

Doctrinal Summary of  
Worship: Commending God for Who He is and What He has Done

In Psalm 113:3 the psalmist identifies God's name is to be praised.

"From the rising of the sun to its setting, the name of the LORD is to be praised."

The word "praised" is translated from the Biblical Hebrew word מְהִלָּל ("m'hul-lal") which more literally means, "being acted upon to repeatedly express great personal commendation in recognition of the characteristics or activity of someone or something." It describes something as being worthy of praise based upon recognition of who it is or what it has accomplished. The praise itself is carried out through individual or corporate expressions which ascribe credit to another for who they are or what they have done. This praise is rooted in gratitude and joy that comes from recognizing the reality and greatness of what something is or has accomplished. It is a repetitious action that repeats itself over and over again each time the individual is personally grateful and joyous about the reality of what something is or has accomplished. Here, the Psalmist identifies that the name of the Lord is what is to be praised.

The word "name" is translated from the Biblical Hebrew word שֵׁם ("shaem") which more literally means "label used to identify a specific individual or thing and is linked to its character, attributes, and activity." It combines the identity, personality, attributes, and activity of a person or thing under one label allowing for that person or thing to be addressed or referred to at various times. It identifies a unique entity for who or what it is and what it has accomplished. Since it is the name "of the LORD" that is in view in the present passage, the psalmist is declaring that God is to be praised for who He is (identity, character, and attributes) as well as for what He has done. This is to be done repeatedly, each time man recognizes the greatness of who God is and what He has accomplished. If man is going to commend God "from the rising of the sun to its setting" then he must be in a position that allows him to recognize God's character and actions in every moment of his wakefulness.

Though God's name is worthy to be praised always (cf. Psalm 145:1-4), the reality of man praising God requires that man sees Him for who He is and what He does. Failure to personally recognize God for who He is comes from an improper focus in one's perspective. When man focuses on creation instead of the Creator, responsibilities and agendas instead of obedience, and the enticements of this world instead of his relationship with God he keeps himself from seeing the fullness and reality of God. Yet despite any man's improper focus and orientation, God has not stopped being who He is, nor has He stopped accomplishing righteous and mighty works. Man simply is not paying attention to Him and what He is doing. This is true of both believers and unbelievers.

Therefore, though man should always praise God for who He is and what He does, the reality of whether man will praise God is contingent upon whether or not man is paying attention to and seeing God and His activity. Without recognition of God's characteristics and activity, man is incapable of praising God. Yet, God remains worthy to be praised for His character is immutable and His activity is righteous.

As a result of God's complete uniqueness and the wondrous and mighty righteous works He accomplishes from His attributes of omniscience, omnipotence, and love He is to be praised. This praise will only be personally expressed by a man if he recognizes in his own mind and is grateful for what God has accomplished because of who He is. Only then will an individual commend the name of the LORD.