

# “THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

## STAND IN AWE

By Danny Linden

*“And I said, “O LORD God of heaven, the great and awesome God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments” (Neh. 1:5, ESV).*

Our God is a God that deserves our reverence, honor, and praise. Psalm 89:6-7 reads, *“For who in the skies can be compared to the LORD? Who among the heavenly beings is like the LORD, a God greatly to be feared in the council of the holy ones, and awesome above all who are around him?”* Unfortunately, many Christians do not have the proper fear and reverence for God that they should. This idea of reverence involves more than just a feeling. There are things that we must do, and others that we must not do if we are to show reverence toward God.

**We must not take His name in vain.** *“You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain”* (Ex. 20:7). The name of our God is holy and sacred and demands our reverence. One application of this is that we cannot use God’s name flippantly or as an expletive. God’s name or some variation of it is used by many to express shock, anger, joy, and many other emotions. It also gets attached to other words to make a stronger curse word. Both of these uses do nothing to honor God and in fact trivialize and corrupt His name. Slightly altering God’s name with a euphemism does not change anything about this intent. This command also means that when we speak of God, it must be done with a sense of gravity. It is not proper to invoke God’s name simply to add force to a promise or to make a joke.

**We must obey Him.** *“My covenant with him was one of life and peace, and I gave them to him. It was a covenant of fear, and he feared me. He stood in awe of my name. True instruction was in his mouth, and no wrong was found on his lips. He walked with me in peace and uprightness, and he turned many from iniquity”* (Mal. 2:5-6). The Bible makes a direct connection between our attitude toward God and our willingness to obey His commandments. If we truly stand in awe of the name of God, we will realize that to not follow His commands would be a direct insult to Him. We must keep His true instruction on our lips and walk in His ways.

**We will worship Him in reverence.** When we assemble to praise and worship God, we need to give Him our full attention and devotion. *“Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire”* (Heb. 12:28-29). Approaching God is no small matter. Every time man has seen even a shrouded form of God he has been overwhelmed by His power. Our worship is an offering to a God who may very well consume us if He is not pleased with us. How can we justify a distracted or irreverent attitude in the assembly?

The Bible is clear when it tells us that God deserves our esteem and reverence. If we do not have this attitude toward Him, then we cannot be pleasing in His sight. That is not a condition that we want to be in. Let’s all strive to be more reverential in our speech, conduct, and worship to God. ■

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## GENEALOGY AS EVIDENCE

By Terry Wane Benton

One thing about all the list of names in the Bible (forget about the difficulty of pronunciation) is that they were kept meticulously to keep the record real and verifiable. When Genesis gives a genealogy, it was to show that

the writer was being historical and real. Families could keep their history straight, but they could also see the connection of each link in the seed line path to the coming Messiah. The Jews, after their Law was given at Mt. Sinai, needed to keep records for two reasons: **1)** The Promise of the coming Savior-Messiah was prophesied to come through Abraham, then Isaac, then Jacob, then Judah, then David, and **2)** The priesthood of the sons of Aaron had to be kept clear for legitimate priests in Israel. To be a legitimate priest in Israel you had to be from the tribe of Levi and more specifically of the sons of Aaron, and if you could not prove your genealogical credentials, you could not serve as priests. So, evidence of genealogy was very important on both of those counts.

Therefore, genealogical records were meticulously used for proof on both counts. No one could claim to be the Christ (Messiah) without the pure seed line to David, and no one could be a priest in Israel without good genealogical ties to the tribe of Levi. All records were lost and destroyed by A.D. 70. Thus, the priesthood of Levi ended and the need to keep records for the king coming from descendants of David was no longer needed since the Messiah had come.

This is why Matthew starts out his book with the genealogical credentials of Jesus. The Jews would have eliminated Jesus as a rightful Messiah if the genealogy of Jesus did not fit the predictive avenue of the seed line. Matthew's credibility would be shut down immediately if the genealogy of Jesus could not be verified as accurate and connected to Abraham and David. The unbelieving (in Jesus) Jews would have loved to have discredited the disciples of Jesus for getting the genealogy wrong and therefore proving their messiah was false. If their message was false, their movement would be short-lived. But the genealogy of Jesus was without controversy, and it was offered as proof that Jesus is the "**Christ**" (the anointed Messiah) of long-standing Jewish prophecy. The disciples offered the genealogy of Jesus as evidence, and it stood close scrutiny through the centuries. The Jews will never be able to come up with another alternative to Jesus of Nazareth. Matthew (Matt. 1) and Luke (Luke 3) take Mary and Joseph and show that either route you take, either through Mary or through Joseph, Jesus is from Abraham and from Israel's greatest king, David, and all the prophecies connect to Jesus. Genealogy was a key piece of evidence. Jesus is also the suffering servant of Isaiah 53, explaining why He let Himself be crucified. He is also the antitype of David who suffered and suffered rejection as he pinned Psalm 22. Jesus is also the Child that would be called "**Mighty God**" as predicted in Isaiah 9:6f.

The four eyewitness accounts of Jesus were never countered with proof that these men concocted an elaborate story that was disproven at every turn. No! The opposite is the case. They presented the facts and details so carefully and thoughtfully, and so convincingly that the world can never be the same. Even our calendars reflect the truth about the "year of our Lord." The genealogy of Jesus is one piece of the evidence that passed the credibility tests in the very city where Jesus was crucified, was buried, and left that tomb empty forever! Jesus is the Christ of prophecy, and we need to believe in Him! ■

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## I Study My Bible Like I Plow My Field

Author unknown

A farmer explained: "*I study my Bible like I plow my field. Oftentimes when I'm plowing or breaking new ground, my plow will get hung under a root, and if I'm going at a pretty good clip it will really jar me. But I don't get mad and beat my mule and burn my plow. No, I just back up a little, ease over the root and get on with my plowing. Next time around I'll probably hit that root again and it still shakes me up, but I don't quit farming. I just back up, ease over the root and keep on working. Pretty soon I have hit that root so many times that it's loose and the first thing you know I plow right through it and don't even notice it. I've got it shook loose.*

*That's the way I study the Bible. When I come upon a hard passage, it might shake me up a little bit, but I don't throw away my Bible and quit the Lord on that account. I just ease over it and keep on studying. The next time I read that passage I jar it a little bit more. I keep on doing this until finally, because of information that I have gathered from other parts of the Bible I am able to jar the passage loose. I understand it."* ■

Service Times — Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM — Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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