

Sermon: Make a Name for Yourself - Genesis, 2 Samuel

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Scriptures: Genesis 11:4, 2 Samuel 7:18-29

We have all heard about people who left humble beginnings to find greatness or stardom or riches: the kid who becomes a world-class athlete, the poor man who becomes a successful entrepreneur, the girl from the broken home that becomes a movie star. Often just one of their names is all that is needed: Madonna, Oprah, Shaq, Trump, Obama. They have earned success, status. As their achievements increase a greater reputation is gained. They, as we say, "have made a name for themselves."

Hence, associated with a name is "renown," "glory," and "fame."

This need to make a name for ourselves has been one of the latent problems with mankind, even from the beginning of time. We want to make a name for ourselves. We find this desire early in history. On the plain of Shinar the world's population settled. We can read this story in Genesis 11. As the inhabitants increased, the people wanted to build a tower that reached to the heavens. Why would they pursue such an action? For the same reason athletes want to be the best and business people want to amass a fortune. They answer themselves, "Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the sky. Let us make a name for ourselves ..." (Gen. 11:4 HCSB). The problem with the building of the tower of Babel was that the builders wanted to exalt their own name in the process, not God's.

Ted Williams, the famous Boston Red Sox slugger, would often say, "I want to walk down the street and have people say, 'There goes the greatest hitter in baseball.'" Nothing wrong with being the greatest hitter in baseball or building skyscrapers or amassing a fortune unless you receive the glory and the fame instead of God.

Likewise, God wants to make a name for himself. David prayed, "This is why You are great, Lord God. There is no one like You, and there is no God besides You, as all we have heard confirms. And who is like Your people Israel? God came to one nation on earth in order to redeem a people for Himself, to make a name for Himself, and to perform for them great and awesome acts, driving out nations and their gods before Your people You redeemed for Yourself from Egypt" (2 Samuel 7:22-23 HCSB). David could only marvel at how great the Lord is, no one is or could be his equal. Only a divine being could possibly do or be all that David attributed to the Lord: "there is no God but" the Lord.

Our God is without peer. His name trumps all other names. Therefore, God makes a name for himself through his fulfilled promises, his benevolent actions, his tender mercies, his redemptive love, his abiding presence. Let's take a closer look at a few of his names:

- Adonai-Jehovah: The Lord our Sovereign
- El-Shaddai: The God Who is Sufficient for the Needs of His People
- Jehovah-Jireh: The Lord our Provider
- Jehovah-Ropheka: The Lord our Healer
- Jehovah-Shammah: The Lord is Present
- Jehovah-Eloheenu: The Lord our God

God never fails, because his name is above all names (Phil. 2:9). We are to bring renown and glory and fame to him and to him alone. We are to exalt his name. Place it high on a pedestal. Revere it. Acknowledge it. Worship it.

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