

Hallowed be your name

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[0 : 00] As I mentioned earlier, we'll be looking at this line, exceptions people might have on this topic.

So in context, the words, hallowed be your name, are spoken by Jesus as an instruction on the subject of praying. It's the second part of Matthew 6, verse 9, as we read.

The first part being the addressee, God, the Father. But I think it would be a fair comment to say that hallowed be your name was the first main petition to be made in this prayer.

So there's a definite priority to the text. But the text raises two major questions. So what exactly does hallowed mean?

And what is God's name? If you Google the word hallowed, the first definition you'll come across is this. to honor as holy.

[1 : 29] If you're a Christian, it's easy to see why you want to do this. You've seen the grace of God in your life. And the proper response, being filled with the Spirit, would be to honor his name.

As echoed in Psalm 111. He sent redemption to his people. He has commanded his covenant forever. Holy and awesome is his name.

It's also a commandment, as we see in Exodus 20, verse 7. You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God. The implication being that it is honored.

This hallowed be your name, part of the Lord's Prayer, is such a famous text that it's taken on a variety of meanings to different people. So when you hear it, some people might think of images like this.

It's a large building that you go to very occasionally to recite prayers, light candles, and often the habits and the rituals take priority over the word.

[2 : 41] Excuse me. I ate a whole bunch of chocolate earlier and it's really sticking in my throat.

So as a 10-year-old boy, for me, it was part of the school chant, which I actually didn't mind at the time because it was about the only thing I could remember all the way through.

And as a 20-year-old boy, if I heard the words, hallowed be thy name, I probably would have responded by throwing my hands on my drink in the air and hollering at the top of my voice.

Because to a large portion of people my age, hallowed be thy name, is actually the name of a very famous heavy metal song by this band. Anybody tell me what band that is?

Not you two. Very good. Iron Maiden. So according to Wikipedia, this song, hallowed be thy name, has been acclaimed as one of the greatest heavy metal songs of all time, which is debatable, but not unrealistic.

[3 : 54] And I always laugh when I see this picture, actually, because that guy there has hair almost exactly like my sister's. So moving on.

So let's look at this word, hallowed. This is the Greek word that's used in Matthew 6, which I believe to be pronounced lazol. Probably got that wrong somewhere.

The English is hallowed be. And according to Strong's word Greek 37, it means to make sacred or to make holy, to sanctify, to set apart as something that is holy for God's use, for the service of God.

I have a couple of examples that can help explain that. So, we as believers have been sanctified. We've come from belonging to the rest of the world to belonging to God.

We were set apart by Jesus to be holy. This is stated in Hebrews 10.10 where the writer quotes Jesus.

[5 : 13] I quote, First he said, sacrifices and offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not desire, nor were you pleased with them, though they were offered in accordance with the law.

Then he said, Here I am. I've come to do your will. He sets aside the first to establish the second and by that will we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once and

for all.

End quote. And Jesus himself, when praying for the twelve apostles, said this in John 17, verse 16. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it.

Lord, sanctify them by your truth. Your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For them, I sanctify myself that they too may be truly sanctified.

So there's our meaning. So to hallow is to set something apart as something holy. It's what Jesus wants for his people, as he did for us by sanctifying himself.

[6 : 25] Offering himself as a sacrifice. I'll just point out that in the following verses, Jesus goes on to expand that prayer to all believers. To all who would come to believe in him.

Which is us, isn't it? Now I'd like to just take a quick, very quick detour and raise a couple of points on that. So occasionally in the New Testament, Jesus displays his omniscience, his all-knowingness by revealing that he knew people perfectly and the future perfectly.

I'm thinking particularly of the Samaritan woman at the well. In John 4, 29, she says, come, come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. I think it wouldn't be a stretch to say at this point that at the time of praying for the people who are yet to believe in him, Jesus had you and me very personally in mind.

I think we should be encouraged and amazed by that. That's my first point. It's the meaning of hallowed.

Excuse me. So when you read the Bible, there's no escaping that God is most definitely in the name.

[7 : 58] Most definitely in the business of naming things. It's from the very first chapter in the Bible, verse 4. God names the day and he names the night. Later, he names people.

He named Adam, the very first person. He also changes people's names. Abraham and Sarah would be good examples of that. So names are important to God and are important to us as well, aren't they?

Not just as identifiers, because our names are more than that. They have significant meaning. In Hebrew, my name means bringer of light.

I think we can all agree that that's true. And if you've ever felt the pain of not being able to find your name in a key ring in a gift shop, then you know what I'm talking about.

I should have a theory that the higher the value is of your name in Scrabble, the less likely you are to find the key ring that you want with your name. Anyway. So there are many, many names for God in the Old Testament.

[9 : 09] Usually, each name describes a different characteristic. So a few examples would be, as you see on the screen, El Eloah, which means God, mighty, strong, and prominent.

El Shaddai, which is God Almighty, and El Elyon, which means the most high. The references are there should you want to look them up.

The list goes on, but there is one very distinctive moment in the Old Testament where God reveals his name definitively, and that's in Exodus 3, 11 to 15.

So if we could turn that in our Bibles, if someone would like to shout out a page number, that would be helpful. 59 and 60, thank you.

Moses said to God, who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?

[10 : 29] And God said, I will be with you, and this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you. when you brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain.

Moses said to God, suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, the God of your fathers has sent me to you, and they ask me, what is his name?

Then what shall I tell them? God said to Moses, I am who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites, I am has sent me to you.

God also said to Moses, say to the Israelites, the Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob has sent me to you.

This is my name forever, the name you should call me from generation to generation. Amen. I won't pretend I understand any Hebrew.

[11 : 30] I did do a little research and we'll touch on it briefly as it's actually extremely important. Okay. So in verse 14 of Exodus 3, God refers to himself as I am.

In Hebrew, this is the word that you see on the screen, Iah. In the next verse, verse 15, Moses refers to God as the Lord.

And this is a different word in the Hebrew text, the word Yahweh, or another name for Yahweh would be Jehovah. But how that process happened is very long and very complicated and I could only just about get my head around so we won't go into that today.

We can recognize it though because when you see the word Lord capitalized in the Old Testament, that's the word that you're seeing, Yahweh. So here we have Ea and Yahweh as God's names. Yahweh is a name as the text said that we are to refer to him as from generation to generation. So according to Strong's, both of these words mean much the same thing.

[12:51] when God says, I am who I am, he's saying I exist, I'm self-sufficient and there's a nuance going on in the tense of these words that we don't have in English.

The simplest way of putting it would be to say that he exists now and he exists forever, past, present, future. Or to quote Isaiah 44 6 which is on the screen, Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts, I am the first and I am the last.

Besides me there is no God. Does this remind anybody of a particular verse from the New Testament? Yeah.

Yeah. So Revelation 1.8 I am the Alpha and the Omega says the Lord God who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.

So God is a definite name, Yahweh. He has definite qualities. He is according to his own description the beginning and the very end of everything.

[14:15] So we know that God's name is to be set apart as holy, particularly in prayer. And now we have a name, Yahweh.

Are you all with me so far? That takes us to our next point, point three. It's why should we hallow his name?

So I'd settle with this, because Jesus says so, and that would be enough for me. If you need more, the Bible is full of reasons.

Think of Genesis 1. He made light, dark, earth, sky, seas, trees, life, everything, basically. Yahweh breathe, the food you eat all belongs to God.

Hebrews 2.10, everything belongs to God and all things were created by his power. Or we can go back and we can look at the names of God to find the answers.

[15:18] why should we set God's name apart as holy? He is a healer. Exodus 15.26, for I am the Lord, Yahweh, who heals you.

He is faithful, Deuteronomy 7.9, know therefore that the Lord, Yahweh, your God, is God, he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commandments.

He is merciful, Deuteronomy 4.31, for the Lord, Yahweh, again, your God is a merciful God. He will not abandon or destroy you or forget the covenant with your ancestors which he confirmed to them by oath.

He is omniscient. He has perfect knowledge. We heard from Ben last week. There are more stars in the sky than there are grains of sand on all the beaches and the deserts of the world.

And yet God calls all of those stars by name according to Psalm 147. In fact, that psalm is full of reasons to praise God's name. It's definitely worth reading.

[16:37] I don't know about you, but when I try and learn a name, I forget it two minutes later. Anyway, I could go on. There are many reasons according to scripture why God's name should be hallowed.

As Christians, most of us have seen hard evidence in our lives. Evidence of God's grace. We should be alert in hallowing his name.

We should be alert in carrying that forward. You might have the following objection. Why should we hallow God's name? What about disasters?

What about disease? What about death? Is he worthy of that when there's so much suffering in the world? I wanted to address this because I think it's a fair question.

If you've ever experienced those things, you know how vile they are. It's definitely worth thinking about. If you're not a Christian and these things are stopping you from turning to God, what I would say to you is you don't know the full story about death.

[17:53] And this brings me to the all-time number one reason why we need to hallow the name of our God. John 3, 16. For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

And then go to read Revelation 21 4, which is a vision of the future. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away.

See, the world says to you in TV, films, radio, news, the BBC, death is the end. That's it. But God says no.

My son defeated that years ago. All you need to do is go and ask him about it. If you're a Christian and you're struggling to sanctify God's name at a time of trial, I say to you, remember who God is.

The Father who sent the Son, because you know Jesus. here's a verse from 2 Timothy 1, 9-10.

[19 : 12] He has saved us and called us to a holy life, not because of anything we have done, but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Saviour, Christ Jesus who has destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

So is Yahweh's name worthy of being hallowed? Absolutely yes. Come disasters, we can say, hallowed be your name.

In disease, we can say, hallowed be your name. Even in death, we can say, hallowed be your name. Amen.

Let's sing 817. O Jesus Christ within me grow. Amen. Let's sing 817. Let's sing 817.