

# THE HONOR THAT COMES FROM GOD

## A SERMON

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“He is your praise, and he is your God, that has done for you these great and terrible things, which your eyes have seen.” Deuteronomy 10:21

You will observe the first clause of our text runs entirely counter to the general taste and feelings of men; for it is true of all men by nature that they love the praise of men more than the praise of God; that they love the things that are seen more than they do the things that are not seen simply because their state as sinners before God is by them unseen; and while that is unseen, eternal glories are unseen. When the Lord opens up the one, and they find out that they have invisible maladies, or maladies that have been hitherto invisible to themselves and to others, that are now made manifest, now they begin to seek remedies that accord with the maladies, they begin now to seek that of which the Lord speaks when he says that he desires truth in the inward parts; and in the hidden parts of the soul will he makes such to know wisdom. Such will then learn the paltriness, the contemptibleness, the deceitfulness, of the praises and the adulations of men; why, they are all passing vapors, not worth the small end of a straw. Such are the praises and adulations of dying mortals; and such will feel their need of what is in a covenant order, in a mediatorial order, in a gospel order of things, by which alone they can be delivered from all their woe. And when brought somewhat to appreciate this great matter of their eternal salvation, then, and not till then, will they appreciate the words of our text, “He is your praise, and he is your God, that has done for you these great and terrible things, which your eyes have seen.”

Our text is placed before us in a fourfold form. First, we have *the praise*; “he is your praise.” Second, we have *the relation*; “he is your God.” Third, we have *the doings of this same God*; that he “has done for you these great and terrible things.” And fourth and last, we have *the revelation*; “which your eyes have seen.”

First, then, that “he is your praise.” Now there is a twofold respect in which the Lord is our praise; first, relatively; and secondly, objectively. First, relatively he is our praise. Hence, that scripture in the New Testament where it is said, “Unto you that believe he is precious;” the marginal reading is, “Unto you that believe he is an honor.” In truth, the original there, the Greek word *timees*, will bear both those renderings, and so our translators have given the word *precious* in the text, and the word *honor* in the margin; so that you may take them both with perfect safety, without doing any

violence whatever to the original there translated *precious*, “Unto you that believe he is an honor.” Let us, then, understand how he is our honor, and how God is our praise; passing by, as I must do, many things; for this first part would occupy all our time were I to branch out upon it; but I will not do so. Let us, therefore, begin not at the beginning of things, but, as it were, in the middle of things. I will not begin with the beginning of the work of grace; I will not begin with the beginning of life in the soul; but I will begin with this one delightful, this one heavenly, this one precious truth; that God is our praise, as he is our sanctification. Christ Jesus, Emmanuel, God with us, he is our sanctification; he is our sanctification because he is the end of sin, and it is only as he is the end of sin that we are exhorted in the Psalm we read this morning, to give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness. What is there a greater terror to a sinner than the holiness of God, when viewed after a legal order, when viewed in his holy law? What was it that made Sinai so terrible, and what is it that will make hell so terrible, but the holiness of God? But when that holiness is viewed in and by Christ Jesus, who is the end of sin, he having finished transgression, and made reparation for iniquity, here Jesus Christ becomes our sanctification. And this is a great honor, inasmuch as it must be a greater honor to be holy than to be unholy; a greater honor to be a saint than to be a sinner; a greater honor to be free from sin than to be entangled in sin; a greater honor to be innocent than to be guilty; a greater honor to be God-like than to be devil-like; to be heaven-like than to be hell-like. So then, whatever we are that is good, is by faith in Christ Jesus the Lord; he is our sanctification; precious faith endears him to us. Take, then, the two words which we have in the New Testament, the one in the text and the other in the margin; “Unto you that believe he is an honor;” then take the other word, “Unto you that believe he is precious;” he is precious in this respect. There is something beautiful in the thought of living before God after an order of things in which he will not behold any iniquity in us, nor see any perverseness in Jacob; something pleasing in the thought of dying in this order of things, where, as far as the east is from the west, so far, Jesus being our sanctification, has he put away our transgressions from us. There is something pleasing in the thought of rising at the last day in all the beauty of holiness, Christ himself being our sanctification. There is something delightful also in the thought that we shall continue to endless ages in heaven by virtue of the Lord Jesus Christ being our sanctification. It is not a mere creature holiness; if so, it might, like the holiness of angels, and like the holiness of the first Adam, come to nothing, and we must come to nothing; but it is God himself, it has in it all the strength of Emmanuel; so that unto endless ages the people of God will remain the same. Second, he is our honor not only by being the Holy One of Israel, and thus the end of sin; but he is also our honor as being our justification, as well as our sanctification. Bless the Lord! there stands the record that “in the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified and shall glory.” And if we take justification as setting us free from all condemnation, perhaps we cannot get a greater scripture in all the word of God upon this matter than that in the Acts of the Apostles, and it is a beautiful declaration, where it is said, that “all that believe,” not, all that merit it, there is no human merit in the matter; it is for sinners, “unto him that justifies the ungodly;” the man who is brought to feel that he is a poor, ungodly creature, and if he is acquitted from condemnation it must be by faith in Christ Jesus. Now, it is there said, in the Acts of the Apostles, that “all that believe in him are justified from all things.” Where is there a man or a woman that, however they have been preserved, if brought to the judgment bar of God, that have not many things that they would wish to get away from, wish to be freed from, wish to be blotted out, and wish to be forgiven, and wish as much also to be forgotten, and never named nor mentioned? Just so is the order of our justification, justified from all things.

I cannot, because it would be presumptuous on my part, attempt to follow the soul as it leaves the body, and enters eternal glory, according to that scripture in the 89th Psalm, that “in your righteousness shall they be exalted” which they are when they get to glory, in a way they never were before; “they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of your countenance, which they do there, in a way they never did before; and “in your name shall they rejoice all the daylong,” the vast, the endless day of eternity. What the ecstasies and triumphs of the redeemed, sanctified, justified soul are when it enters heaven, we ourselves must die to know. The Lord, then, is our honor. Oh, what an honorable thing to be holy! what an honorable thing to be righteous! and especially to be holy by the cleansing blood of the Lamb, especially to be righteous by the everlasting righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. Being thus divinely righteous, infallibly righteous, and surely righteous, truly, then, he is your honor, your praise. Again, if we take a third view, and it shall be the last I will take in this, that he is our praise, not only as being our sanctification and justification, but he is our praise in close relation. Who may not be proud of such a Father? who may not be proud of such an Elder Brother? who may not be proud of such a Teacher as the eternal Spirit of God? Oh, my hearer, what are all the little molehill exaltations among men, upon which they pique and pride themselves, in comparison of the honor of looking up to God in the spirit of adoption, and crying, “Abba, Father”? looking to Jesus in the spirit of precious faith, and saying, “My beloved is mine, and I am his”? looking to the Holy Spirit of God with the feeling after him in the relation described in Solomon’s Song, “Awake, O north wind; come, you south wind, and blow upon my garden”, the garden of my soul, “that the spices thereof may flow out”? Why, what can be so noble a boast as that of being born of God, descendants of the most high God, heirs of the blessed God, joint-heirs with the Lord Jesus Christ? He is indeed our praise. And I am sure, friends, if this be the honor we seek, we shall find quite honor enough, and quiet dignity enough, and quite glory enough, to make us as happy as Christ himself is happy; so that we can well part with the praise of men, we can well bear the reproaches of men, we can well bear the hatred of men; we may well bear, yes, we may even welcome the reproaches of the world, for “woe unto you when all men speak well of you!” So then, Christian, come, look up if you can, and remember you are not your own sanctification; you are not, by your own works, your own justification; if you were, then alas! alas! despair would seize your trembling soul, and down you would go into unfathomable depths; you are not your own strength, nor your own salvation, nor your own preserver; no, if you were, then you might despair; but it is God that is your praise; it is God, that is, Christ, Immanuel, God with us, that is your sanctification, justification, salvation. Here is glorious relation; the soul thus born of God, destined to all the blessedness that shall fulfil the declaration, “The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places: yea, I have a goodly heritage.”

Then, God also is our praise objectively. It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and especially when we can do so really and truly; “Whoso offers praise glorifies the Lord,” but then it must be real. That is very poor love and friendship that will not bear a little cold water sprinkled on it; that is very poor favor that grows cold and becomes extinguished at the first obstacle; not at all like him of whom it is said that many waters could not quench his love, neither could the floods drown it. Now then, in this praising of the Lord, “Whoso offers praise glorifies me,” but then it must be real; we must feel that the gospel, not only as a whole, but in detail, is that for which and by which we can praise the Lord. If we take the testimony of his immutable love, we must feel that we shall never be able to praise him as he is worthy to be praised for such love; and if we take electing grace, his inscribing our names in the book of life, we must feel that that transaction is worthy of more praise than we can ever render; and if we look at the gift of his dear Son, and what

Jesus Christ has done, achieved, and established, we shall still feel the same; and if we look back at his mercy to us in first making us concerned about our souls at all, whatever the time, or whatever the manner, if we can look back and see that we have, by degrees at least, some of us instantaneously, been brought to a concern about our souls, and that he has never suffered that concern so to die out as for us to go back to what we were before; he has never suffered that concern for our souls so to die out as for us to rest short of a knowledge of the truth. Oh! then, we may here bless his dear and holy name, and feel that for this gracious dealing with us he is worthy of more praise than we can render to him. And then, when we look at his dear, I cannot help saying so, the dear promises of his blessed word, poor, dying mortals as we are,

“In life’s uncertain path we stand,  
Beset with snares on every hand,”

we know not who may become our enemy; we know not what adversity may overtake us; we know not what calamity may befall us; we know not what reservoirs of tribulation may break forth, and overwhelm our every earthly comfort and earthly hope: in the possibility of these things occurring, oh! how sweet the thought to have this promise-performing God, that he will not leave us, that he will not only not forsake us, but will not suffer us ultimately to be hurt; he does not mean to leave us, he does not mean to love us less, he sees the end from the beginning, and he does not intend anything for us short of perfect joy; he does not intend anything for us short of eternal glory; he has sworn by himself that in blessing he will bless; in that oath he rests. How can we ever sufficiently praise a God like this? He is a Friend of friends, a wise friend, an almighty friend, a consistent friend, a close friend, a near friend, a dear friend, a supreme friend. Here we have a friendship; as one of old said, “When my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will take me up.” He is, therefore, our praise then; first, relatively, being thus our sanctification, justification, and bringing us into close relation, taking our very nature, taking our flesh, that we may be with him, of one spirit; and that in the order of things, he is by his children praised. I cannot myself, though I can pity those of my fellow-creatures that do it, but I cannot myself feel at all at home where any one of these truths I have named are spoken lightly of; it goes to my very soul. I may be despised, and I am despised pretty extensively, but that I care not for; I bind it to me rather as a badge of honor; but I do feel in my soul before God that I cannot deviate knowingly one hair’s breadth from a free-grace gospel. I do feel my need of it more, I love it more, I know more and more the truth of it, I am assured of it beyond all doubt. And although there may be some that are not brought to that decision that may have grace in their hearts, yet unless I can see it, I cannot receive them. And so, I must remain just where I have been. I have done pretty well, through grace, and I think the best way is to let well enough alone and go simply on with the vital realities of the glorious gospel of the blessed God. He is our praise, then, relatively and objectively. And I have already anticipated, in a measure, that he is our praise eternally, to last forever. It is a comfortable thing to be spoken well of somewhere. And you are sure to be spoken well of in heaven, and spoken well of by the Lord, bless the Lord for it!, There are hundreds of you, bless his precious name for it! that are blessed with a good experience, with a clear knowledge of these things. The Lord has indeed done wonderful things for you. And may we be led to praise him more and more, for it is a good thing. It is very rare, very rare, that you can praise him from the heart and soul for one mercy without another following upon it, generally the case. One returning to give thanks to God for one mercy; he says, You are thankful for that one, I will give you another; and he then poured into his soul the peace that passes all understanding, a sense of pardon of sin, and that of course embodied

in it, his interest in eternal things. Why, the man went away ten times happier than ever, and more cause to praise than ever, and so shall we. And therefore, "He is my God," said one, "and I will prepare him a habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him." He shall live with me, and I will live with him; I am happy only with him, and he, in infinite condescension, dwells with me; my delight is to abide under his shadow.

But second, "He is your praise and your God." The original word here conveys the idea, reading it according to Parkhurst, of mediation, or rather of interposition; and this is the idea it conveyed to the Israelites. "He is your Interposer;" a ready interposer. A great many cases where men cannot interpose; but you cannot name a case where the Lord cannot interpose. It does not matter how high the mountain, before Zerubbabel it shall become a plain; does not matter; how boisterous the sea, he can interpose and quiet it; does not matter whether it be Sennacherib, or a million of Ethiopians; matters not what it is; our privilege is to call the Lord in, to cry to him; he is our Interposer. And while life is made up, as we sometimes say, of little circumstances, what a mercy that while the Lord has so ordered it that life shall be made up of comparatively little circumstances in detail, and sometimes great events hang upon one little circumstance, it is our privilege, therefore, to look to the Lord in all our little troubles as well as our great ones, our troubles in detail as well as our troubles in the aggregate! for he will not say no to us. He, therefore, is our God, that we worship; he is our God, to interpose for us. And what do we want? Why, if in our right minds, our prayer will be for neither extreme poverty, for that is a state of very great temptation; nor extreme riches, for that also is a state very unfavorable to spirituality; but that the Lord would be pleased just to give us food convenient for us, and supply our needs. That is a very wise prayer. But then there is something we want above all this, and that is that which is spiritual. Hence you will find in most cases that rich, very rich men in churches, are generally very great curses. That is the sort of congregation that I like, that are not too poor, nor too rich; for if they get very rich they get dreadfully worldly, dreadfully carnal, and dreadfully consequential, that the poor minister is looked upon as a kind of pauper. God ever deliver me from such; he has done hitherto, and I am sure he will do. And therefore those of you, if there be any of you very rich, that will not heighten you in my estimation, I can tell you; I shall not esteem you for your riches; I hope to esteem you for something better, and that is for the grace of God. And as for those of you that are very poor, and can hardly get on, my prayer for you is, The Lord appear for you, the Lord grant you health, and the Lord grant you wisdom, and the Lord grant you industry, and grant you diligence, and guide you in that path in which you may enjoy a comfortable little independence; for if you have a little room, eighteen pence a week, and can just buy your own bread and butter, and live a little bit comfortable, you will be as happy with that as the richest man under the sun. But when you become dependent on others, therein lies the misery. Well, then, I say to all that our God is our Interposer. But while we all feel the force of matters that are temporal, still the chief object of our prayer is that the Lord would interpose for us spiritually, to keep up our spirituality of mind. Those words of the Savior are of vast import when he says, "Continue you in my love." I have made these remarks about temporal matters because we all feel our need of the Lord to take care of us; yet, as I have said, in our right mind we shall desire neither extreme poverty nor extreme riches, but to be supplied with food convenient for us. The chief end, after all, is to be kept where the dear Savior exhorts when he says, "Continue you in my love;" that is the place; in the love of the truth, in the love of God, in brotherly love, in love to the people of God. Let us, then, pray to our God for more grace, that he would step in and carry on his work more mightily, that there may be more unity of spirit, more concern for spiritual things, and a greater realization of the undying

realities of the gospel; and if that does not keep us right, then I know not what will. Well, then, he is our God to interpose providentially, and he is our God to interpose spiritually. My heart would often sink, so would yours too, but for this. Bless his dear name! if I have nothing else to boast of, I have his name, his mercy, his promise to boast of; his presence to boast of; for he is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

But I come to the third part. "That has done for you these great and terrible things." There are three great things I notice, which we must transfer, of course, from the old to the new covenant, from the temporal into that which is eternal. The one great thing was their release from bondage; the second great thing was their salvation from Egypt; the third great thing was, for they were now towards the end of the wilderness, and near the promised land, was that sustentation by which the Lord had now for forty years sustained them in the wilderness. Now these were the three great things. Let us transfer these to Calvary's cross, and let us see the Lord Jesus Christ there releasing us, though that is certainly not personally, but rather relatively; see Jesus Christ there, by his death releasing us from sin, and that forever; releasing us from wrath, releasing us from the sting of death, releasing us from the curse of the law, releasing us from all the powers of darkness; there is our complete release. "As for you, by the blood of your covenant I have sent forth your prisoners out of the pit wherein there is no water." And I am sure we must see this is a great thing, a precious testimony; and precious faith lays hold of that precious testimony; there it rests, there we rest our hope, there we draw our comfort, and there we live in the sweet prospect of an entire realization ere long of that perfect release which the dear Savior has wrought by his precious blood. Then the next great thing was their salvation from Egypt. And so now the Lord has manifested to us his great salvation. See what great power there was employed in dividing the sea; and see what great goodness the Lord manifested, and he saved the people in a way that not one Israelite could be destroyed. I wish you to notice this part, that his manner of saving the Israelites from the Egyptians when he overturned them, that his manner of saving the Israelites was such that not an Israelite could be lost. They could not be lost. They were gathered together under the protection of the cloud; in that cloud was God himself. The Lord divided the sea; and the waters were a wall to them on the right hand and on the left, and God himself was there to see that there should not be one feeble person among them. So that his manner of saving them was such that they could not be otherwise than saved. How beautifully this typifies the salvation, the eternal salvation of the soul! That, of course, was only a temporal salvation, and the main body of the people lost the advantage of it; nevertheless, it does well as a type. So, the Lord's manner of saving his people is such that they cannot be lost. Just look at it. First, the Lord Jesus Christ by his death works out entire release from sin; there is release, there is freedom. He was bound with our responsibilities, he was bound with the bands of death, the cords of death, but it was not possible that he should be holden of them; no, the cords were thus, as it were, worn out by what he suffered, and he rose triumphant from the dead. There is our release. Secondly, the Lord has now brought us into the light of Christ. The luminous side of that cloud I take to be a type of the gospel, the light of the gospel; and the Lord has now brought us into the light of the gospel. And just as that cloud stood between the Israelites and the Egyptians, so the gospel comes between us and our sins, Christ comes between us and our sins, so that we cannot be destroyed; there is no way of being lost, and then the Lord will take care that nothing shall destroy us. So that his thus coming, Christ coming between us and our sins, God is hereby with us, in this order of things he is with us. The Egyptians are there behind; our sins are severed from us, but we are not severed from God, and God will not leave us. So that there was no possibility. Just so with the people of God now there is no possibility of being lost;

there is the release wrought by the Savior, and now we are brought into the light of the gospel. And these two, that release we have in what Christ has done, and our being brought now under the light of the gospel, these are great things. And the next great thing was to sustain them. He had sustained them through the wilderness. It is true that thousands of them had died of a disease which the people of God cannot die of, namely, unbelief, because Christ is the author and the finisher of their faith. Well, now, they were sustained; so, we have been sustained, at least, I hope so, I trust so. Let us try that. A man may be sustained providentially, and that man at the same time may be a professor, and at the same time have no spiritual existence, and therefore he is not sustained spiritually; for he has no spiritual existence, he has no spiritual hunger, he has no spiritual thirst; he is sustained providentially. Thousands are raised up very high providentially, even in a profession, and may be made, for aught I know, very popular preachers, and yet at the same time have no spiritual existence. Peter the Hermit was one of the most popular preachers that Europe ever knew, and we are all pretty well convinced that he had no spiritual existence. Now, then, if we speak of being sustained, let us see what this sustenance is. It is simply this; as the Israelite was brought into the wilderness, and there was no possibility of his living or being sustained unless the Lord interposed for him, for there the creature was quite helpless; he could neither plough nor sow, nor consequently reap; there could be no harvest or vintage there, in that wilderness of drought. And just so spiritually; the Lord brings a sinner to feel that he is in the wilderness of sin, in the wilderness of mortality and death; and that sinner says, Now I see no sustenance, I see no hope. By-and-bye the dear Savior becomes revealed to such, and he says, Oh yes, Jesus Christ is my hope, he becomes my hope; and the testimony that God has given of him becomes my hope. And thus that blessing, as the word of God describes it, and some of us have happily experienced it, that "Your words were found, and I did eat them, and they were sweet to my taste; sweeter than honey and the honeycomb." Now, then, has the doctrine of mediation been a support to our souls? Has the doctrine of the everlasting covenant been a support to our souls? And have the promises of God, that are yea and amen in Christ Jesus, have we been so sustained that we have been kept in love with this same gospel, in love with this same God; that the carnal enmity of our nature, though it has risen in many rebellions against many of his dealings with us, has never been able to make us hate the truth; that ever since we received the truth in the love of it, we have been kept in the love of it from that day to this? Now I call this to be a very great thing, when we look at the turnings and twisting's of professors, vast numbers of them, and to stand out thus in distinction, and to be sustained so many years in the love of the truth. Now this proves that you have a spiritual existence, because you feel that you can be sustained in the love of God only after this gospel order. This, then, I will call a great thing, to be thus preserved. Well might John say, and it was the best view he could take of his hearers, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in the truth;" and that will, be a walk of faith, that faith that works by love. Now, then, he is your praise; he is your interposer, and he has done these great things for you, he has released you from all your woe, he has saved your soul; and since he has saved you he has sustained you, and will continue to sustain you until the end; as your days, so also shall be your strength.

But then our text says, "terrible things." Why were they terrible things? for we must, if we can do so properly, transfer that word also to Calvary's cross. They were terrible things, because they were judgments that overturned Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea and destroyed the Amalekites in the wilderness. And these things were done for the Israelites, all to encourage us in prayer to God, not indeed for the destruction of our bitterest foes, but still to show that he will interpose for us. But I have an impression that this part of our text may be transferred to Calvary's cross; "He

has done for you these great and terrible things.” You that are Christians know it would be a terrible thing to you if you had to be responsible before God for your sins; you know it would be a terrible thing for you if you were responsible to God’s law for all that law demands; you know that it would be a terrible thing for you if that law were to bind you hand and foot, which it justly might, and cast you into hell for ever. Now then, did not Jesus Christ do these terrible things for you? Did he not become responsible for your sins, did he not become responsible for the enduring of your hell; did he not become responsible for the swallowing up of death in victory; did he not come into the most terrible position that any person could come into? Oh, he did these great, these terrible things for you and he has thereby put an end to the terror; he has done these terrible things for you, for they were terrible things, they were things such as an incarnate God could do. Bless his dear name! The more I look at his wonderful person, and the wonderful things which he endured, and what a salvation he has brought in, what a life, immortal life, he has brought to light, we cannot contemplate this without our souls being drawn in love to his blessed name. So, then he is your praise, and he is your interposer, and he has done these great things, Jesus Christ has, and these terrible things. So that when you read in the latter part of the Book of Revelation the description there given of Jerusalem, how it fulfils the prediction in Isaiah, “Your eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation.” Go to the ultimate description in the latter part of the Book of Revelation, and there you see the fulfilment of it. “Your eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken.” There the Lord shall be unto us in all the calmness and peacefulness of a broad river, everything paradisiacal, no more terror, no more trembling. “In righteousness shall you be established; you shall be far from oppression, for you shall not fear; and from terror, for it shall not come near you.” Ah! then, our God has done, Jesus Christ has done, these terrible things for us; he has undergone all these terrible things; and so, he sends his ministers preaching peace by what he has done.

But, lastly, “which your eyes have seen.” The Israelites saw what God had done, but they did not appreciate it, not the main body of them. “Which your eyes have seen.” The apostle Paul set before the Galatians, as well as before others, this very same gospel that I have been speaking of in my feeble way this morning; setting before them what Christ has done, what regeneration was, what salvation was. By-and-bye they turned away from this God in a measure and admitted something else into the place of some of the blessed truths of the gospel. “O foolish Galatians, before whose eyes Jesus Christ has been evidently set forth, crucified among you.”

Now, my hearer, let us in conclusion ask this question: Is it not to most of us as clear as our very existence that Jesus Christ has done these great things, that he has by his one offering perfected forever them that are sanctified? There it stands before our eyes; we see it, we understand it, we appreciate it, we receive it, we love it.