

Psalm 99:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Let them praise thy great and terrible name; for it is holy.

Analysis

The call to praise God's 'great and terrible name' (gadol ve-nora) holds in tension His magnificent greatness and His fearsome holiness. 'It is holy' (kadosh hu) uses the same word repeated three times in Isaiah 6:3 ('Holy, holy, holy'), emphasizing God's complete otherness and moral perfection. God's name represents His revealed character, which demands worship. This holiness isn't merely separation from sin but positive moral perfection that defines goodness itself. Praising His holy name acknowledges God as the standard of righteousness.

Historical Context

Israel's covenant relationship included reverence for God's name (as in the third commandment), recognizing that His character—represented by His name—defines reality.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does understanding God's holiness affect how you approach Him in prayer and worship?

2. In what ways have you seen God's 'great and terrible name' profaned, and how should you respond?

Interlinear Text

לְבָרְךָ יְהֹוָה	שֵׁם	בָּרָךְ	אַתָּה	יְהֹוָה	בָּרָךְ	וְשָׁמָעָה	יְהֹוָה
Let them praise	name	thy great	and terrible	for it is holy			
H3034	H8034	H1419	H3372	H6918			H1931

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 6:3 (Holy): And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.

Deuteronomy 28:58 (Parallel theme): If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, THE LORD THY GOD;

Psalms 111:9 (Holy): He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend is his name.

Revelation 4:8 (Holy): And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.

Psalms 66:3 (Parallel theme): Say unto God, How terrible art thou in thy works! through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies submit themselves unto thee.

Psalms 145:17 (Holy): The LORD is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.

Nehemiah 4:14 (Parallel theme): And I looked, and rose up, and said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, Be not ye afraid of them: remember the Lord, which is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives, and your houses.

Nehemiah 1:5 (Parallel theme): And said, I beseech thee, O LORD God of heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love him and observe his commandments:

John 17:11 (Holy): And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.

Deuteronomy 7:21 (Parallel theme): Thou shalt not be affrighted at them: for the LORD thy God is among you, a mighty God and terrible.

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