

Names of God from the Bible

17 – Israel's Glory

I have tears in my eyes as I write this. It is the greatest tragedy, and yet, the constantly repeated action, not only of Israel, but of us all.

Reading: Jeremiah 2:1-13

Just consider the Name – Glory. The Eternal Name of God. According to Larry Richards, *“in Hebrew, the root meaning of the word translated ‘glory’ is ‘heavy’ or ‘weighty’. The idea is that there is no more weighty or significant being in the universe than Yahweh, for He alone truly is majestic and high above all.”*

In the passage in Jeremiah, God says, *“Has a nation ever changed its gods? (Yet they are not gods at all.) But My people have exchanged their Glory for worthless idols.”*

What made Israel different from all the other nations? Their Glory!

Israel was no better than any other nation. They had been chosen by God to be His special, treasured possession. But what made them special? Their Glory! Their God, Yahweh!

The people of Israel could boast about their God because He was unique. He was all powerful, He was indestructible, He was victorious, He ‘belonged’ to Israel, and Israel alone. Yes, out of all the other nations on earth, God had chosen Israel to be His own people. They were the recipients of His unconditional love, protection and blessing. God intended to bless the rest of the entire human race through Israel.

They had done nothing to deserve God’s special attention. Yet, they had a whole lot of experiences to boast about their God. They were the direct descendants of Abraham and the unique recipients of the Abrahamic covenant of blessing. The patriarchs were their ancestors.

God had delivered Israel out of Egypt through miraculous and mighty acts of ‘raw’ power and majesty. God had given them the Promised Land, driving out their enemies before them. When they rejected God, their enemies won battles against them. However, after they cried out to God, He raised up deliverers to gain freedom for them once more. When they asked for a king, in rebellion against God, He acceded to their request. Later, He replaced Saul with David, who’s probably the greatest human king that has ever lived.

But the kings, leaders and people finally rejected God’s prophets, and Jeremiah recorded the most heart-rending cry from God Himself, *“My people have exchanged their Glory for worthless idols.”* Have you ever thought how God must have felt about that?

Why would you exchange the Creator and Sustainer of the Universe for a man-made object, carved out of a block of wood, stone or gold? The apostle Paul goes further and, in Romans, he includes us with Israel. *“For though they knew God, they neither glorified Him as God nor gave thanks to Him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the “Glory” of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.”* Paul is right, isn’t he?

I think, if Paul was writing his letter today, he might add that we have exchanged the “Glory” for money, achievement, fashion, toys, image, investments, and bigger and better... Yes, we think we

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are so wise, and yet, what have we got in exchange for the “Glory”? Get rid of the eternal, omnipotent God if you will, but what will you have, in exchange for Him?

Think about it.

*I'd rather have Jesus than silver or gold
I'd rather be His than have riches untold
I'd rather have Jesus than houses or lands
I'd rather be led by His nail-pierced hand
I'd rather have Jesus than men's applause
I'd rather be faithful to His dear cause
I'd rather have Jesus than world-wide fame
I'd rather be true to His holy Name*

*Than to be the king of a vast domain
And be held in sin's dread sway
I'd rather have Jesus than anything
This world affords today.*

(Rhea F Miller)

What does that name mean for us today?

The greatest joy, the greatest thrill in our lives is to own Jesus Christ as our “Glory”. He is altogether lovely and alone worthy of all our praise, adoration and instinctive obedience. Let them who boast – boast in the Lord – the Glory of Israel.

Prayer

Father, the Glory of Israel, please forgive me for allowing things to replace You in my life. Please take back Your rightful place as my Lord and my God. Amen.

Additional Readings

- Psalm 24
- Ephesians 1:15-23
- Romans 1:18-25

Questions

1. What does Israel's Glory mean to you?
2. Have you allowed things into your life that have exchanged Israel's glory as the rightful place of priority?
3. How does Jesus fulfil that name?