

The Lord's Excellent Name

Joe Slater

“Oh LORD, our Lord, how excellent is Your name in all the earth” (Psalm 8:1).

The excellence of God's name goes far beyond the four Hebrew letters that spelled it (they would correspond to our letters YHWH) or the sounds that articulated it. In fact, most Jews at the time of Christ so strongly feared mispronouncing it that they had forgotten the exact sounds and didn't even try.

In both Old and New Testaments, His name refers to His attributes – the traits which characterize Him. We immediately think of such qualities as His power and His love. David thought of these also:

“When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars which You have ordained . . .” (8:3). Obviously, David didn't believe that a speck of nothing just exploded for no reason and produced the universe of which we are a part. Such absurdities are neither scientific nor Biblical. Only a Being with infinite power and intelligence can bring something into existence out of nothing. David knew, as we know, Who that Being is, and that He is worthy of our praise and adoration.

Having created the universe, this infinitely-powerful God lovingly put it under the dominion of humans! *“What is man, that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him? For you have made him a little lower than the angels, and You have crowned him with glory and honor. You have made him to have dominion over all the works of your hands; You have put all things under his feet”* (8:4-6).

Unlimited power – infinite love – *“O LORD, our Lord, how excellent is Your name in all the earth!”*

Local Church Membership

An elder in another city called a family that had attended services a number of times. He had found that they were members of the body of Christ. He asked them where their membership was. “We hope our names are in the book of life,” the lady answered. “That is fine,” he replied, “but where is your membership?” It developed that it was nowhere. They considered themselves members of the universal body of Christ, but were not affiliated with any certain congregation.

It is true that to be a member of the church means that one is a member of the universal body of Christ (Ephesians 1:22-23). The Lord adds those who are being saved to the church (Acts 2:47). Christ is the savior of the body (Ephesians 5:23). This is highly important, and nothing should ever be said to disparage these facts.

However, a Christian should be a member of a local congregation. Paul's letters such as Romans, First Corinthians, Ephesians, etc., were written to local churches. John's letters in Revelation chapters 2-3 are addressed to local churches (Ephesus, Sardis, Laodicea, Philadelphia, etc.). The New Testament writers contemplate local church membership as a normal thing. If you had been living in the first century, would you have been a person who was included in the salutations of these letters? Not unless you were a member of a local congregation.

How can a Christian have a group of elders who, as shepherds, watch for his soul, if he is not a part of a local church? (Hebrews 13:17). A Christian needs leaders to watch on his behalf. He needs leaders to see that he is fed properly with spiritual food (1 Peter 5:3). A “floating” church member who attends one place one week and another place next week is not living at his best. He misses many blessings. Likely He feels no certain responsibility. He should be a member of a local church and function as a member of the body.

--Raymond Kelcy (deceased) via *Old Paths*

MARRIED WITHOUT CONSENT?

I have a dear preacher friend who is not married. While considering his marital state, and the awful misery he must be experiencing, I thought perhaps it would be better if he were married. I have happened upon a plan that would accomplish my desired end, and thought I might share it with our readers.

Some afternoon, while he is sleeping, I will get some fine Christian lady to accompany me, along with the necessary witnesses, to his home. We will quietly sneak in and, while my friend is sleeping, I will put the question to the bride-to-be: “Will you take this sleeper to be your lawful wedded husband?” She will, of course, answer, “I do.”

I will then ask my sleeping brother, “Do you take this woman to be your wife?” He being unable to answer for himself, we will permit the woman to answer for him. I will then pronounce them husband and wife, awaken my friend, and inform him of his good fortune!

Ridiculous, you say? Absolutely! But is there any difference between the procedure in our imaginary intentions and what is done in the modern-day practice of infant baptism? I think not! There is not one single infant upon whom the rite of baptism is pronounced, that is aware of what is taking place. Sponsors (usually the parents) take certain vows on behalf of the babe, but there is not one shred of evidence in the New Testament to authorize such a practice. When will we learn that only those who believe and confess the name of Christ before men are viable candidates for obedience in the watery grave of baptism?

Think about it! *“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved . . .”* (Mark 16:16).

--Tom Wacaster (via Facebook)