

Theme: See the LORD's [Jehovah's] Glory

- 1. Not in the Outward Signs of His Majesty and Power**
- 2. But in His Name!**

Exodus 34:5-9 (EHV)

⁵ **The LORD [Hebrew: "Jehovah," or "Yaweh"] came down in the cloud. He took his stand there with Moses and proclaimed the name of the LORD.** ⁶ **The LORD passed by in front of him and proclaimed: "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, and overflowing with mercy and truth,** ⁷ **maintaining mercy for thousands, forgiving guilt and rebellion and sin. He will by no means clear the guilty. He calls their children and their children's children to account for the guilt of the fathers, even to the third and the fourth generation."** ⁸ **Moses quickly bowed to the ground and worshipped.** ⁹ **He said, "If I have now found favor in your sight, Lord, please let the Lord go along with us. Although this is a stiff-necked people, pardon our guilt and our sin, and accept us as your possession."**

Maybe you've read the cute story that was going around the Internet a number of years ago:

A 1st grade boy was drawing a picture during the school day. His teacher came up and asked the young student what he was drawing and he said, "A picture of God." A bit surprised, the teacher responded, "But no one knows what God looks like." The boy replied, "Well, they will in a minute!"

Have you ever wondered what God looks like? Who hasn't, right? We found out in our Old Testament reading that even Moses wanted to see what God looks like. We can all certainly relate to Moses, who wanted God to give him some visible proof that He would be with him as he led God's chosen people Israel toward the promised land of Canaan. God had spoken to Moses **"face to face, as a man speaks to his friend" (Exodus 33:11)**, but he had apparently never seen God in all His holiness and splendor. He wanted God to reveal Himself to him as He really is so he asked, **"Please, show me Your glory" (Exodus 33:18)**. As we heard, Moses was not allowed to see God's face in all its holiness and glory, for God told him, **"You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live" (Exodus 33:20)**. God had to cover Moses with His hand while He passed by and only allowed Moses to see His back **(Exodus 33:22-23)**.

However, as we learn from our sermon text, the next day Moses was allowed to **"See" the LORD's [Jehovah's] Glory**. The first verse of our text tells us, **The LORD [Hebrew: "Jehovah," or "Yaweh"] came down in the cloud. He took his stand there with Moses and proclaimed the name of the LORD. (v. 5)**. By proclaiming His name, that is how the LORD, Jehovah, revealed Himself to Moses in all His glory, and that's how He still reveals His full glory to us as well.

In order to fully understand what it means that the LORD was **"proclaim[ing] the name of the LORD" (v. 5)** we need to first understand what God's name means. Our names usually serve two purposes: 1) they are used to distinguish us from other people—it would be very confusing if we all had the same name— 2) our names also identify us. When people who know us hear our name, they think about who we are and what we're like and probably even what we look like.

Well, God's name functions in a similar way. There are many names for God in the Bible: Almighty God, Father, Son, Holy Spirit, LORD, Savior, Creator, etc. These names are used to distinguish our God, the true God, from all other false gods. God's names also identify Him and describe His attributes. In Hebrew there are several names for God, each one of them points to a different attribute (or attributes) of God. The word used here is the Hebrew word that we often pronounce *Jehovah*, or *Yaweh*. It is translated in most English translations with the word LORD in all capital letters (or in small caps: LORD). This is the special, personal name by which God revealed Himself to Moses and the Israelites as He led them out of Egypt **(Exodus 6:2-3)**. This personal name of God, *Jehovah*, means "I AM." By giving His people this

very special name for Himself, *Jehovah*, He revealed Himself as the unchanging, eternal, self-existent God who always “is,” and always keeps His promises. This special name, *Jehovah*, reminded God’s people of His promise to send a Savior, Jesus the Messiah.

God’s name not only identifies who He is, it describes who He is and what He has done. In our catechism we define God’s name as being “Everything He has told us about Himself” (*Martin Luther’s Small Catechism*, Sydow, p. 39). Everything God has told us about Himself is found right here, in God’s Word. Therefore, God’s NAME = God’s WORD. Whenever God tells us about Himself, He is proclaiming His name. In the verses of our text God tells us a lot about Himself as he “**proclaimed the name of the LORD [Jehovah]**” (v. 5) to Moses. Martin Luther called these verses, “The Great Sermon on the Name of the LORD.” **The LORD passed by in front of him and proclaimed: “The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, and overflowing with mercy and truth, ⁷ maintaining mercy for thousands, forgiving guilt and rebellion and sin. He will by no means clear the guilty. He calls their children and their children’s children to account for the guilt of the fathers, even to the third and the fourth generation.” (v. 6-7).**

This was not the way in which Moses asked, or expected the LORD to reveal His full glory to Him. Moses wanted something visual, something physical and impressive to his senses for his assurance that the LORD, *Jehovah*, would be with Him and His people as he undertook the daunting task of leading this huge nation of people across the desert to the Promised Land. Instead, God revealed His glory to Moses in His NAME—the certain assurances of His Word. God did a similar thing for one of His other great Old Testament prophets, Elijah. We are told in **1 Kings** that when Elijah was depressed and felt like he was the last believer on the earth and that the burden the LORD, *Jehovah*, had placed on him was too much to bear, he went up on this very same mountain, Mt. Sinai (also called Mt. Horeb) and we are told, “**And behold, the LORD [Jehovah] passed by, and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice** (1 Kings 19:9-12 NKJV). The LORD, *Jehovah*, came to Elijah in the “**still small voice**” of His Word! The message to Moses and Elijah was very clear: reassurance, comfort, and strength from the LORD are **1. Not found in the outward signs of God’s majesty and power!**

Unfortunately, this is what we want from God by nature. I do it. You do it. We all do it. We do what Moses and Elijah did: When the pressures, burdens, disappointments, and everyday situations of this sinful life bear down heavily on us, we want God to “show us His glory” by an outward manifestation of His presence and power. We want Him to write His name and His will for us in fire across the sky. We want Him to work physical miracles before our eyes so that we are assured of His powerful presence in our lives. The apostle Paul reminds us that this was a trait of the unbelieving Jews, who had known *Jehovah*, but rejected His promised Messiah Jesus. He writes that the “**Jews demand miraculous signs**” (1 Corinthians 1:22 – NIV), but “**God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty**” (1 Corinthians 1:27).

He chose to come to us as a little baby, born in a manger in a stable in Bethlehem. He chose a cross and an empty tomb to save us. He comes to infants with water and His Word in baptism. He comes to us in bread and wine at His Supper. He has chosen the “**still small voice**” (1 Kings 19:12) of His saving NAME—His Gospel message—to reveal His true majesty, power, and glory! These seemingly “**weak**” things are strong enough to reassure us, comfort us, strengthen and sustain us until the day when we see Him in all His glory face to face with our glorified eyes in heaven!

See the LORD’s [Jehovah’s] Glory 2. in His NAME! How often don’t we human beings look for the miraculous from God where He has not promised it, and pass right over the greatest miracles of all? The God of this universe tells us that He is “**compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, and overflowing with mercy and truth, ⁷ maintaining mercy for thousands, forgiving guilt and rebellion**

and sin.” He doesn’t have to be “**compassionate**” or “**gracious**” or “**slow to anger**” toward us. How miraculous is that!? He doesn’t have to “**forgive our guilt and rebellion and sin.**” He is the all-powerful Creator God who can do anything. He doesn’t owe us these miraculous blessings; we certainly don’t deserve them. That is the greatest miracle of all: that a Holy, Almighty God would chose to reveal His saving name to sinful, lost mankind and come and live inside their hearts through His Word.

God did very visibly and physically show His glory to us and fully reveal His saving NAME to us and all mankind when He sent His Son Jesus to this earth to be one of us. The Bible tells us that Jesus “**is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation**” (Colossians 1:15) and that “**in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily**” (Colossians 2:9). He sent us His Son to reveal Himself fully to us, to show us His saving NAME. He sent Him to live sinlessly in our place, to die innocently to forgive our “**guilt and rebellion and sin**” (v. 7). To give us eternal life through His resurrection from the grave.

This greatest miracle of all, this true manifestation of God’s glory in Christ is available and offered to all people. However, many have rejected this truly miraculous gift of salvation. They have looked for the miraculous within themselves instead of looking to the cross of Christ for forgiveness and salvation. They have looked for the miraculous in nature, in superstitions and physical healings, instead of seeing the miracles God has given us through His Sacraments: forgiveness and faith through baptism, the true presence of Jesus’ body and blood for our forgiveness and the strengthening of our faith in the Lord’s Supper.

To those who have rejected the saving name of our Savior-God, *Jehovah*, He reminds them in our text that He is also a just God that will not overlook sin, “**He will by no means clear the guilty. He calls their children and their children’s children to account for the guilt of the fathers, even to the third and the fourth generation**” (v. 7). The wickedness and unbelief of one generation is passed down to their children and to their children’s children. What a tragedy! Unless God’s saving name is preached to them this cycle of unbelief and condemnation will continue down the family line.

This fact should speak to our hearts. First of all, it should make us realize that except for God’s grace and mercy that would be us! Thankfully the LORD brought His saving NAME to us through our parents, or another Christian who reached out with the saving message of the Gospel of Christ. Secondly, it should make us want to do the same for someone else who is trapped in sin and unbelief. And finally, it should make us get serious about our own spiritual health and that of our family and our fellow Christians around us. If we do not See the LORD’s Glory by hearing His saving name preached, read, and taught, if we do not share that saving name with our children these words of judgment will apply to us.

Thank the LORD that by His grace He has saved us. Praise Him that He has revealed His saving NAME to us through His Son Jesus, the Word made flesh. Our response should be like that of Moses in our text, **Moses quickly bowed to the ground and worshipped.**⁹ He said, “**If I have now found favor in your sight, Lord, please let the Lord go along with us. Although this is a stiff-necked people, pardon our guilt and our sin, and accept us as your possession.**” (v. 8-9).

Let me encourage you this morning to See the LORD’s Glory, **1. not in the outward signs of His majesty and power, 2. but in His NAME!** This is His NAME [the Bible]! This is where we see Him in all His glory! This is where we see His Son, our Savior Jesus! This is where He gives us His Spirit for our true comfort and strength! This is where we see who God is and what He has done to save us! **“The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin” (v. 6-7).** Thanks be to our God, *Jehovah*, for giving us His saving NAME! Amen.