

The Majestic Name of the Lord

Pastor Tom Anderst

August 4, 2013 - Psalm 8

Well it's finally official. We have the new name. After months of anticipation, days of watching and non-stop media coverage, Prince William and Kate have a new baby boy. He arrived Monday, July 22 weighing 8 pounds, 6 ozs. A couple of days later, they announced the baby's new name: George Alexander Louis. His Royal Highness Prince George of Cambridge, 3rd in line to the throne. Six King Georges have worn the crown throughout history since the German-born George, the first, took to the throne in 1714. The last was the Queen's father George, the sixth, who died in 1952.

The name Louis is likely a tribute to Lord Louis Mountbatten.. He was assassinated by the IRA in 1979. Time will tell how this baby turns out and what he will add to the history of the names of George, Alexander and Louis. William and Kate and little George have entered the wonderful world of parenting. I just love that part where they bring the baby out in the car seat to depart the hospital. Their lives are so scrutinized that the press wonders if they put little George in the car seat properly. Seriously! They've been parents for one day! What parent hasn't made a mistake on car seats at some point with their infants?

Yet George Alexander Louis made it safely home. Everyone likely has an opinion about his name. It might even influence some people. Expectant parents who have a boy this summer may include one of the prince's names in their baby's name. But for most of us, it's unlikely his name will have much influence on your or my life in the days to come.

But there's another name that should definitely have great influence over our lives, especially if we call ourselves Christians; The name of God. What difference does God's name make in your daily life?

What difference does His name make in your life direction, attitude, entertainment choices – relationship choices – perspective on your resources? Lots, little, none?

Today – we have opportunity to ponder and act upon this. Why do we need to? **Because the Lord's name is majestic over all the earth we must alter our lives to line up with this reality.** The next Psalm in our summer study brings this to us. It twice makes this bold claim the Lord's name is majestic over all the earth. In between these claims, the Psalmist explains why the Lord's name is majestic. He gives us unexpected proofs that bolster the claim. Yet we will discover these proofs were not fulfilled until many years later. But when fulfilled they strengthen the claim's authority. "The Lord's name is majestic over all the earth."

So we're going to look at these questions today. What is the Lord's Name? Why is it majestic? How must we alter our lives to line up with this reality?

TO THE CHOIRMASTER: ACCORDING TO THE GITTITH. A PSALM OF DAVID.

8 O LORD, our Lord,
 how majestic is your name in all the earth!
 You have set your glory above the heavens.

2 Out of the mouth of babies and infants,
 you have established strength because of your foes,
 to still the enemy and the avenger.

3 When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,
 the moon and the stars, which you have set in place,

4 what is man that you are mindful of him,
 and the son of man that you care for him?

5 Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings
 and crowned him with glory and honor.

6 You have given him dominion over the works of your hands;
 you have put all things under his feet,

7 all sheep and oxen,
 and also the beasts of the field,

8 the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea,
 whatever passes along the paths of the seas.

9 O LORD, our Lord,
 how majestic is your name in all the earth!

What is God's name? (8:1)

Notice the first phrase in verse 1. O LORD (all in capitals), our Lord (with only the L capitalized). So God's name is the first all in capitals LORD. Your Bible indicates this to you hopefully by capitalizing all the letters. But what does capitalized LORD mean? It translates the Hebrew Yahweh which was God's personal name. He gave this name to Moses at the burning bush in Exodus 3:14. Our English versions translate the name of God in that passage "I AM WHO I AM." It means God is the absolutely existing one – the one who simply is. He is the one who never came into being, does not go out of being and never changes in his being. He depends on nothing, but all else depends on Him. John Piper writes "There is no place on Earth where the Lord is not the absolute one. He has no viable competitors. He is above all things everywhere. He sustains all things everywhere. He is the ground and goal of all things everywhere. He is greater, wiser and more beautiful than everything everywhere." This is the God whose name is I am who I am, Yahweh, LORD. So God's name is the LORD; I am who I am.

The Psalmist, David then makes a bold claim about the Lord's name. "O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! Majesty is glorious character, stunning beauty and spotless holiness. When we begin to associate these characteristics with the LORD, we see why His name should have a very deep impact on our lives. We're not talking about just any old name and one person among billions. We are talking about the name of the all-powerful, completely self-sufficient, always existing God. Our very existence depends completely upon Him. This planet's continuing existence depends completely upon Him. Oh Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth.

Why is the Lord's name majestic?

The first reason is found in verse 2. *Out of the mouth of babies and infants you have established strength because of your foes, to still the enemy and the avenger. Why not point to God's greatness & power?* But what does that mean? What does it have to do with proving the majesty of the Lord's name?

Well to get this, we first need to recognize a very subtle but surprising reality of verse 2. God has enemies. In the first verse, the Psalmist claims that the Lord's name is majestic in all the earth. The Lord is the always existing one. Yet some choose to resist Him. Some choose to wage war against Him. The way God chooses to wage war somehow makes his name majestic. It has something to do with babies and infants and their speech.

Out of the mouths of babies and infants – you have established strength because of your foes. Somehow, something spoken by very young children, will establish strength or a foundation against God's foes. What will be the result? The end of verse 2 tells us "to still the enemy and the avenger," or "to silence the foe and the avenger."

So here are these great enemies of God. They think they are quite strong to oppose Him. If we know anything about God, we know that they're weaklings compared to him. Yet they're likely a lot stronger than babies and infants. Yet God is going to silence them and stop them not by His overwhelming planet creating power or His supernatural ability to control the elements for His purposes. He will stop them through the lips of babies and infants. **The Lord's name is majestic because He uses the weakness of children and infants to silence his enemies.**

It's not going to be some mechanical puppet like use of the infant's voice. The babies and infants will speak voluntarily. What they say will silence the enemies of God. It takes a pretty majestic person to be able to draw out from the lips of infants and babies words that will stop an enemy in its tracks. Babies and infants do not have deep

understanding about a lot of things. They're not physically as strong as enemies. Something unusual and spectacular would have to happen for them to just speak and silence God's enemies.

Did this actually happen? Yes on Palm Sunday when Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. We learn this from Matthew 21. While riding, crowds begin to form. They spread their cloaks on the ground. And they cut palm leaves and branches from trees and spread them on the ground creating a palm leaf carpet. And the crowds start shouting "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of Lord. Hosanna in the Highest!" Hosanna means "save us!" They gave Jesus a welcome fit for a king. This was no minor disturbance caused by 25 people. The Bible tells us the whole city was stirred up and the crowds asked who is this? They answered "This is the prophet Jesus of Nazareth from Galilee."

Jesus then proceeds to the temple. There he finds moneychangers and merchants cheating the poor as they prepare to sacrifice. So he drives out this market upsetting tables and seats. This was an act of great authority. Blind people and lame come to him and he heals them. But then we read this in Matthew 21:15-17. "But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying out in the temple, 'Hosanna to the Son of David!' they were indignant and they said to him, 'Do you hear what these are saying?' And Jesus said to them, 'Yes; have you never read,' "Out of the mouth of infants and nursing babies, you have prepared praise?" And leaving them, he went out of the city to Bethany and lodged there."

So what just happened? Some very young children followed Jesus into the temple grounds. They have heard their parents call out Hosanna to Jesus. They want to see this one everyone is praising. So maybe they see Jesus drive out the money changers. Maybe they witness some of the healings. Then these children start crying out in the temple "Hosanna to the Son of David!" Out of the lips of children and infants come these words.

Well the religious leaders have taken this all in. They've about had enough.

So they say to Jesus "Do you hear what these are saying? But they're not just asking him if he heard what these children say. Their question is actually a veiled demand. "Don't you hear what they're saying? They're giving you the title reserved for the Messiah which you clearly aren't. So stop them from saying that!"

But Jesus says "Yes." I hear what they are saying and they are right. Then he brings in Psalm 8. Have you never read – out of the mouth of infants and nursing babies you have prepared praise? Instead of using the direct Hebrew

translation of Psalm 8, Jesus uses what the Greek translation of the Old Testament said. It's like he expands on Psalm 8 to reveal what in fact comes out these children's mouths – praise.

Then he leaves – and what's just happened? Psalm 8:2 has just happened. Jesus' enemies have been silenced because out of the mouths of infants and little children came praise for Jesus. They have no answer to the spontaneous praise of children and infants. They know you can't really buy kids or force babies to say something they don't mean. God is so majestic and powerful that He doesn't have to use His power to bowl over his enemies. He is able to draw out voluntary praise from children and infants that defeats his enemies and silences them because His, majesty and greatness is so obvious. So the Lord's name is majestic because He uses the weakness of children and infants to silence His enemies. Lesson – when we're surrounded by enemies, when life does not go well, when Satan accuses; you can silence those voices by continuing to praise the Lord.

The rest of the Psalm gives us the second reason why the Lord's name is majestic. **He uses the weakness of man to rule over the earth. (8:3-8)** How is man weak? David compares man to the creator of the stars. "When I look at your heavens; the work of your fingers." The magnificence of the heavens was not some massive undertaking by God. It was the work of his fingers. And David also references the moon and the stars "which you, LORD, have set in place." David considers the stars and the night sky.

What happens to you when you gaze at a night sky, especially when you're away from the city? When you see a sky full of stars and realize they are millions of light years away, they point to the massive universe. Here we have the galaxy hat also called the Messier Hat. It is 28 million light years from earth and is considered one of the best pictures taken by the Hubble Telescope. Here we have the nebula MZ3 called Fourmi between 3000 and 6000 light years away. The sky, stars and universe are massive.

What does this point to? Our world says not God or a Creator. There has to be life on other planets. I remember having a conversation with some neighbors one night about this. They disputed the argument that the universe's vastness proved God's existence. They said it had to point to life on other planets. And then one of them said something I have not yet forgotten. "I wouldn't be so arrogant as to think that we were the only living beings in the entire universe."

So I thought about that for a while. How might you answer that? Why is there such a vast universe out there and so many stars in the sky if there is no other life to be discovered? Then I heard a message that put forward a very strong point. The speaker states “what if the vastness of the universe is revealed to us is not so we can speculate about alien life but so we can marvel at the majesty of God? What if the multitude of stars in the night sky reveal the unmatched magnificence of God, if only we would stop and ponder it?”

Yet the Psalmist does not introduce the stars and heavens just to have us marvel at God’s greatness. He does it as a point of comparison. “When I consider the heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?” When I consider the vastness of the universe and the beauty of the galaxies, humans are so small and insignificant by comparison. Yet you O Lord, are mindful of us and care for us. We weak human beings are on the Creator of the Universe’s mind. The designer of the galaxies cares for us tiny speck people.

But not only does the LORD pay attention to us and care for us. He has made us a little lower than heavenly beings – likely the angels of the high heavenly council. He has crowned us with glory and honor. He has given us dominion over the work of his hands. Would you be willing to give dominion to somebody else over the work of your hands? My garden, my business, my children, my household, my money? Yet the Lord did this giving man ruler’s responsibility over tame and wild animals, birds, fish and sea creatures. And the Psalmist concludes. O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth. Your name is majestic because you use the weakness of man to rule the earth when you could have done it perfectly yourself.

But there is a problem with this isn’t there? If man is ruling over the earth, he’s doing a pretty poor job. Just turn on the news to see how well man is doing. Disease, mismanagement, corruption, depravity, disloyalty deceit, greed and violence seem to be par for the course with man in charge. We might ask “David what are you talking about? What world are you talking about? You’re either blind or you’re talking about some future time.

Maybe God’s plan failed or he should rethink it. Maybe its something in the future. Or maybe He’s done it and we just don’t see it. The New Testament again gives us the answer. Hebrews 2:5-9 is one example. Here the author points to Jesus fulfilling Psalm 8. He was for a little while lower than the angels. Yet He suffered, died and was resurrected. Now he does have dominion over everything.

He now reigns in his human resurrection body over the earth. So through human weakness, the voluntary weakness of Jesus, the LORD made Jesus ruler over everything. Jesus will defeat all the enemies on the last day. After that, those who have Him as their Lord, will rule with him. Then Psalm 8 will be completely fulfilled.

For now, Jesus fulfills it as the God-man. The LORD, I AM WHO I AM, fulfills Psalm 8's declaration of His majesty.

So the Lord's name is majestic because he uses weak children and infants lips to speak words that silence His enemies. And He uses the voluntary weakness of the God/man Jesus to result in a man, Jesus, now ruling the entire universe from heaven. So with all this in mind – how does the majestic name of the Lord impact your life? This is a just a glimpse into the majesty of the Lord.

How must we alter our lives to line up with this reality? So how do I/we live in light of this? If you answered 'God's name has little or no influence on my daily life' you can't stay there. If you do you're saying the LORD is not your Lord. **Is the LORD, your Lord?** We can choose different lords to rule over us. It can be ourselves, the idol of success, the pursuit of more, the quest for the perfect soul mate, the dream job or the right circumstances. But there's only one supreme Lord who is truly majestic. You are not too far gone to come to Christ. You can come to the LORD, I AM WHO I AM through Jesus and the Gospel. In this way the LORD will become your Lord.

Adopt a balanced Biblical perspective on humanity (you). I think that Christians can err on one of two extremes when it comes to their view of humanity. We can err on the fallen side of humans. We only talk about the reality that we are wicked sinners. Or we only talk about the potential of man and his creation with God's image.

But a balanced perspective includes both. Humans are tiny specks compared to the Lord and His Creation. Yet the Lord is mindful of us and cares for us. He has set us a little lower than Himself and given us dominion over the works of His hands. Yet we have collectively failed to reign and rule in humble service under Christ. So Christ came and now reigns over all. All things have been subjected under his feet including us. We need to submit ourselves under Him – forgiven – not guilty- set apart to God – growing in holiness. So adapt this balanced Biblical view in light of the Lord's name.

Rule over what has been entrusted to you with humble service like Christ. Jesus' parables about the talents emphasize this point. He wants us to use whatever He entrusts us with in this life to His glory. Faithfulness with a few things in this life lead to greater responsibility in the new heavens and earth. In Matthew 25:21 Jesus says "Well done,

good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.” So we need to in dependence upon the Holy Spirit’s help and power, rule over what Jesus has given us in a way that glorifies Him. This includes:

- Your body; The direction of your life; Your time; Your resources
- Your family; house; children; work; schooling.
- People you have responsibility over – those who report to you; those who look up to you; those who you are given influence over.
- “Little” things for which you have been given responsibility – honest expense reports; handing in your homework; petty cash; work ethic when the boss or supervisor isn’t looking; attitude in a social gathering; resisting impulse to blow your budget.

We currently live in a fallen world. Psalm 8’s promises have not yet been fulfilled to their fullest. But we can faithful where we are, with what we’ve been given and ride well in the Lord’s strength.

Marvel at the majestic name of the Lord in all the earth. Marvel about God’s majesty - God’s strength established through human weakness. Become one of those people who praises God in the midst of enemies. Be strong in the Lord by being humble before Him. A life impacted by God’s name submits to the LORD as Lord, adopts the Bible’s definition of humanity, rules over what’s entrusted with humility, marvels/worships the Lord with the majestic name. George Alexander Louis’s name may have little impact in your life. But God’s name means everything. How will you alter your life this week that recognizes the majestic name of the Lord?