

What's in a Name?

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Preacher: Dr. Carl Ellis

[0:00] Ezekiel chapter 36, verses 16 to 32. Can everybody hear me back there?!

Verse 18.

I poured out my wrath on them because they had shed blood in the land and because they had defiled them with their eyes. I dispersed them among the nations and they were scattered through the countries.

I judged them according to their conduct and their actions. And wherever they went among the nations, they profaned my holy name. For it was said of them, these are the Lord's people, yet they had to leave his land.

I had concern for my holy name, which the house of Israel profaned among the nations where they had come. Therefore, say to the house of Israel, this is what the sovereign Lord says.

[1:31] It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am going to do these things, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you have gone.

I will show the holiness of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations, the name you have profaned among them.

Then the nations will know that I am the Lord, declare the sovereign Lord, when I show myself holy through you before their eyes.

For I will take you from the nations, I will gather you from the countries and bring you back to your own land. I will sprinkle clean water on you, I will make you clean, and I will cleanse you from all of your impurities and from all of your idols.

I will give you a new heart and a new spirit. I will remove from you the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.

[2:39] And I will put my spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. You will live in the land of your forefathers, you will be my people, and I will be your God.

I will save you from your uncleanness. You will curl on the grain to make it political and will not bring famine upon you.

I will increase the fruit of the trees, the crops of your fields, so that you will no longer suffer the disgrace among the nations because of famine. Then I will remember your evil ways and wicked deeds.

I will, no, and then you will remember your evil ways and wicked deeds, and you will low yourselves for the sins and detestable practices.

I want you to know that I am not doing this for your sake, declares the sovereign Lord.

[3:43] You may be seated. Verse 20, 21.

Wherever they went among the nations, they profaned my holy name for it was said of them that they, these are the Lord's people, and they have to leave his land. I am concerned about my holy name, which was profaned among the nations where they had thought.

And then another one, 2 Chronicles 7, 14, you know, listen, if my people who are called will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from the wicked ways, then I will hear from them and forgive them, give their sins and heal their land.

What's in the name? What's in the name? I'm reminded you this morning that that comes from Romeo and Juliet. I didn't know that. I thought that was just a popular thing.

See, I never like Shakespeare anymore. Now, when a loving parent gives a child a spanking, what does he or she often say?

[4:57] I know, I used to say it all the time. This is going to hurt me? See, more than it hurts you. And my son has said, damn, please don't hurt yourself. All right.

So when God disciplines his people, he says the same thing. Have you ever thought about that? So God brings discipline on you. When he has to spank you, it hurts him.

More than it hurts you. Oh, my goodness. This passage begs two questions. How did God's people end up scattered among the nations?

And the second question, why was God so determined to restore his people to the land he promised them? All right. All right. Let's take a look at the first question.

How did God's people end up scattered among the nations? Well, Ezekiel told Israel that they had to found their land in two ways.

[5:58] First, through bloodshed. You know that they burned their babies alive? Yeah. On pagan altars except as the altars of Moab.

You know that? They didn't do injustice. They said they didn't do violence. They said they didn't do greed. And a whole lot of other things. And the second way they defiled the land was through ideology.

They were distracted from God through the worship of pornographic idols. You know what I'm saying? I mean, this was, I mean, John Nelson brought that out the other day.

In the temple itself, they brought these pornographic idols. Boy, I tell you, they had some nerve.

And it affected every aspect of the people's lives. And it dragged them away into every conceivable type of conversion.

[7:07] See, the Canaanites, they took church growth seriously. You see? If you went to Canaanite church, you'd be met at the north by a temple prostitute. And she would take her, be into her chambers and help me worship.

And if you really wanted to get spiritual, you'd go to the young boy. Hello. Not done for that.

God repeatedly warned them that if they continued along this destructive path, that he would discipline them by scattering them among the nations. And being a good father, God was very concerned that his people be restored to right relationship with him.

And whatever I had to get with him, he'd say, and stuff. And it wasn't that often. It was really cute.

There would always be that sweet time of reconciliation that he had. And he'd come to settle up.

I'd be lying to him, but I love him. And, uh, it was their weirdest thing, you know? And they realized I was wrong. Me, they were wrong.

[8:16] So, what's in a name, you ask? Well, much more than you could ever imagine.

Amen. God laid his reputation on the line to discipline his people. In the ancient Near East, a nation was uniquely tied to its land.

And it was uniquely defined by its land. Who were the Canaanites? They were the people who lived in Canaan. If the people were forced to leave its land, that it was a clear demonstration that the God or gods they worship were not strong enough to protect them.

It didn't matter why they were forced to leave, whether it be invasion, pandemic, economic distress, disease, or whatever. Or terrorism, you know, whatever.

It didn't matter. But therefore, so when they were scattered among the nations, those nations concluded that God was weak and a whither and a chump.

[9:43] Now, do you know, most of you talk about the term of that? I've got some great hair to prove, but I've never been in this term. I've never been in this term. And thus, the name of God was profaned.

It was ruined. It was slandered. Imagine the kind of pressure the Babylonians put on Daniel and his friends.

Huh. That way ain't nothing. We're not just simple. Why don't you submit to the storm gods of Babylon? Because after all, we are the superpower.

And we're going to make that one really. But anyway, that's all right. Okay. God's people were his. Why? Why were God's people his? Because what? Well, that. But because they were called by his name.

[10:48] All right. Right. Right. He chose to call them by his name. That's what they were chosen. Right. Israel. What does that mean?

One who prevails with God and man. That's a good thing. Judah. What does it mean? Praise the Lord. These people were named that.

And discipline in Israel was so important that God even allowed his only name to be profaned among the nations. In the Old Testament times, a person's name was equivalent to the person

himself.

So when Israel rebelled against God, they profaned his person in two ways. By their actions, the actions of Israel itself, and by the ridicule of the nations they were scared of.

What's his name? Much more than you could ever imagine. Amen. Amen. The second question that this pastor begs is, why was God so determined to restore his people to the land he promised them?

[12:12] You get any idea why? Because they were called by his name. You know, I like this set up. This is a lot. You got a lot of good and take care.

Like I said, this is like the old Frank Y, you know? I got some ideas. Hey, what? Will you, uh, stay here. We had to clean the sanctuary because God wasn't sorry to let the people stay, right?

No. No. So they were caught by God's name, but God would not let his name be profaned forever.

Amen. Amen. Amen. God will restore his people not for their sake or for the sake of his holy name.

and in restoring his people, God would demonstrate to the nations that he is the only true and living God and that he is the God who deals with his people according to pure grace.

[13:20] All right, so that's a nice story and all that, but what does that have to do with us? All right. All right. here we go.

Ah, prison. Oh, no. All right. Later. Okay, all right. All right, I'm making the switch, making the switch, making the switch.

All right. All right. You always have a backup, you know? Later.

All right, hang on. All right. Come on. All right. Okay. All right. I think I got it. So, what does this have to do with us?

Well, idolatry is not limited to Israel and Ezekiel today. It still plagues us today. Amen. Amen.

[14:48] Now, many of you say, I don't know about it. I don't know about it. Okay, so I'll take it. first, idolatry affects what we are devoted to.

Right, right. True emotion requires strong love and loyalty. Right? Right, right. What's the first of the great commandments?

Love the Lord your God with all your heart, your mind, your strength, your soul, your everything.

Right? Right? Right? If you really love God, then you will love him. But I think I can carefully, let me say, I can safely say, I can safely assume that everyone here has some kind of devotion to God.

Can I make that assumption? Yeah. Because if we didn't, I don't think we could be here. Right,

right. Is there an acceptance of that? Do you want to pray that I'm see Jesus now? Okay.

Now, there's no sin in devotion to friends and family and all that. There's nothing wrong with that.

[16:00] However, not having God as your highest object of devotion is a form of idolatry. Amen.

Amen. Now, we may not be idol worshippers in these modern times, but we are often idol devotees.

Ouch, that hurt my toe. I don't know about you, but I see theology in everything. For example, the blues gives us a lot of good theological lessons.

I don't know if we've ever thought about that. It does. When the blues is sung from a man's point of view, it's about how his woman mistreats him.

Guess what? This is how God's people treat God. Yeah. Yeah. Oh, yeah.

Remember the story of Jose? Okay. All right. she claims to be devoted to her man, but her real devotion is to other men.

[17:19] One of my favorite blues songs is one by Ray Charles called I've Got News for You. I don't know, but it's so practical truth.

It goes something like this. You said before we met that your life was awfully tame. Well, I took you to a nightclub and the whole man knew your name.

Oh, how do you y'all? You found that you'd be late because you took the wrong express and then you walked in smiling with your lipstick all messed.

And then finally here the third verse. You wore diamond watch claimed it was from Uncle Joe.

When I looked at the inscription it said love from Daniel.

I mean doesn't that sound like the prophets or something? And after each verse Ray Charles would reply somehow your story don't ring true.

[18:38] I've got news for you. Yeah, yeah. Well, look at the way we treat them. Look at the way we propane this thing. When the blues assume from a woman's point of view though, it is about her abuse of man, how he mistreats her.

One man don't love him, treats me all so mean. You know, you know, you know, you know, you know, you know, guess what? This is how idols mistreat and abuse us when we are devoted to them.

Oh, right, right. You might think I'm, you know, those sacrilegious here talking about singing the blues, but you know, God sings the blues sometimes.

He said anything about Isaiah chapter 5 verses 1 through 7. Quote, I will sing for the wine I love. Hello. Just a guy talking.

Yeah, yeah. A song about a vineyard. My love had a vineyard on a very fertile hill. He dug it deep and cleared it of stones.

[19 : 53] He planted it with a choice in finds. He built a watch tower in it. He cut out the wine press as well.

He looked for a crop of good grapes but it healed only bad fruit. And it goes on.

It's really amazing how God ties that together. You look for righteousness and only found violence.

You know, I don't do anything to steal your devotion to God.

I know. I'm a better than in idol devotion. So I know what I'm talking about. Thanks to Jesus.

They seduce us with incredible promises and demand very little at first. In essence, they quickly want to say, how can you lose with the stuff I use?

[21 : 00] But they never keep their promises. Why? Because they are incapable of keeping those promises.

Promises only don't keep. Each time we pursue an idol, it delivers less and demands more.

Eventually, the idol's demands exceed what it delivers. Right. And at this point, those of us have both common sense, or Christian terms, common grace, right?

To give up on the idol and cut our losses. However, when we are addicted, we continue pursuing the idol.

And finally, the idol demands everything, and delivers nothing. At this point, we are the idol's slave.

[22 : 10] Yes, yes. And when that idol is finished with us, it doesn't say thanks.

It discards us like yesterday's stinky garbage into a dumpster of dead. that's what I want to do. Well, the second way it affects us today is not just in our devotion, but in our worship.

True worship requires ultimate remembrance and adoration. tradition. The first of the ten commandments, what does it say?

You shall not have any gods before me. do it. Now, I'm going to safely assume that no one here actually bows down and worships man-made objects.

You don't do that. Of course, we're too sophisticated for that in these days. We don't do stupid stuff like that, right? Right? Right? But here's the point.

[23 : 29] All idols, all idols are abusive to human beings. Yeah, yeah, yeah. This is why God says in Ezekiel 34, 14, do not worship any other God for the Lord whose name is Jealous.

Yeah. He's a jealous guy. Now, you know, you might say, oh, how can God be so jealous? Oh, no, no, no. God's jealousy is not like our jealousy.

Our jealousy is petty. It's self-centered. It's obsessed with our own personal pleasure, even at the expense of others. That's our jealousy.

That's not God's jealousy. God's jealousy is altruistic. In other words, it involves a self-concerned for others. God is even willing to let his name be profaned so he can discipline and restore his people.

That's altruistic for it. And God's concern for our well-being has been at his own expense. God doesn't need us.

[24 : 43] That's right. That's right. God is jealous for us. What's it mean, y'all? More than you can ever imagine.

We may not worship man-made objects, but we tend, all of us tend to worship man-made demons. Holy people. Man-made demons, man-made gods.

How? Here's the thing that trips us all up. When we think of God as limited or in limited terms, we reduce him to a man-made deity.

Such an idol is not worthy of our worship or devotion. I find a lot of people out there who don't believe in God because what they see coming from us is the worship of a man-made deity we call Lord.

I know it. I know it. Sometimes it's wise to ask people who don't believe why they don't believe. Ask them to describe the style that they reject.

[25 : 58] You might be surprised what you do. I grew up in the church. That's all that came across to me was a man-made deed.

thank God that somebody got you to burn God. When God relates to us he does so on terms we can understand for our sake.

But we foolishly think that God is limited by those terms. God comes to you and you'll speak English or Spanish.

That's okay. But then we think that God can only speak English or Spanish. That's the problem.

Does that make sense? For example, there's a stupid debate going on today that's raging all over the place about God and gender.

Some think that because God uses the pronoun he means that he is male. And others who react in toxic masculinity are claiming that God is female.

[27 : 15] While others such as some politicians in the state of Texas claim that God is non-binary. The God of this stupid debate is nothing but an idol a man made deity because God is not limited by human categories such as gender.

That's right. God reminded Jeremiah that he was unlimited by anything outside of himself. In chapter 32 verse 27 he said I am the Lord the God of all mankind is anything too hard for me?

Now let me ask you some questions here. Again I got stung when I was preparing this because I certainly have done all these things.

Do you believe that God is spiritual? No? However if that is the extent of your understanding of God that is just spiritual then the words of man may be to be called on God Huh And why?

Because God is not just spiritual John 4 24 says that God is spiritual right right right right right right right Do you believe that God is right?

[29 : 04] The message still of our understanding of God is to worship a man made deity called God God Well when we made name this man made deity after God we stranded his name right right Why?

Because God is not just love John 1 John 4 16 says what? God is love right Do you believe that God is for justice?

I don't know I'm stepping on some toes now But that's the extent of your understanding of who God is that what you've done you've reduced him to a man made deity who's nothing but a social justice activist You're right Right Right God is not just for social justice God is justice Amen Amen Without God there would be no justice Amen And there would be no sense of justice We believe that God exists right for the vast extent of our understanding of God that you worship a man made deity you call God and when we name this man made deity every

God we stand in his name Why because God does not just exist he is existence Amen Without God's existence there will be no existence Amen Did you understand Yes This is what God was telling Moses at the tree Moses what's your label what's your handle I play that I am Alright Have you ever felt God let you down Don't raise your hand I don't see what it is Well guess what it was a man made deity come on God Amen God does not fail

Amen God is faithful He is faithful as himself And yet we blame the true living God and in some doom we profane and slander God's name Unfortunately I have met people I have known people who have abandoned their faith in God by people unconverted Guess who they really abandoned Guess who they really blamed And guess whose name they profane and slander All of us here have gone off this Well let's wrap this up Why was God why was God so determined to restore [32 : 43] His people in the time of His He did Come on you know why Because they were called by God's name What's in the name more than you better know And God would not let His name be profaned forever And God would do this not just for their sake but for His name sake Why has God promised to save us today in spite of our extensive ideology both in our devotional life and in our worship life Why Why Why Because we are called by His name Right Right And God will not put His name equal fame forever Just think about that

God chose to put His name on you God redeemed us not for our sakes but for the sake of this name In the body of Christ we bear Jesus name What's the name Much more than you would have ever imagined 2nd Corinthians 1 24 No matter how many promises God has made they are yes amen in Christ and through Him the amen is spoken amen by us to the Lord in God yeah in Christ

that means we are in His name why you know why we bear the name of Christ Psalm 23 verse 1-3 the Lord is my shepherd

I shall not want He makes me lie down in mean fashion He leads me to side beside the waters he restores my soul he guides you fast the righteousness Psalm 79 verse 9 help us God our Savior for the glory of your name deliver us and forgive us our sins for the sake of your name sins but we have often rebelled and we have sinned against you and then finally 1 John 1-12 I am writing you dear children because your sins have been forgiven on account of His name

God what's in God's name what's in God's name it's God Himself amen the salvation is every own benefit that God has provided for us what's in the name don't forget that thank God every day every woman for the privilege of bearing His name amen amen let's pray Lord thank you so much for your word thank you for your promises thank you for your name we don't think like that today sometimes we just think we think we're right to we we stand on you without simple imaginations God break us of that open our hearts open our minds make us open to the great things that you have tell us and to lead us and Lord let us live according to you not for our sakes but for the sake of the holy name we may have broken we ask you to see!

Amen! Amen to the