

BLESSING AND HONOUR

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Revelation 5. 13 reads, “And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and all that are in them I heard saying, ‘Blessing and honour, glory and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb for ever and ever’”.

A day is coming when all flesh, living and dead, shall see the glory of God (John 5. 28 ff)

We live in a day when familiar Bible words are taken for granted. All sorts of devices have been used to help us remember meanings of words but these ‘aids’ are not accurate. We were told that faith was ‘forsaking all I take Him’ and that grace was ‘God’s riches at Christ’s expense’.

It was said that blessed means being happy but the word and its cognates has to do with strength and this is the meaning of the Hebrew word. It also means to be well spoken of — or, to call down God’s grace and power.

Psalm 84.5 says, “Blessed is the man whose strength is in Thee”.

Psalm 83.1. reads, “Sing aloud to God our strength”.

Psalm 73.26 says, “God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever”.

Psalm 46. 1 Writes, “God is my refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble”.

Psalm 28. 7 reads, “The Lord is my strength and shield.”

Psalm 28.8 says, "The Lord is their strength and the saving strength of his anointed”.

God’s blessing are those of strength for us and that strength banishes weaknesses.

God Himself does not need blessings as such, but every creature will say that His strength is a major feature. He is omnipotent.

The nearer a Christian is to the Lord, the blessings will abound and the Christian will be strengthened.

When someone is converted we are to strengthen them (Luke 22.32) The apostle Paul talks about Christ strengthening him (2 Timothy 4. 17). We are to edify and encourage each other in the faith. In Ephesians 6. 10 Paul exhorts the brethren to be strong in the Lord. We are to be strong in the faith (Romans 4.20).

To be well spoken of is an important concept. As Christians, we should strive to achieve this although we live in dark days when Christianity is under pressure and is being both dismissed and ridiculed.

When we bless the Lord it is that we speak well of Him and that constitutes praise. Praise is the fruit of our lips which speak no guile (1 Peter 3.10). Praise has nothing to do with lifting hands or jumping up and down, waving flags or dancing.

Hebrews 13.15 says, “Let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is the fruit of our lips giving thanks unto His Name”.

The second attribute due to God is honour.

Honour is profound respect, courtesy and reverence producing willing obedience. God is honoured when we are faithful to Him and serve Him.

The real meaning is 'to give weight to'. It has to do with realising the status of the Lord.

Reverence is essential in honouring and worshipping the Lord. It means to show profound respect with esteem, to venerate, to do obeisance and to defer to Him. It has to do with dignity mingled with fear. Fear is respect not terror, but we must always remember that disobedience to God is sin and it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

We are to reverence the Son (Matthew 21.37). We are to serve God with reverence (Hebrews 12.28). Isaiah 30 15 tells us that in quietness and confidence is our strength. Therefore in noise and exuberance is weakness.

Praise and worship and, indeed, our service for the Lord is to be reverent and dignified. It is not to be noisy or exuberant. God is not heard in the tumult but in the still voice (1 Kings 19.12) and, as one brother said, God is not deaf! Quietness is enjoined.

Do you think that God is honoured when worship is noise, flashing lights, exuberance, the singing of worship songs that sound like pop songs, girls dancing or waving flags and the speaker cracking jokes and Where there is a worship leader? It is God that leads worship. Where is the dignity in these modern styles of worship? Worship is not self-expression but that which God requires in profound respect and godly fear. Worship is the acknowledgement of the worthiness of God, His worth. Worship is worship. It is to be reverent and dignified.

In many churches today people get up and talk about themselves and what they have done and so on. Whether intentionally or not, they are inviting the honour for themselves. We are told to be full of the Spirit of God and that cannot be if we are full of self.

O Jesus Christ, grown Thou in me
And all things else recede.
My heart be daily nearer Thee
From sin be daily free.

Make this poor self grow less and less
Be Thou my life and aim,
O make me daily, through Thy grace,
More meet to bear Thy Name.

Every Christian should make the Biblical views expressed in this hymn an integral part of their experience particularly those in house churches, charismatic groups and Pentecostals.

The third attribute due to the Lord is glory.

The meaning of glory is very great praise and honour. It refers to great distinction. It also means renown, adoration, independent beauty and magnificence and the highest splendour. Glory is often displayed in visible and brilliant light. On the night of the Nativity the shepherds abiding in the fields saw a great light. The Lord Jesus spoke to the Father and said, "I have glorified Thee and finished the work Thou gavest Me to do".

While the following expression may not appeal to everyone, God is beautiful and magnificent.

In Exodus 24.17 we read, "And the sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel".

Moses spoke of the tremendous and indescribable glory of God. In Exodus 33. 18 he asks the Lord to show him His glory. In verse 20 the Lord speaks and says, “Thou canst not see my face. For there shall no man see me, and live”. The glory of the face of God is of such glory that no one could bear it.

For those who believe in evolution this verse may not please them. Psalm 19. 1, “The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament sheweth His handiwork”.

Creation is God’s work.

In Acts 7, Saul is converted and saw the glory of God in heaven and saw the Lord in that glory.

While in exile on the Island of Patmos, the aging apostle John saw the glory of the Lord which was sensational and overwhelming and so he fell at the Lord’s feet as if he had died. But the Lord put His hand on John and reassured him.

There are no words to describe the glory of the Lord.

The Christian is told to glorify God. In Matthew 5.16, the Lord Jesus said, “Let your light shine before men that they may see your good words and glorify your Father which is in heaven”.

Spiritual unity is achieved when “we are all with one mind and one mouth glorifying God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ”. (Romans 15.6).

Our salvation is given a reminder in 1 Corinthians 6. 20, “For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit which are God’s”. This is consecration, a word and a doctrine seldom used to day.

1 Peter 4.11 contains some advice that all Christians must follow when he says that whatever we do it must for the sole purpose to glorify God.

The Christian cannot glorify God if he wants the glory for himself. If self is paramount, the Lord Jesus is not.

There are people in churches who want to build personal empires. Even in assemblies there may be someone who wants to take over and be a Diotrefes. And some will eliminate all opposition to their personal quest for power.

Paul reminds us in 2 Corinthians 4. 5, “We preach not ourselves but Christ Jesus the Lord”. There is far too much talk about self in meetings, even boasting. Look at me. Look at what I have done. What we may have done is not the ground for boasting (Ephesians 2. 9). The apostle Paul said that the only thing in which we can boast is the Cross of Christ (Galatians 4.16)

One day all true believers will have a glorified body like unto that of the Lord Jesus. We shall appear with Him in glory (Colossians 3.4)

When all my labours and trials are o'er
And I am safe on that beautiful shore,
Just to be near the dear Lord I adore
Will thro' the ages be glory for me.

The fourth attribute due to the Lord is power.

Power is the ability to do great things. It also speaks of ability and authority.

In Matthew 28. 18 the Lord Jesus said, " All power is given unto Me in heaven and on the earth." We read that the Lord Jesus taught with authority and not as the scribes. (Matthew 7.29). Mark 1.27 speaks of those who were amazed at His teaching and authority who, with that authority, even commanded evil spirits and they obeyed him.

In a previous generation we used to talk about the authority of God and of the Lord Jesus as well as the authority of the Word of God. But these truths are seldom spoken of today.

To our peril, we are forgetting the greatness of God and His attributes. We are therefore missing out on His blessings and losing strength and becoming weak.

The Lord has ultimate power and authority. The day is coming when every knee to Him shall bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. And this includes both the living and the dead. We read that He will judge the quick and the dead. Tony Blair will bow at the feet of the Lord Jesus and he will have to give an account of his life and will not be able to deceive. Henry VIII, Hitler, every atheist and agnostic including Stephen Hawking and Richard Dawkins will do likewise. Everyone who has put science before God and has ridiculed Him as the Divine Creator will admit the truth that Jesus Christ is Lord.

The other aspect of His power and authority is His ability. The anonymous writer records that the Lord is able to save to the uttermost (Hebrews 7.25) and I recall one old farmer preacher saying, "He can also save to the guttermost". The Lord's arm is not shortened that He cannot save. The Lord is not willing that any should perish but that all may come to repentance and a knowledge of all the truth (1 Timothy 2.4, 2 Peter 3.9)

The most comforting verses in the New Testament, which is addressed to Christians, is Jude 24-25, "Now unto Him who is able (has the ability) to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before His presence with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour be glory, dominion and power, both now and forever".

Blessing and honour, glory and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb.

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