Jesus Christ revealed in his word and say, "This is where God has made His final revelation known."

Look at Hebrews again, chapter 1 with me, and you'll see this culminating climax in the Lord Jesus Christ yet again. In Hebrews 1:1, just illustrating the point that I'm making here that in the Old Testament there was this manifestation of God in Jerusalem and in his prophets, now we look someplace else. Hebrews 1:1, "God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us," what? "In His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. And He," meaning Christ, "is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much better than the angels, as He has inherited a more excellent name than they."

Beloved, what we are to do in New Testament times is to follow revelation all the way through. Psalm 99 calling Old Testament believers to worship at the holy hill of God because – and this is what's critical to it – this is where God had made his presence known. Now we ask the question 3,000 years later, "Where has God made His presence known?" Scripture tells us he has made himself known in the person of Christ. This is his final revelation. This is where God has spoken in a final, ultimate, climactic sense. As a result of that, then, we come to this great transcendent God and we worship him in, by and through the Lord Jesus Christ who, as we saw on Sunday, said, "I am the way, the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me." And the way that you and I now approach this God in worship is not through an Old Testament mediator like a high priest, a human, mere man high priest, not through Moses, not through Samuel, the ultimate final mediator has been given to us in the Lord Jesus Christ and that is where the true people of God gather around to give him this worship, is by faith alone, in Christ alone, recognizing that Christ is the center-point of the worship of God now to his people, the center-point of worship in this New Testament era. We worship God in, through and by the Lord Jesus Christ. We don't need the physical location, we have the ultimate manifestation of God in the Incarnation of his Son. So the call now to worship this God is a call to come to him through faith in Christ. The God who reigns is holy, you're a sinner. You need a mediator if you are to approach him and that mediator is Jesus Christ. 1 Timothy 2 says there is one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus.

And beloved, just to wrap this up, in Christ this transcendent holy God of whom we have been speaking, in Christ God himself came to reveal himself in a final ultimate way. God himself came to reconcile us to himself. This God manifesting Christ, this God fully Incarnate in Christ, shed his blood on the cross to stand between this holy God and your violations of his law. That display of holiness on the cross, that display of mercy at the cross is the place where God is ultimately made known now. You and I, we're not holy. We're fallen, we're sinful, and yet God has provided access of worship through the atonement in Christ in the forgiveness of our sins. He has given us a new birth of which we've spoken a lot in recent days. He has made us new. He has claimed us as his own. In an ultimate sense, he is our God and, beloved, if he has done that work in your life, forgiven you and sanctified you in a positional sense despite your sin, and if you have been forgiven, then beloved, surely you see that the only proper response to God is that you should lift high the name of Christ, lift high this holy God who is so great in his own essence and yet has condescended to be so kind and forgiving to you, that calls forth the ultimate fulfillment, the ultimate wholehearted response of worship to this God who has forgiven you like that.

In Hebrews 12:28 it says this and with this I close, it says, "Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe; for our God is a consuming fire." A holy God accessed through faith in Christ, the response one of gratitude, one of reverence, one of awe, gathering all of that up, a response of worship to the greatness of the majesty of God as he has made himself known in our Lord Jesus Christ. Will you respond to him like that tonight?

Let's pray.

*Our Father, we do ascribe worship to You. We honor Your great and holy and majestic name. Thank You for making Yourself known to the prophets of old. Thank You, Father, for the greater privilege that is ours to know Christ, to know the Gospel, things into which angels long to look, Father, are ours through faith in Christ. And Father, You did that for sinners like us, rebels like us, sinners, unclean, unworthy, ungrateful, and yet by a powerful work of Your Holy Spirit, You drew us to Christ, called us in an effective powerful way that we would belong to You forever, and You would be our God and You would be our people, rescued from judgment and destruction into a realm that leads to glory, giving us an inheritance and a kingdom which cannot be shaken, these things are ours? O God, however imperfectly we may do it in this moment, we express our gratitude to You. We offer to You ourselves as Your servants. We offer You our powers, our talents, our gifts, our resources, our times, everything about ourselves, Father, we offer to You as an act of service and worship in response. We revere Your name. We stand in awe of the greatness of Your majesty. We worship this God who is a consuming fire and yet has touched our lips with the burning coal and cleansed us that our tongues might be purified in order to give You an acceptable response from the praise of our hearts. Father, I pray for each one here, each one watching, each one listening later into the future, that Your Spirit would so work to convict us of the greatness of Your majesty and at the same time the goodness of Your mercy to us, that our hearts might be united in a proper response of praise, worship and adoration that simply carries us on wings that ultimately lead us into our appointed destination, our inheritance in Your presence around the throne of our Lord Jesus. We pray these things in his matchless name. Amen.*

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