

I.N.I.

2nd Sunday after Pentecost
June 18, 2017
I Kings 8:41-43

In Christ Jesus, whose name we proclaim in every worship service to the Glory of our Triune God and for the salvation of all people, Dear Fellow Redeemed,

In our catechism under the First Petition of the Lord's Prayer (Hallowed be Thy Name) there is a question: What is God's name? The answer: "God's name is what identifies and describes Him. It is every revelation God has made about Himself." In other words, God's name is really His Word that reveals who He is and what He has done for us. There are three passages listed:

I am the LORD, that is My name; And My glory I will not give to another, Nor My praise to carved images. (Is. 42:8)

In every place where I record My name I will come to you, and I will bless you. (Ex. 20:24)

For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved." (Rom. 10:13)

The next question asks: What do we learn about God from His name? Answer: "We learn that God is our loving Savior from His name."

When the Israelites dedicated the ornate, beautiful new temple King Solomon offered up a prayer of dedication. In that prayer Solomon mentions God's name many, many times. In our short text of 3 verses he mentions God's name 4 times. That is because out from that temple the name of the LORD, or His Word would be proclaimed. That is not unusual.

What is unusual is that the LORD'S name, His Word would be proclaimed to the foreigner, the stranger. Even though God had chosen His people Israel, He also is desirous that all be saved, even in the Old Testament times. Not all Israelites believed this, or taught this or acted this way. They looked down upon the foreigner. But God did not want His Name, His Word only to be proclaimed to Abraham's seed.

Solomon prays: **MOREOVER, CONCERNING A FOREIGNER, WHO IS NOT OF YOUR PEOPLE ISRAEL, BUT HAS COME FROM A FAR COUNTRY FOR YOUR NAME'S SAKE '(FOR THEY WILL HEAR OF YOUR GREAT NAME AND YOUR STRONG HAND AND YOUR OUTSTRETCHED ARM),**

What is the reason a foreigner would come to the temple, to the house of God? He has heard a message about God's great name. God's name, His Word draws him. And what did these foreigners hear? They did not hear what they needed to do to appease this God. How they had to sacrifice themselves or their children to satisfy this God's anger. That was the message of the other religions of Solomon's day. The nations surrounding Israel also said they had gods with great names. These gods demanded the people sacrifice themselves, their goods and their possessions in order to get on the good side of their god. They had to do something.

But notice what Solomon says the foreigner will hear from Jehovah's temple...**THEY WILL HEAR OF YOUR GREAT NAME AND YOUR STRONG HAND AND YOUR OUTSTRETCHED ARM.** They will hear what this God has done for them! Instead of demanding something of them, this God gives to them. He protects them and provides for them with His powerful hand and outstretched arm. Hands busy at work or busy fighting are not held close to the body. They are at the end of arms that are reaching, pulling, pushing and slashing. Strong hands were symbolic of a good provider and also a trustworthy source of protection. This, God had been doing for Israel ever since He called Abraham. Leading him, providing for him, protecting him. This He had done for the Israelites throughout their history, even while in Egypt. His mighty hand and powerful arms were shown in the ten plagues, the parting of the Red Sea and the Jordan River, in the destruction of one nation after another so that they now lived in peace and safety in the Promised Land of Canaan. But even greater it was seen in the promise of the Messiah---the One who would come and destroy Satan's power and set them free from sin, death, Satan and hell.

This God, actually, lovingly involved Himself in the affairs of His people and would draw them to Him by His name, His Word that they would hear. He would even draw the foreigner to Himself.

And even as amazing is that this God would hear the foreigner when he prayed and answer his prayer. We read from our text: **WHEN HE COMES AND PRAYS TOWARD THIS TEMPLE, HEAR IN HEAVEN YOUR DWELLING PLACE...**

Solomon is praying that the LORD Jehovah not only hear His people when they pray, but also hear the foreigner who trusts in Him. David said this in Psalm 34: **OH, MAGNIFY THE LORD WITH ME, AND LET US EXALT HIS NAME TOGETHER. I SOUGHT THE LORD, AND HE HEARD ME, AND DELIVERED ME FROM ALL MY FEARS...THE ANGEL OF THE LORD ENCAMPS ALL AROUND THOSE WHO FEAR HIM, AND DELIVERS THEM.**

Solomon also prays that the LORD answer those prayers with a blessing. We read **AND DO ACCORDING TO ALL FOR WHICH THE FOREIGNER CALLS TO YOU THAT ALL PEOPLES OF THE EARTH MAY KNOW YOUR NAME AND FEAR YOU, AS DO YOUR PEOPLE ISRAEL, AND THAT THEY MAY KNOW THAT THIS TEMPLE WHICH I HAVE BUILT IS CALLED BY YOUR NAME.**

Solomon's concern is for the building up of the foreigner's faith and the spread of the LORD'S name. When the LORD answers the foreigner's prayer, His power is being revealed, His promises are being confirmed, and people are moved to tell others about the good things that the Lord has done for them. Doing this then causes **ALL PEOPLES OF THE EARTH (to) KNOW YOUR NAME AND FEAR YOU.**

A second concern for Solomon was that when the foreigner's prayers are answered and God's name is spread and proclaimed people will **KNOW THAT THIS TEMPLE WHICH I HAVE BUILT IS CALLED BY YOUR NAME.** The temple in Jerusalem was the center for the true worship that the only true God had established. All the other temples and places of worship to other gods were man-made idols. Practicing the true worship that the only true God, the LORD Jehovah had ordained, would build up the foreigner's faith even further.

Two strong themes run through this Old Testament text—prayer and missions. And so our theme this morning is also a prayer with a mission thought.

Lord, Use this Your House to Reach Others!

I: Draw them.

II: Hear them.

III: Bless them.

When we proclaim God's name, the message of salvation alone through God's Son, Jesus Christ, that message draws others to the Lord. They are led away from work-righteous beliefs that they can earn their own way into heaven and God's presence. It reveals to them their great need of a Savior when they see their lost condition of sin and spiritual death. When we proclaim God's strong hands and outstretched arms have saved us through Jesus coming into this world as a human being, taking our place suffering, dying and rising again, others will be drawn to the Lord. When we see what great things God has done for us---saving us from all of our sins and promising us eternal life in heaven--- we too will want to tell others. We pray the Lord use this house and the words that come from this house to do that.

We also pray that when others come to the Lord in faith and cry out to Him that He answer their prayers, thereby showing them His love and compassion, His might and power, His saving zeal and desire. This in turn will strengthen their faith and our own as we see the Word working in the hearts of others who had not known Jesus before.

We in the New Testament do not have a temple like that in Jerusalem, but we do have houses of God where we worship the only true God, the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. A house of God where we proclaim God's name, that is, what this God has done for us in the person of Jesus. This message draws others into God's family and into His house.

May we be busy in our daily lives praying like Solomon did, that this name of our God be proclaimed to others of different nations, cultures and races. May we realize that our loving Savior gave the Great Commission to each of us individually, so that we too busy ourselves in proclaiming this message to others whom we know.

Through Jesus all people are drawn to the Father, and all prayer that comes to the Father's throne of grace in Jesus' name will be heard and answered.

And so we pray...Lord Jesus, give us a love for lost souls as Solomon had. Move us to speak Your name to others and support the proclamation of Your name to others in our prayers and in our offerings. We pray that You, through the Holy Spirit, draw many to Your house to hear Your Gospel message of salvation only through Jesus and bring them into Your family and Your kingdom. We ask this in Your powerful saving name. Amen.