

A Lord's Day Snippet!

Biblical And Southern Studies

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1. Jehovah sovereign King doth reign,
Let guilty sinners quake;
He sits between the cherubims,
The earth let reel, and shake.
2. The Lord, in Sion, great appears,
High o'er all people raised.
3. By them, thy great, and dreadful name,
Which holy is, be praised.
- 4 The king, in all his strength, delights
In judgment; he ordains
What's right; in Jacob, justice he,
And equity, maintains.
5. Jehovah, our great God, exalt,
And worshiping bow down;
Prostrate, before his footstool, fall,
For he's the holy One.
6. Moses, and Aaron, with his priests,
Samuel, with those addressed
His sacred name, called on the Lord;
Who answered their request.
7. God, from the pillar of a cloud,
Declared to them his will;
Then they his testimonies kept,
And statutes did fulfill.
8. Thou answeredst them, O Lord, our God;
Thy people for their sake,
Forgavest oft, yet on their works,
Didst just revenges take.
9. Therefore exalt the Lord, our God,
And in his courts adore;
Because Jehovah, our great God
Is holy evermore.

John Barnard (1681-1770)

Holy, Holy, Holy

“Thy great and terrible name ... is holy.... The Lord our God ... he is holy.... Exalt the LORD our God, and
worship at his holy hill; for the LORD our God is holy.”

Psalm 99:3, 5, 9

Psalm 99 is called “The Holy, Holy, Holy Psalm.” *First*, He is to be worshipped whose name is Holy. The LORD is reigning as King, who is the great LORD of Zion, who is high above all the people who should praise His great and revered name which is holy. “Let them praise thy great and terrible name; for it is holy.” “Name” here signifies essence, character or all his attributes in conjunction. All His attributes take on the essence of His holiness for He has holy justice, holy love, holy wrath, etc. Remember how our Lord taught His disciples to pray to the Father in heaven, “hallowed be thy name.” Thus, in worship and life we are to set God’s name above all others, and not only show Him admiration, but adore Him, which is proper only to the Deity. “Hallowing God’s name is to give Him high honor and veneration, and render His name sacred. We can add nothing to His essential glory; but we are said to honor and sanctify His name when we lift Him up in the world, and make Him appear greater in the eyes of others.... He cannot be greater than He is, only we may make Him appear greater in the eyes of others” [T. Watson]. This is our purpose in true worship.

Second, He is to be worshipped whose person is holy. The reigning LORD is the strong King who loves and executes justice. “Exalt ye the LORD our God, and worship at his footstool; for he is holy.” “He is holy” which is in the seraphic song wherein the seraphim “cried unto one another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory” (Isa. 6:3). The word “holy” with reference to God refers to His otherness in which He is different from us and transcends all else and is thus one of a kind who is transcendent. “The holiness of God is ... that divine perfection by which God is absolutely distinct from all His creatures, and is exalted above them in infinite majesty ... (and) the ethical holiness of God, which consists in His separation from moral evil, that is, from sin” [Berkhof]. “Worship” in the Hebrew means to bow down or prostrate oneself before this holy Jehovah. This worship may be private, public, internal or external. Jesus said such worship should be in spirit and in truth. This worship is to “exalt the LORD your God.” Are we worshipping at the Holy One’s “footstool.” This is the place of prostration and submission at the feet of the reigning King. This is also the place of confession, exaltation, admiration, and adoration. Why worship at His footstool? “He is holy.”

Third, He is to be worshipped whose presence is holy and He is worshipped in the place of His holy hill. There are examples to follow in Moses, Aaron, and Samuel for they called upon His name. “They called upon the LORD, and he answered them. He spake unto them in the cloudy pillar: they kept his testimonies, and the ordinance that he gave them.” The answer was, O LORD our God: you are a God that forgave them, though you punished

their sinful behavior. “Exalt the LORD our God, and worship at his holy hill; for the LORD our God is holy.” Yes, the presence of the One who is personally holy is a holy presence. Here we have the third “holy” in Psalm 99. Here is another *treishagios* (Greek, *treis* three, *hagios* holy) or *Ter Sanctus* (Latin) three times holy (Isa. 6:3; Rev. 4:8). This Holy God is to be “exalted or lifted up in adoration.” He is to be worshipped at His holy hill which was the place of public worship. Why should He be “exalted” and “worshipped?” “For the LORD our God is holy.” This glorious transcendent One is owed worship. Jesus quoting Scripture said, “Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve” (Matt. 4:10; Deut. 6:13).

Our holy, holy, holy Jehovah God whom we worship is our mercy seat as He sits between the cherubim, and He reigns which impacts our behavior as we tremble in awe before Him in worship. Mary Slessor the missionary to Nigeria when she could no longer walk great distances pushed herself along in a handcart to reach the people. After years of hard work and exposure to the elements, a painful and crippling form of rheumatoid arthritis forced her to take periods of rest. Still, she kept at her post as long as she was able. She died of fever and dysentery on January 13, 1915, at sixty-two years of age. When Mary was dying, she accosted herself by asking, “Why do you worry? Is God not fit to take care of His own universe and purpose?” Then she would return to the thought and words, “The LORD reigneth,” whereby she then rested as if on a soft pillow.

Charles H. Spurgeon commented, “‘Exalt the LORD our God.’ A second time the delightful title of Jehovah our God is used, and it is quickly followed by a third. The Psalm is Trinitarian in its whole structure. In each of His sacred persons the Lord is the God of His people; the Father is ours; the Son is ours; and the Holy Spirit is ours: let us exalt Him with all our ransomed powers. ‘And worship at His holy hill.’ Where he appoints His temple let us resort. No spot of ground is now fenced about as peculiarly holy, or to be regarded as more sacred than another; yet His visible church is His chosen hill, and there would we be found, numbered with his people, and unite with them in worship. ‘For the LORD our God is holy.’ Again, this devout description is repeated, and made the climax of the song. Oh, for hearts made pure within, so that we may rightly perceive and worthily praise the infinite perfection of the Triune Lord.”