

**Holy**

He sent

redemption unto  
his people:

**and**

holy  
commanded his

**Reverend**

covenant for ever:  
holy and reverend

**is**

is his name

**His**

Psalm 111:9

**Name**

**Mack Lyon**



# **SEARCH PROGRAMS**

**January 2000**

**Topics subject to change without notice**

## **JAN 2 -- HOLY AND REVEREND IS HIS NAME**

Just how holy and how reverend is God's name even among professed Christians? In worshiping assemblies of the 20th century church? God is being held in contempt by some and irreverence by others, which may well be the root cause of the collapse of our moral order, as well as the turmoil and divisions coming into the Lord's church.

## **JAN 9 -- GREAT IS OUR GOD**

The premise of this program is: A person's response to God is in direct proportion to his estimate of the greatness of God. The message deals with the "casualness" with which many people approach obedience to God, the worshiping assemblies of the church and Christian living. It raises the question: Does God really accept our casual offerings?

## **JAN 16 -- WORSHIP WITH REVERENCE AND AWE**

What is awe? The word "awesome" is being used nowadays to describe just about anything the least bit out of the ordinary, such as hamburgers and pizza, so that it has about lost its real meaning. Perhaps "fear" (KJV) is a better translation. How much of it do you see or demonstrate in the worshiping assemblies of the church where you are?

## **JAN 23 -- THE GOODNESS AND SEVERITY OF GOD**

God is good! Completely so! Everything He is and does is good! Too much cannot be said about His goodness, His love and grace and longsuffering toward us, etc. But, there are some things about the nature of God some people would really rather not hear or know about. Therefore, there's very little preaching and teaching about His severity, His anger, His justice and judgment. This program shows the need for balance.

## **JAN 30 -- GOD WHOSE VOICE SHAKES HEAVEN AND EARTH**

When God gave the law to Moses on Mt. Sinai, it is said the mountain trembled and shook, as did Moses. The same Scripture says His voice now shakes heaven and earth. Is God still speaking to man? How? Is His word really as powerful now as the Scripture says it is? Much modern teaching denies God His reverence and awe by denying the importance of Bible doctrine.

## "HOLY AND REVEREND IS HIS NAME"

Psalm 111:9

At first thought of God, what bursts into your mind? The Creator? Genesis 1:1, perhaps, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth?" Creative power, maybe? As in the 33rd Psalm, verses six through nine: "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses. Let all the earth fear the Lord: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast." Or it may be you think first of "Our Father which art in heaven" (Matt. 6:9). Perhaps it's love, absolutely pure, unlimited, unrequited love (I John 4:8). Or negatively, at the mention of God, you may think first of mystery, the unknown and unknowable, or your needs, "where was He when I needed Him?" Oh, it'd be interesting to know what most people think of when the name of God is mentioned. The probabilities are not that we would think of Him who is "holy and reverend," as we read in our text.

First, let's think about His name: "Holy and reverend is His name." A person's name is often used to refer to his person. We speak of honoring someone's name, or lifting his name in prayer to God. Or we speak of a person's "good name," when we really mean he's reputed to be a good person. The apostle Paul said that before his conversion, he thought he "ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth" (Acts 26:9). But, it was Jesus he was persecuting (Acts 9:5).

"Holy and reverend is His name." In most of our literature "God" is spelled with a capital "G," because for all intents and purposes, it is a proper name. When spelled thusly, it signifies the God whom it is supposed all professed Christians worship. However, in more recent years, "God" with a capital "G" has been bent and twisted to support just about as many different viewpoints of God as there are believers. To learn this, a person needs only to do as I did, visit a religious book store and randomly select some devotional materials, take them home and read them. He quickly learns that there are many strange images of God conjured up to satisfy each author (and his reader) with his or her personal needs. And a greater disappointment is, we are told that to be truly Christian, a person must be tolerant or accepting of all those images, which actually, then, renders American religion polytheistic --a religion of many gods.

Of course "Holy" means pure or ceremonially and morally clean. The word used in our text means "Sacred," so it carries the thought of separation or dedication or consecration. "Holy" is His name, means then, not only that He is absolutely and perfectly morally and ceremonially clean, but that He is the one and only such One.

So, well within the definition of "Holy" is His name, is His separateness or uniqueness or oneness. It's highly unlikely that that's the image that comes to most of our minds upon hearing the name of God. Ephesians 4:6 says, there is "One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." Political and social pressures are brought to bear upon American Christians nowadays to accept the gods of all world religions, as their adherents migrate to our country and become our next-door neighbors. I said it in another program recently, but under the present circumstances, it can't be said too often: the things we esteem most highly are the unique, the one-of-a-kind. Thus to esteem God as just one among many gods, is to reduce Him to the status of the ordinary. When that happens, it can no longer be said, "Holy and reverend is His name," because He is no longer that. It isn't any wonder that we reveal such a low estimate of God in our personal, religious and social lives. It isn't any wonder He has such a remote and insignificant and non-essential role with us. The Holy Spirit's

words about God in 1 Corinthians 8:5-6 are most appropriate for our time. He said, "For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him."

"Holy and reverend is His name." Are you aware --oh probably not; it's likely you've never had any reason to give it that much thought: this is the one and only time the word "reverend" is used in the Bible? And it's used here, only with reference to God? It's a rather special word, then, isn't it, reserved in the Scriptures for God alone. We use it frequently, but seldom if ever do we use it to refer to God --always a man. Therefore, it's become familiar, and like every thing that's familiar, "reverend" has lost its distinctive meaning.

It's from the Hebrew word "yare" (yaw-ray') which means "to fear, to revere, to frighten, to make afraid --terrible (Strongs)" And, that's the word that's used in the Scriptures exclusively for God? Yes, it's true. That's the King James Version. The NKJV has it, "holy and awesome is His name." The ASV says, "holy and reverend," and the NASV has, "holy and awesome." But the RSV translates it, "holy and terrible is His name." The idea is that His name --or God Himself --is holy and reverend, awesome or terrible. Since we use "reverend" so commonly referring to men, and since we've trivialized "awesome" to mean just about anything that's a bit unusual or exciting or delightful, perhaps the word "terrible," is the most fitting of the three English words used to describe our God. "Holy and terrible is His name." Did I hear someone say, "That's not my God, you're talking about as terrible" or frightening?" Maybe so.

That's part of what this whole series is about. There's a part of the nature of God that's revealed in the Scriptures that modern man just doesn't care to know --or to think about. He'd much prefer to perceive God as a loving grandpa type gift-giver, a pal, someone you don't have to dress up for, you can just go casual, someone who's a jovial good ole boy you can joke with --or joke about; someone that just gives you a good feeling about yourself, someone you can kinda just treat about any ole way and he'll forgive and forget, and it'll be alright "Yeah!" someone says, "that's my god." Well, --I wouldn't spell it with a capital "G," if I were you. And since that's the dominant attitude even of church people nowadays, the preachers aren't saying much about "Holy and reverend is His name" in its real meaning.

There's a great story in the twenty-seventh and twenty-eighth chapters of Genesis that sheds some light on what we're studying. As you probably know, Isaac was the son of Abraham through whom God had promised to bring the Savior into the world. Isaac had twin sons Esau and Jacob. Jacob means "supplanter," or one who overthrows or rules by tripping-up others. Well, you know the story of Esau and Jacob, how by tripping up his father, Jacob received the blessing that would have otherwise gone to his brother.

Isaac didn't want Jacob to marry a woman of the Canaanites, but to go back to their own people to find his wife. Jacob set out on the long journey, and when night came, he took one of the stones there in that place, used it for a pillow, and laid down to sleep. He had a dream that night. Now this was no ordinary dream like you or I might have, or even like Jacob had doubtlessly had many times before. No, no, it was a very, unusual, a most extraordinary dream. It was one in which God appeared and made the promise to Jacob that He had made with his father Isaac and his grandfather Abraham that made Jacob the father of a great nation and put him in the lineage of the Messiah who was to come generations later. You can read about it in Genesis 28:10-22. Verses 16 and 17 say, "And Jacob

awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate to heaven."

What an enlightening response to the realization of having been in the presence of the God of heaven! It was not glee and shouting and dancing and hallelujahs. There was joy, no doubt, but it summoned a response of obeisance and fear, not flippancy and familiarity. The message to us is the spontaneous reaction of the spiritual person to the sudden awareness of being --or having been in the presence of the very God! "Holy and Reverend is His name."

Then, there was the time when Moses went upon the mount to be in the presence God and to receive the law of commandments written on the tables of stone. The people were not permitted to come go with him. They were not even permitted to touch the mountain; under the penalty of death. They were instructed to wash their clothing and to bathe and to be ready. Does that sound like God doesn't care or take notice of how we appear before Him?" Lest any of them should take it lightly, God sent Moses the second time to tell them to bathe, wash their clothes, and not to touch the mountain. You can read about it in your Bible in Exodus 19. Hebrews 12:21 says, "And so terrible was the sight that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake." No, Moses didn't descend the mountain with dancing and shouting. I'm saying that God's very presence is not to be taken carelessly and casually and light-heartedly.

But, isn't God always and everywhere present? Oh yes, the Scripture teaches the omnipresence of God. For example, the psalmist asks, "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven [in an airplane or space ship?], thou art there: if I make my bed in hell [the grave], behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea [in a submarine, maybe]; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee" (Psalm 139:7-12).

However, there are certain consecrated places and times when God comes nearer --is nearer. Jacob's rock became a very sacred and holy place to him. A very special meeting with God took place there. He said, "And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house" (Gen. 28:22).

When God appeared to Moses from the burning bush to call him to lead the people of Israel out of Egypt, He said to him, "Draw not nigh hither (in other words, "Moses, don't get too close"), put off thy shoes from off thy feet; for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. Moreover," He said, "I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God" (Exodus 3:5-6). Holy and reverend is He. Don't get too close. Don't be too familiar. Don't be too casual. God is God. He only is God. "Holy and reverend is His name."

In the New Testament, in the model prayer given by our Lord in Matthew 6:9, Jesus taught: "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name." "Hallowed" means to make holy, to purify or sanctify, to venerate or to sanctify --which is not too different from the definition we learned of the Hebrew word for "Holy" in Psalm 111:9. In prayer and other avenues of worship, God's name --God Himself is to be revered as the one and only --distinctive and therefore, when we come into His sacred presence in prayer or other avenues of worship, we fall or bow down before Him in obeisance.

Despite the fact that God is always near the Christian (He has said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee"), there are times and places when we're nearer to Him than at other times and places.

One of these is the time of our home devotions --or worship. Yes, I mean families worshipping together at home. Or even the Christian's private devotions. We often open our prayers with something like, "Our Heavenly Father, we come to Thee --or before Thee in prayer." Despite His assurance of His presence with us always, this is a special time and place. Jesus called it a "closet" according to the King James Version. Every Christian ought to have his closet meeting with God every day.

Then there are the assemblies of the church for worship, when Christians draw into a special and sacred nearness to God. There are some things the congregation does in worship which we cannot do in our private devotions and these are sacred moments. Great care needs to be taken that our appearance before Him on these special occasions is in reverence and awe. They're not casual meetings, they're sacred meetings. Here we come to worship Him whose name is Holy and reverend. From what I'm reading there are people in about every religious group who've been heard saying, "I don't get anything out of it." The reason might well be that there's insufficient preparation and only a little reverence and awe. Christianity is a spiritual way of life and Christian worship is a very, very special spiritual event. The carnal casual spirit that seems to have totally permeated our society is destructive to meaningful worship in spirit and in truth as Jesus taught in John 4:24.

"GREAT IS OUR GOD"  
2 Chronicles 2:1-6

"Great is our God above all gods." I was about to say that the Old Testament world was one of many gods, but that's true of the world in New Testament days, too, isn't it? That's what occasioned that great sermon of the apostle Paul's on Mar's Hill in Athens recorded in Acts 17. And it's also true of the world in our own times. Well then, Solomon's statement is relevant to any period of history, wouldn't you say.

It's because of the spirit of individualism and pluralism that has infiltrated and thoroughly permeated modern American religion, that makes it so relevant today. Individualism says that God is to every person, just what he perceives Him to be, and pluralism says no one can say another person's perception is wrong. Everyone is right. Denying the accuracy or the truthfulness of another person's image of God is generally considered absolute heresy --or even worse, if that's possible. And I used the word "image" there very intentionally, for that's what it is.

We don't carve our images in gold or silver or wood and keep them on the mantle over the fireplace and bow down before them, but we carry them about in our hearts or minds. And our images are not always engraved or defined in our hearts by Scripture teaching about God, but by our own private experiences and/or whatever we wish Him to be and to do. So, when we say, "Great is our God above all gods," are we really talking about the same God that Solomon was talking about, or our own private icon? Now all this is important because it's going to determine our response to God. And that's the bottom line of this message.

After their deliverance from Egypt and their receiving the law of God at Mt. Sinai, until the reign of King Solomon, God's presence among the people of Israel had been in the tabernacle. It was a tent-like structure which could easily be moved from place to place in their wilderness wanderings. But, when they possessed the land and were dwelling in it, King David wanted to build a permanent temple to replace the tabernacle as the place of their worship. However, God denied David that privilege and gave it to his son, Solomon. That's where we are in the passage we read a moment ago. Solomon begins preparation for one of the most magnificent structures ever built by human hands. It took 183,000 skilled workmen and craftsmen seven and one-half years to build it.

Solomon said, "The house which I build is great, for great is our God above all gods." And a great house it was. It was great in cost. It was said a few years ago that it was the most expensive building ever built at that time. And when we consider the cost of some of the pagan temples such as the Parthenon in Athens, Greece and the Temple to Diana of the Ephesians, and some of the great cathedrals of Europe, or when we consider the cost of some government buildings around the world, to have exceeded the cost of them, it must have been costly. Why, do you suppose King Solomon would spend so much money on a temple like that when there were hungry people, the poor to be clothed, the elderly and widows that could have used financial assistance? Why? Well, he said why: "The house which I build is great, for great is our God above all gods."

Aesthetically it was a great house. I mean it was a beautiful thing! It's said that being overlaid with plates of pure gold, it defied a person to look on it in the morning sunlight with unshaded eyes. Like the Queen of Sheba when people saw all the works of Solomon, including the temple, they marvelled and said it exceeded all they had been told. It was great in its purpose and meaning. It was the glory of all Israel. It was God's dwelling place among them. It was the place of their worship. The loss of the temple in the captivity was one of the greatest losses they suffered. It was rebuilt but not to

its original splendor. Why all this cost? Why all this beauty? Why all this fuss about the temple on Mt. Moriah in Jerusalem? Because, "Great is our God."

The principle is this: Our response to God is in direct proportion to our estimate of the greatness of God. It can be illustrated many times over in the Scriptures as well as in modern life. We respond to anything in direct proportion to our estimate of its greatness or its importance. Back in the early part of the 20th century Booker T. Washington was struggling to build a school for the education of black people in the south --in Tuskegee, Alabama. He had very meager beginnings. He was attempting the impossible. I like that in a man, especially when it's a good thing he's attempting. Anyway, Mr. Washington was granted an appointment with the great philanthropist Andrew Carnegie to ask for monetary help in his work. He went. He made his appeal. Mr. Carnegie reached down in his desk drawer for his check book, and gave Mr. Washington a check in the amount of \$5,000. Of course, \$5,000 was more then than now, so it was nothing to be ungrateful for. However, Mr. Washington looked the check over and handed it back with the words, "Mr. Carnegie, it is obvious I have failed to impress you with the greatness of my cause." And he asked for another appointment. He went home, did his home work a bit better and returned. This time Mr. Carnegie gave him a check for \$500,000 (one-half million) and the Encyclopedia Britannica says he sent that amount every year for some years thereafter to the work of the Tuskegee Institute for the education of black people.

From the response we're seeing, I'm fully persuaded that we preachers have failed to impress our congregations with the importance --the greatness --of our God. God is no triviality, my friend. Our response to Him is not a casual one. He either has first place in a person's life or He will have no place at all. Our Savior said, "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it" (Matt. 10:37-39). It's been observed that some of us have succeeded in turning Christianity into nothing more than a big "bless me club," where we receive God's favors and blessings freely, and never give anything. So, these people "shop around" for a church that can give them the most --the church that can meet the most of all their felt needs and demand nothing. In those "seeker-friendly churches," there's nothing required, no commitment to doctrine, no expectations, no repentance, no obedience or obeisance to God. That's where the crowds gather, but Jesus also said, "Enter ye in at the strait (the small pent-up) gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matt. 7:13-14).

This cultural "casualness" business of our times is tearing at the very heart and soul of Christianity. It is as far from the attitude the genuine believer ought to exhibit in the presence of our great God as the North is from the South. Oh! How we do need an enhancement of love and respect and reverence for our God who is great above all gods --and for all that pertains to Him. I'm not talking about a money response alone; that can't be eliminated, of course it can't. We respond to God with our prosperity in direct proportion to our real estimate of His importance in our lives. Certainly we do; there's no denying it. And our monetary offerings often belie our verbal professions. But I'm speaking more directly to the concern of showing Him the reverence and respect and obeisance that's due Him in other ways, too.

Our God is great above all gods. The sweet singer of Israel said of Him, "The word of the Lord is right; and all his works are done in truth. He loveth righteousness and judgment: the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord. By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the



breath of his mouth. He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses. Let all the earth fear the Lord: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast" (Psalm 33:4-9). What a great God He is! Yes, let the whole world stand in awe of Him.

Although Solomon built that magnificent temple, and did it by the authority of God Himself, he spoke a truth about it, we must not overlook. "But who is able," he asked, "to build him an house, seeing the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain him? who am I then that I should build him a house, save only to burn sacrifice before him?" Paul agreed with him in his sermon at Athens. He said, "God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands" (Acts 17:24).

It's interesting that in the New Testament there is no mention that the Christians ever built or bought or owned a material building of any kind that might be called a temple, a cathedral or sanctuary for the Lord. In contrast to that, much of 20th century American Christianity is in some way associated with a material building, which is often an elaborately beautiful and costly facility, the highest priority and biggest item in the congregation's budget, and the focal point of virtually all of the church's activity. The average Christian's practice of his religious faith is within the church building. To him, that's where he meets God. His god is never outside it.

"Great is our God." Paul introduced Him to the Athenians as "God that made the world and all things therein...He is Lord [meaning, Supreme Ruler] of heaven and earth" (Acts 17:24). He not only created the heaven and earth as we learn from the first sentence in the Bible, He is the supreme ruler over all of it. He is the One in charge. Surely we owe Him, at the very least, the great measure of respect we give to our lowly kings and prime ministers, presidents and others. Solomon says we are to "Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Ecc. 12:13-14).

Oh the emptiness of our words! when we say we "stand in awe of Him," but do not do His commandments. My friend, I hope you're a Christian, and a Christian who reverences the name of God in doing His will. But if you are not, I pray you will humbly, reverently and respectfully submit yourself wholly to doing His will expressed in His word. Come to Him through Jesus Christ by turning from your sinful lifestyle in repentance. He commands all men everywhere to repent (Acts 17:30) and by being baptized into the death of His only begotten Son (Rom. 6:3) you can have your sins washed away in His blood. He will receive you and forgive your sins, plant your feet on higher ground and eventually welcome you into heaven when life is finished here. Do it today, will you?

A few years ago when I was serving as Chaplain of the State Senate of Oklahoma, one of the very distinguished senators was killed in an auto accident. He died on Monday morning and the Governor promptly announced a memorial service to be conducted on Wednesday morning in the rotunda of the capitol building. The chaplains of the House and Senate were to be in charge. The deceased was a good man, a gentleman and a distinguished servant of the people. So we wanted everything done with dignity and order to honor his good name and work. He was worthy of the best we could do. Of course, all members of the Senate and the House would be present along with the Governor, the Lt. Governor, other dignitaries and more importantly the grieving family and many close friends.

My first thought was to follow the established protocol, but this kind of thing had never been done in the history of Oklahoma (and incidentally, it's never been done again), therefore, we would actually be establishing protocol for possible future events like it. This was neither the time or the

place for casualness or carelessness or sloppiness. It was a time for our best. That's precisely the way I feel about our every worship assembly of the church, because we assemble in the presence of our great God to offer Him the best of our worship and praise offerings. Yes, and the other people are important enough to be considered, too. Because you see, anything that distracts from the spirit and truth of true worship as Jesus said in John 4:24, not only profanes the name of God, it is an injustice to those who are worshiping. Anything less than our best is inexcusable and unacceptable. Great is our God, let us fear Him and keep His commandments for this is the whole duty of man.

"WORSHIP GOD WITH REVERENCE AND AWE"

Heb. 12:25-28

According to a recent book, Directions For The Road Ahead (Page 68) some people wonder and even ask, why there is so much focus on worship in today's church. We'll not attempt to respond to that today, other than to say that with some people the question, just in itself, seems to be saying that the worship of God ought not to demand as much attention as it does in the Christian community. However, no attempt to create respect and reverence for God --and awe in His presence --would even approach sufficiency without some time and effort being devoted to a study of worship of Him. True worship is an expression of reverence for God.

From the very earliest recordings of man's history --in only the second generation --in the case of Adam's sons, Cain and Able in Genesis 4:1-15, and through every subsequent generation, man has been a worshiper and God has shown His deep interest in what they did. Because God is deeply involved, worship is a very, very sacred thing, and for the worshiper to minimize its importance or to be careless or casual about it, is but to trivialize God.

In the case of Cain and Abel, what was unacceptable with Cain's offering was that Cain had no respect for the blood sacrifice to the Lord, so he substituted an offering of grain from his fields. It's possible that he was like many in our own day who consider some things about Divinely prescribed worship, "non-salvation issues," meaning they don't really matter. Cain's brother Abel, offered the blood sacrifice and God had respect for it, but He found no pleasure in Cain's grain offering. You know the rest of the story. Romans 15:4 says it was recorded in Scripture for our learning.

The important thing generally overlooked in this situation is that in Genesis 3:15 God had already announced His plan for sending His Son to die as Redeemer of the lost race. And the blood of animal sacrifices which men were required to offer throughout the Old Testament, pointed by faith to that event at Calvary. Therefore, with God the animal sacrifice was not a matter of expediency. It was not a "non-salvation-issue." It was an expression of faith in God's coming Savior, His Son, and His death on the cross. Doing God's expressed will does make a difference, whether or not we understand every "why" and "wherefore." It doesn't take great faith to do what God says when we can see a reason or purpose in it; but it does take great faith to do the things He commands when we can not see His reason or purpose.

There are six biblical words, or word families, that translate into our English words "worship," "worshiped," and "worshiping." Each of these casts a little different light on the subject of worship. The most commonly used word defines worship as an act of homage or reverence; to make obeisance, to do reverence to or toward, to kiss. Another word means to "revere" and emphasizes the emotions of awe and devotion. Another means to bow the knee before the object of worship. Still another conveys the idea of sacrificial offerings. And one of them implies a pattern for religious service. But there is no Bible word for worship that means "celebration," --or "festivity" --or "ceremony" or "ritual." None of that is what worship is all about and to make it so, is to pervert true worship in spirit and in truth.

Let's look at some Bible passages where we have these words and see what took place in the worship of God in reverence and awe. First, in Genesis 24 it's said that when the patriarch Abraham was old and well-stricken in age he sent his servant back to Mesopotamia to find a wife for his son Isaac from among his own people. The servant prayed that God would give success to his journey and as God answered, verse 26 says, "The man bowed down his head and worshiped." When he rehearsed all these things to Laban, Rachel's father, he said, "And I bowed down my head, and worshiped the

Lord." And when Rebekah's father gave Rebekah to Isaac for marriage verse 52 says, "When Abraham's servant heard their words [the words of consent] he worshiped the Lord, bowing himself to the earth."

In Exodus 4, when Moses and Aaron told the elders of the children of Israel of God's plan to deliver them from Egyptian bondage verse 31 says, "The people believed: and when they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel, and that he had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshiped."

Before King David died he told the people of Israel how he had carefully prepared the materials for the building of the temple in Jerusalem, as we studied in a previous message in this series. He ended his speech with a prayer, after which it's said in I Chronicles 29:20, "All the congregation blessed the Lord God of their fathers, and bowed down their heads, and worshipped the Lord."

Solomon succeeded his father to the throne and built the temple according to God's plan. And after his long dedicatory speech which ended with a prayer, "When the children of Israel saw...the glory of the Lord upon the house, they bowed their heads with their faces to the ground upon the pavement, and worshiped, and praised the Lord, saying, For He is good; for his mercy endureth forever" (2 Chron. 7:1-3).

Upon their return from the captivity, when the city of Jerusalem had been rebuilt, all the people were gathered together (the Scripture says, "as one man") in the street before the water gate. Ezra the scribe was chosen to read from the book of the law of Moses (the law of God). When he opened the book, "All the people stood up," and he read from early morning until midday and the people were attentive to the book of the law. "And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God. And all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands: and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground."

When the messenger came running to Job with the bad news of the loss of all his children, and another to tell of the loss of his oxen and asses, and another with the same news about all his sheep and servants, and another with the same news of the camels, the Scripture says, "Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped" (Job 1:20).

In Revelation 5:14 "the four and twenty elders fell down and worshiped him that liveth forever and ever." "And the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces and worshiped God" (Rev. 7:12). "And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshiped God" (Rev. 11:16).

So now, what have we learned from the Scriptures? These are not isolated cases. A person needs only to get a good concordance and do as I have done --simply work his way through the Bible. Always, when people or angels are seen worshiping God, it is an act of humble obeisance with reverence and fear --bowing themselves to the ground; never, not even once is their worship characterized by shouting and holy laughter and dancing and frivolity and celebration --or casualness.

What we read in the Bible about worshiping God is a far cry from what we'll find when we enter most assemblies of worshipers today. Psalm 2:11 says, "Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling." And Psalm 95:1-7 says, "O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms. For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods. In his hand are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is his also. The sea is his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry land. O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our Maker. For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand."



Worship of God is the lowest human posture of humility and submission. Hear what the Scripture says: "Exalt ye the Lord our God, and worship at his footstool; for He is holy" (Psalm 99:5), -- worship at His footstool? That isn't a modern perception of worship. A young Christian friend and I visited a real old church building. As we passed down the center aisle, he noticed what he called the "foot-rests," they were padded. I said, "No, those are kneeling rails." He laughed. He thought it was funny. He didn't believe me. I should say, he doesn't believe me --yet. A few congregations still have them.

Worshipping God with reverence and Godly fear is extremely important, because God is great! And our worship of Him in spirit and in truth affects every other aspect of our lives, our morals, our character, our concern for the salvation of others, how we treat other people,--how we get along with other Christians, family members and others, yes and even how we transact business. Our lack of reverence and genuine awe of Him in our worshiping assemblies is at the very heart of the many social ills from which we suffer so today. Virtually every religious group that calls itself Christian is concerning itself with what's being done in their worshiping assemblies. Many wild and weird worship patterns are tearing churches apart, and traditions are being defended, but very little attention is being focused on worshiping God in reverence and awe, or fear. I say that without fear of denial because of what I'm reading in published books and periodicals, and what I'm observing first hand in the electronic media. In all honesty, I must say that much of the "strange fire" (Lev. 10:1), people are offering to God as worship today, is being marketed in religious programming on radio and television.

Worshipping God with reverence and Godly fear is extremely important because our Bible text today says, "Our God is a consuming fire." "Oh," someone's bound to say, "That isn't my God you're talking about; the God I worship is not a consuming fire." I'm sorry about that, but the God of the Bible is a "consuming fire." The Bible says so in Deuteronomy 4:24 and Hebrews 12:29. Oh, I wish He were your God. You see, I'm simply telling you something about the true and living God, that you're not hearing, unless of course, you're reading and studying your Bible. Why not bow with your face to the ground in genuine humility and submit to doing His will completely. Begin by turning from your sinful life in repentance, and by being baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sinful past as you read in your Bible in Acts 2:38, and be reconciled to God. Why not? Why not do it now? I hope you will.

Our society is seeking answers to many questions. Why do our youth, some of whom are regular church-going boys, take guns to school and kill or attempt to kill their class mates? Why is the divorce rate the highest in some states in the Bible belt, where it's but natural to assume that religious faith is the strongest? Why is it that in a nation where 92 to 96 percent of the citizens profess to be believers in God, that that nation is without a moral standard and anarchy reigns? Oh, the list could go on and on, but our time doesn't.

I've been doing some serious thinking and praying about all this. I'm sure you have, too. How could these things be in an environment where most of the people say they believe in God? I don't have the answers; I'm asking, like you are. But, I'm wondering if it could be that despite all our beautifully steepled church facilities at about every street intersection, and despite all our church-going and Bible-waving, and all our feelings-oriented worship services, we have forsaken God, and made our own gods to meet our personal needs and demands? I'm wondering if we're really not offering God anything in worship; we're there only for the "experience" --or the "show," --or what we get can out of it. I wonder if it isn't that our perception of God is that He is an automatic grace dispenser who makes no demands on our lives, no commitment to faith founded on His word as He

says in Romans 10:17, no obedience to His commands, no claims on our lives, who doesn't hold us accountable for our words and deeds? I wonder. I wonder if our worship has become worthless in His sight. I wonder if He may be saying about our worship what He said to Israel in Malachi, chapter 1: "A son honoreth his father, and a servant his master: If then I be a father, where is mine honor? and if I be a master, where is my fear...I have no pleasure in you..., neither will I accept an offering at your hand...Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness is it! ye have snuffed at it...should I accept this of your hand, saith the Lord?...Go offer it to your governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the Lord of hosts?"

## "THE GOODNESS AND THE SEVERITY OF GOD"

Romans 11:22

Remember now, God is not a man, and whatever God is, He is that to perfection. I mean, when the Scripture says in I John 4:8 that "God is love," it means that God is love perfected. When we say God is all-knowing, we mean He has absolute knowledge of everything. He does not know more now than He once did. He can never know more than He does now. When in Genesis 17:1 He says He is almighty, the meaning is that He possesses all power to do whatever He pleases (Psalm 115:3). When Paul said on Mar's Hill that "He is Lord of heaven and earth (Acts 17:24), He declared God's sovereign Lordship over everything. When He created the heaven and the earth, He did it, not of necessity, but because He chose to do it. He didn't do it to make up for any pre-existing deficiency in Himself or His will, for there was none, but solely because He willed to do it. When He created man with the capability of disobedience, it was not a mistake, or blunder, He willed to do it that way. Therefore, when we come to the statement in our text, "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God," we must know that neither His goodness nor His severity is diminished one mote by the other, nor has either of them diminished in worth. He is totally good and He is absolutely severe.

The goodness of God has never been, and cannot be overstated. It can't be, for He is goodness perfected. The Scripture says, "O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever" (Psalm 107:1). God is always good. He is never more good or less good. He is never bad; He cannot be so, because it is against His nature, just as it is said that He "cannot lie" (Tit. 1:2). Everything God does is good. He cannot do otherwise. Six times in the story of creation in Genesis chapter one, it is said that "God saw that it was good."

The poet wrote, "Could we with ink the ocean fill, / Were every blade of grass a quill, / Were the whole world of parchment made, / And every man a scribe by trade, / To write the love of God above / Would drain the ocean dry; / Nor would the scroll contain the whole / Though stretched from sky to sky." Well, he's sure right about that, isn't he? In his book, Knowing God, J.I. Packer says that "God's love is an exercise of His goodness toward individual sinners whereby, having identified himself with their welfare, He has given himself to be their savior, and now brings them to know and enjoy Him in a covenant relation." So, when talking about His goodness, we turn at once to the subject of His love. It knows no bounds. I John 4:7-8 says. "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love." (Oh my! A person may be right! Dead right! Absolutely right in all his teaching --and not know God. It makes you kind of back off and think again look, doesn't it? The verse doesn't necessitate one or the other, but demands both, rightness and love.)

God doesn't just love saints; He loves sinners, too. Jesus said, "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Matt. 9:12-13). The Scripture says, "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:7-8). At Edmond church we teach the very little children to sing, "Jesus loves me when I'm good / And when I do the things I should. / Jesus loves me when I'm bad / But it makes Him very sad." It's true with adults, too.

Oh for the wonderful love and grace of God. "Grace" is unmerited, unearned and undeserved favor. And God is "the God of all grace" (I Pet. 5:10). It is by God's grace that sinners can be saved (forgiven their sins). It isn't because any of us merit forgiveness or deserve it or earn it (Eph. 2:8), but

because the love of God in Christ Jesus reaches all who will come to Him. The apostle Paul, who perceived himself to be "chief of sinners" (I Tim. 1:15) because he was such a radical persecutor of Christ and His church, knew something about God's grace. He said it was by God's grace, he was what he was --the apostle of Christ to the Gentile world (I Cor. 15:9-10). And he said it doesn't matter how many are your sins or how big, where sin has gone, God's grace has gone more abundantly, "That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 5:20-21).

We must speak, too, of the longsuffering of God. Peter spoke of it with reference to the antediluvian world, "when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (I Pet. 3:20-21). He speaks of it again with reference to the return of Christ and the destruction of this present world. He says, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

But, the theme of this message is the goodness and the severity of God. And the Scripture says, "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised: he also is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the peoples are idols, but the Lord made the heavens: (I Chron. 16:25-26). "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him" (Psalm 89:7). "Oh," but somebody says, fear in those verses doesn't mean fear." Well, let's see. The first reference (I Chron. 16:25-26) is part of the praise the congregation of Israel offered when the Ark of the Covenant had been successfully moved to its rightful place. It was after that awful experience they'd had when they tried to move the ark improperly and "the anger of the Lord burned against Uzza, when God struck him down because he put out his hand to the ark [touched it]; and he died there before God" (that's back in 13:10). With those people, fear meant fear. And don't be deceived, that's the message to us, too. And in the second passage it's clearly stated, "God is to be greatly feared in the assembly of the saints." We've become too casual about God in the assemblies of the saints. This modern concept of God as a "casual" friend is truly robbing God of His respect and it's destroying meaningful worship of Him. He is not a man. He says He is not like one of us. "Casualness" is 20th century America's idol. Many American churches are worshiping at the altar of "casualness." Are you hearing me? Do you understand what I'm saying? Nothing, seems to be sacred enough anymore to demand a serious and spiritual sacrifice. God will be our friend, but He will not be our casual friend. If we were to appear before our governor or some other human dignitary as casually and disrespectfully as we do God, we'd be quickly ushered out of the room (Read the first chapter of Malachi.) There is no fear of God in us anymore.

But, Justice and Judgment are the Lord's too. We all desire just judgment. Job is a good example. When his three friends came from afar to "comfort" him, but accused him of having done some terrible sin that resulted in such terrible suffering, Job replied, "If I have walked with falsehood, And my foot has hastened after deceit, Let Him [God] weigh me with accurate scales, And let God know my integrity" (Job 31:2-6).

Just as Job did, so do we --want justice. We all want to be weighed in accurate or honest scales. But there is no such thing in this present evil world. We've experienced it, haven't we? We know what it is to be weighed in false balances. And we're reminded of it by our daily newspaper --and radio and TV newscasts. The innocent suffer while the guilty go scot free because of some nonsensical legal



technicality. It takes years --if not forever --for our American justice system (the best in the world) to execute a just sentence on the murderer or rapist or other violent criminals. It isn't so with God. God's judgment is sure and certain. The old Patriarch Abraham had it right. In his pleading with God for the sinful city of Sodom, he replied to God "That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Gen. 18:25). Yes, He will. Of course He will. He is good. And He is just, absolutely and totally good and just. Oh, how we should hold Him and serve Him in reverence and awe (fear), for He is good and He is just. We will get justice from Him.

The "wrath" of God is not the subject of many sermons nowadays. Jonathan Edwards, who was known for his frequent sermons on the grace and love of God, shocked the New Englanders of Colonial days with his sermon, "Sinners In The Hands of An Angry God." However, history says of him that with that sermon he launched the first great revival period in American history. Maybe such a sermon would spark another such revival in our own day. But it isn't likely to happen. How long has it been since you heard a sermon about God's wrath or anger? It's probably the least popular of all of God's attributes. In fact, there'd probably be very few believers, even, who would consider "anger" or "wrath" worthy of an association with the name of God. These qualities are most commonly considered blemishes of character, defects, not virtues.

Yet, they are essentials in the character of a good God, "who loves righteousness and hates iniquity" (Psalm 45:6). God will judge the world in righteousness (Acts 17:31; Rom. 2:5). "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. 5:10). "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. 14:12). "For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10:30-31). Let us pray.

Anger and severe judgment are as much a part of the severity of the Lord, as His love and His grace are manifestations of His goodness. But who wants to serve an angry God? In his book titled, The Attributes of God, A. W. Tozer makes a reply. He says, "I tell you this: I want God to be what God is: the impeccably holy, unapproachable Holy Thing, the All-Holy One. I want Him to be and remain THE HOLY. I want his heaven to be holy and His throne to be holy. I don't want Him to change or modify His requirements. Even it shuts me out, I want something holy left in the universe." And to that we say a hearty "Amen."

"Behold the goodness and the severity of God. Oh! How we need to have balance in our preaching and our perception of God. There are people who know nothing of the severity of God; they think solely on His goodness. And others dwell constantly on His severity --never on His goodness. We need balance. As Tozer says, "I want God to be what God is." I don't want a perverted image of Him. I don't want someone presenting to me a picture of God, which when I meet Him on judgment day, I'll find to be so inaccurate, I won't recognize Him.

My friend, if you're not ready to meet God in judgement, I hope something has been said here today that will move you to get ready. God's severe justice says, "The soul that sinneth it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:20). And in the next verse His supreme love says, "But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die." Will you turn from all your sins, as that verse says, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins as we're taught in Acts 2:38? I hope you will today. Let us hear from you that you did it today.

## "GOD, WHOSE VOICE SHAKES HEAVEN AND EARTH"

Heb. 12:22-29

In order for there to be a relationship (relationship: that's our modern word; the Bible calls it fellowship or communion) between God His offspring (Acts 17:28), there must be communication between the two. God must in some way communicate Himself and His will to us, and we must have a way to speak our praises and our needs to Him. Stated more briefly, God must speak to us and we to Him. From the very creation of man, it's been so. In the very first chapter of the Bible (verses 27 and 28) it's said, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, be fruitful, and multiply and replenish the earth, and subdue it..."

In the New Testament book of Hebrews (1:1) the Holy Spirit says to us, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son..." (Heb. 1:1-2). That's KJV; McCord's translation has it, "Long ago, God spoke to the fathers by the prophets at various times and in many ways; but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son..." From those passages, then, we know that from the very beginning to this present day, God has always spoken to man. He has done so at different times, and in many ways: directly, as in the garden (we just noted), in visions as He did to Abram in Genesis 15:1, in dreams as He did to Jacob in Genesis 31:11, in a cloud as He did to Moses in Numbers 11:25 in a whirlwind as He did to Job in Job 38:1 and by His prophets. "But, in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son." Did you get that? In times that are now past, God has spoken to men in these different ways, but in these last days (the Christian age), He speaks to us through His Son. Isn't it correct to say, then, that according to the Bible, God no longer speaks to men directly or in visions or in dreams or in a cloud or in such events as a whirlwind, but that He speaks to us through Jesus Christ His Son? Certainly so! If that isn't the meaning for Christians, I don't know what it means.

In His prayer the night before His crucifixion the next day Jesus prayed, "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world [that's the apostles]: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me" (John 17:4-8).

So, God gave His Son His words and He taught them to His God-chosen apostles. To assure the accuracy of their recall and delivery of all He had taught them, and would later reveal to them, He promised them the Holy Spirit as a Helper and a Guide (John 14:16-17; 16:7-13). Therefore, their preaching and their writings constitute God's word to all men today. The Holy Spirit caused it to be written in 2 Timothy 3:16-17 that "All scripture is given by inspiration of God [meaning it's God-breathed], and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Therefore, God speaks to us today through the word of His Son which He delegated to His apostles and as it is revealed in the Bible. "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17).

Well, what about the fellow who says, "The Lord spoke to me directly and personally" or "The Lord said to me in a dream last night," or "the Lord sat on my hospital bed, we visited and He said to

me" or some other similar claim?" Yes, well, in view of biblical teaching, suppose you tell me what about it. In I Corinthians 4:6 we're warned against thinking of men above that which is written.

"Oh," someone's heard saying, "but the experience of hearing God speak is an indescribably, exhilarating experience, and there's no experience of that kind that comes from just reading the Bible. As a matter of fact," he says, "reading the Bible gets to be a drag to me." Here is a person who values experience above the word of God. I'm afraid such a person has been listening to the voice of another God, because that isn't what those people in the Bible would say about that. And that's the evil against which we're speaking --the almost total absence of any reverence or respect for God's word.

Let's consider for a moment the power and the authority with which God speaks. In the 33rd Psalm it's said, "The word of the Lord is right; and all his works are done in truth. He loveth righteousness and judgment: the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord. By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses. Let all the earth fear the Lord: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast" (verses 4-9).

In the passage which we read awhile ago (Hebrews 12:18-29) God is telling us that we in the Christian age have come to something greater than that mountain that shook and trembled and burned when He spoke from Sinai. In our time His voice shakes both heaven and earth. This is an obvious reference to the prophecy of Haggai (2:6-7) that is fulfilled in the Christian age, in that God speaks even more powerfully now than then. He speaks by different means, but His voice is heard in heaven and in earth. These Scriptures are His word. They are as powerful --even more powerful than if He had whispered them in our ears.

What, then, should be the human response to the word of so great and good a God as He is, who speaks so powerfully? Here is the thrust of today's message. "See then that ye refuse not Him that speaketh. For if they escaped not, who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh in heaven." People who are casual with God will be careless with His word, too. Is that too much of an assumption? No, I don't think so. It's the only logical conclusion to which we can come. In fact, the former is the probable cause of the latter. We hear TV and radio preachers speaking so glibly about their experiences with God. "God spoke to me..." as it were some kind of joke. It probably is. That isn't the way people in the Bible responded to God.

For example, the Scripture says when God spoke to Adam, Adam said, "I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself" (Gen. 3:10). That reminds me of the time Jesus borrowed Simon Peter's boat to use as a pulpit. When He had finished His sermon, He told Peter to launch out into the deep for a catch of fish. Peter told Him they had fished there all night and had caught nothing, nevertheless, at Jesus command they did. And they caught so many fish that the boat was about to sink and they called for another boat and they filled it, too. Luke 5:8 says, "When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord."

The prophet Isaiah describes his feelings when the Lord called him to the prophetic ministry in chapter six. He said, "In the year of King Uzziah's death, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple. Seraphim stood above Him, each having six wings; with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called out to another and said, Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of hosts, The whole earth is full of His glory. And the foundations of the thresholds trembled at the voice of him who called out, while the temple was filling

with smoke. Then I said, Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I live among a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts."

And in the first chapter of Revelation the apostle John describes the circumstances of the revelation that came to him on the Isle of Patmos. He says, "I heard behind me a loud voice like the sound of a trumpet, saying, Write in a book what you see...And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as a dead man."

My friend, that's the way the great men of God behaved in the presence of the almighty and holy God of the Bible. They were not flippant or casual about it. They loved Him. Surely they did, and with full realization of their sinful humanness, they prostrated themselves before Him in deep, deep humility and reverence and heard Him.

Jesus once took Peter, James and John up on a mountain and there He was transfigured before them. What a significant occasion, and you know Peter, impetuous Peter, he wanted to do something for Jesus. While he was saying it, a cloud overshadowed them and God spoke from the cloud saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased, hear ye Him." And verse six says, "When the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid" (Matt. 17:1-7). What a momentous and memorable occasion and Peter wrote about it in his second epistle. And listen to what he said about it: "We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard when we were with him in the holy mount. We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation." You see, despite all of what Peter saw and heard, there was something even more sure --it was the Scripture. The lesson is, God speaks to us today in His word, the Scriptures. He speaks no other way. And we must not refuse or reject it.

Say my friend, if you're not a Christian, why not become so today. Don't refuse God's word. Receive it in obedience. Confess Jesus to be the Son of God. Obey Him in baptism today.

It's been our purpose in these messages this month to instill a deeper reverence and fear of God in the hearts of all, especially professed believers. The irreverent and disrespectful manner in which many of us approach God in life and in worship is without doubt the root cause of the breakdown of our social order. It isn't enough just to be religious. It's been observed that some of the youth who've taken guns to school and shot up the place were religious. It isn't enough merely to be believers in God. Depending on who we're reading, 92 to 96 percent of Americans say they believe in God, but they treat Him with less reverence and awe than they do a governor or some sports or music star. It isn't enough just to "attend church." When people assemble to worship God in reverence and Godly fear, when people come to worship a God whose name is to them holy and reverend, when they respect God as much as they would some human dignitary, the other problems will vanish. You see, worship is not a casual event, like a cook out, or a beach party.

Reverence and fear of God will also eliminate the distracting human innovations in worship that are tearing some churches apart, because the focus will then be on God, His holiness, His greatness, His goodness and severity, and not on the new and amusing and self-focused novelty. Fear of God will result in surrendering obedience to the teachings and will of God who is greater than all gods. It's this



contemptible casualness about everything, especially about things that are holy and sacred that's simply destroying us, my friend We need to get hold of it now. Thanks for being with us.