

Known and Feared

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As we open God's word again and turn to Psalm 76, I'm reminded of a very foundational text in Scripture. Proverbs 1:7 says, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom." The fear of the Lord is the beginning of the wisdom in the sense that it is the foundation upon which everything else is built. We must recognize that God has revealed himself, that he is a holy God, and that he is a God to be feared as a result of that. He is a God whom we are to hold in reverence, to sanctify his name as holy and to regard him as high and lifted up.

Now friends, I just want to tell you something now that we have said many times in different ways from one perspective or another: a man cannot think rightly until he starts with that perspective. All proper, right thinking starts with Scripture and the God who has revealed himself there. A man whose thinking does not incorporate that as the cornerstone of his life, as the cornerstone of his thinking, is a man who is not thinking rightly at all. The holiness of God, the nature of God, the existence of God, is not an extraneous aspect of our existence, something to be taken or left behind, something to consult on a Sunday morning or in a religious ritual, rather it is to be the cornerstone of existence. The fear of God, the revelation of God is the reason that all of us exist and so we need to have that firmly in mind if we're going to have any hope of thinking rightly and if we're going to have any hope of living rightly, we must be thinking rightly and so this permeates all of life and defines existence for us.

One of the things that as we turn to the Psalms and turn to Psalm 76 which I read just a little bit ago, one of the things that I am continually impressed about with the Psalms is that they are not in the Scripture so much to give us a daily bump in our devotions. We find comfort in our sorrows in the Psalms, to be sure, but it is a truncated view of the purpose of the Psalms to see them only in that perspective, we go to the Psalms when we're discouraged and we hope for the Psalms to give us something that will encourage us for the day. It's far more profound than that. What we find in the Psalms is revelation from God that sets the foundation for the way that we think in the most fundamental, far-reaching, profound basics of human thought and existence. That's what we find in the Psalms and that's certainly true of Psalm 76 which I read earlier.

We saw last time the likely background of Psalm 76 when we studied Isaiah 36 and 37. We saw that the nation of Assyria had come and was threatening Jerusalem. The

representative of the Assyrian king was making blasphemous claims against God and boasting in their strength and their past conquests in an effort to demoralize the Jewish people so that they would surrender and allow themselves to be taken into exile. The righteous King Hezekiah turned to God in that desperate hour, turned to the prophet Isaiah, and Isaiah declared to him that God would take the Assyrian army and turn them away, and that seemed to be an absolute impossibility under the circumstances, but as we saw, what God did is that he slew 185,000 Assyrian soldiers in a single night and saved Jerusalem by his mighty hand. We saw that God was mighty to save and he displayed that in history, in time, against the greatest army of the world that existed at that time.

So we looked at that last week. Psalms 76 takes that event and interprets the meaning of it for us. It tells us the lessons that we are to draw from such a magnificent display of God's power as God is a warrior for his people, and if you wanted to write a title down for this Psalm, we're going to call it tonight "Known and Feared." Known and feared. God is known by the way that he has made himself known in his acts of history, and his acts of history show that God is to be feared. Who has power to slay 185,000 of the greatest soldiers in a single night? Who has the power to deliver on his promises without fail? That's who God is and in looking at that event, we see that God has made himself known as he has revealed himself in history, as he has revealed himself in the skies, as he has revealed himself in the Scriptures. He has made himself known. Let no man think otherwise, and what God has revealed about himself shows that he is a God to be feared. If a God has that kind of power to destroy a human army without breaking a sweat, so to speak, then that is a God to whom reverence is due, to whom worship is due, to whom fear is due, and Psalm 76 helps us to see that, and we're going to break it down along those two headings: God is known and God is to be feared, and it kind of breaks down that way in six verse segments of the Psalm.

So let's look at point 1: God is known. We see this in the first three verses as the psalmist opens up this celebration of the greatness of God. Verse 1,

1 God is known in Judah; His name is great in Israel. 2 His tabernacle is in Salem; His dwelling place also is in Zion. 3 There He broke the flaming arrows, The shield and the sword and the weapons of war.

So these first three verses are celebrating Jerusalem, the city of God, celebrating Jerusalem as the place where God dwells and has manifested his power. That is the perspective of the Old Testament. In the Old Testament, God had manifested his presence in the temple that Solomon built and he had manifested his power to the citizens of that city.

As we saw on Sunday as we were talking about the book of Jonah, Judah was the name for the southern kingdom after the kingdom was divided after Solomon's reign, and Israel was the name of the northern kingdom, and so here in this context taking those two names together, Judah and Israel, it's a comprehensive term to describe all of the people of God. This poetic parallelism, Judah and Israel, is making a statement that incorporates all the people of God descended from Abraham. God is known in Judah. His name is

great in Israel. In other words, among the inhabitants of this area, they know who God is. They know who the true God is and he has made himself known to them. God was the covenant God who had revealed himself to them over the course of their history. He made himself known to Abraham. He made himself known to Moses. He made himself known as they entered the Promised Land and drove out nations before them. He made himself known to David. He made himself known to Solomon and now here in the reign of Hezekiah, he had manifested his great power once again. So this is the nature of this Psalm. This is the focus of the Psalm as it opens up, is simply making a declaration that the true God of the universe is known in this area and to his people that he has made himself known.

Look at verse 2. God had designated a place for the manifestation of his presence. Verse 2, "His tabernacle is in Salem," Salem being an old word for the city of Jerusalem. You can see that in Genesis 14:18. "His dwelling place also is in Zion." The psalmist here is just multiplying place names to show the place where God has made himself known: Judah and Israel; Salem, an old name for the city; Zion, the hill on which the city of Jerusalem was built and is often used as a poetic name for the city. So there is this celebration of this area as the Psalm opens, but not a celebration of the area for its own sake but because this area, this place, is sanctified, it is set apart as glorious because it is where God has chosen to make himself known here in this place.

And the terms that are used here for his dwelling place, very interesting, fascinating in light of the historical background of the Psalm. It's a term that is used to describe the den of a lion, the lair of a lion. In other words, what is a den to a lion except the place which the lion considers to be his home; the place where he belongs, his turf, if you will. If we can extend and carry out the analogy just a little bit longer, what does a lion do with his den? The lion, the king of animals, what does he do with his den, he defends it. He defends it from intruders. He defends it from attack. He uses his great power in order to defend his home. The lioness defending her cubs at the place that she has chosen for her home, that's the picture, that is a picture of God here in the Old Testament and God looking at Jerusalem and saying, "That is my home. I will defend it." So when the Assyrian army came and laid siege to it and God had chosen to defend it at that time in history, that is exactly what he did. It was just outside the walls of Jerusalem where he defeated the Assyrian army.

Look at verse 3, having spoken of Jerusalem, having spoken of Zion, it says in verse 3, "There," in other words, looking back to this geographic region that he had been describing in the first two verses, "There He broke the flaming arrows, The shield and the sword and the weapons of war." These weapons of war in verse 3 are emblematic, they are a symbol of the power of that great army, and so when it says that God broke the arrows, broke the shield, broke the sword, broke the weapons of war, what it's saying is that God broke their power there. For all of the might of Assyria and for all of their boast about how they were going to lay waste to Jerusalem just like they had other nations and cities along the way, for all of that God came and broke it so that they were no longer a threat to the city.

So God had proven himself to be a lion on behalf of his people. He had proven himself to be a warrior and in so doing, he had once again made his greatness known to those who were there, to those who were observing and you see the word "Selah" there at the end of verse 3, kind of set apart in the margin perhaps in your Bible. It's a word that calls for meditation; to-step back; to stop; to slow down your reading and to engage your thinking and to contemplate what that means. There is a true God who is to be feared and his true place where he manifests his presence is found there and there alone, again, speaking in Old Testament terms from the Old Testament perspective in which this was written, and so great is his name, so great is his power, that he is able to defend that city without a human hand raising itself to assist him. He can do it on his own. So having opened up in these three verses, the Selah calls you to look back at that and remember the might and the faithfulness that he had displayed. That's an Old Testament perspective on the might and power of God.

Now, we'll get to this more at the end of the message this evening as well, but let's think about this from a New Testament perspective. Let's think about this from a Christian perspective and remind ourselves of who our God is now in light of subsequent revelation, to remind ourselves of where our God, the same God, the Old Testament God, the New Testament God, one and the same, where has God displayed his power, displayed his might, displayed his faithfulness to his people, now what do we look back to? We were singing about it, weren't we? We look back to the cross of Christ. We look back to the cross where God in human flesh, God in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, manifested his power in a particular, unique, once-for-all way, dying for sin, destroying the power of Satan and redeeming his people for all of eternity that they might be reconciled to himself, and we go back there, we look back there and we remember the fact that God has manifested his power on our behalf in a different location, he's done it at the cross, and his power is displayed not simply in defeating a human army, although he has done that throughout history as well, we find in the cross where God broke the supernatural power of Satan over our souls; he broke the power of sin in our hearts; he broke the power of death when he rose from the tomb. Beloved, don't you see, don't you get it, do you see how God again in time and space history has made himself known? We look at the cross and we see what God is like. We look at the cross and we see the great and mighty God of the Old Testament having humbled himself to take on human flesh to go to a cross in order to lay his righteous life down as a sacrifice to take away the curse that sin had put us under. He's made himself known and so it is right and it is proper for us to say, "I know the true and living God. I know where he's made himself known. He's made himself known in Scriptures. He's made himself known in the skies and he has made himself known in his sacrifice on the cross, the supreme manifestation of divine power and divine love and divine mercy all meeting in a central point, the crux of history right there." He's made himself known and so we make no apology for the unqualified statement. Yes, we know the true God. He has made himself known at the cross and we love him for it.

So we recognize something else as we say those things, beloved, and for you young people, this is really helpful for you to kind of sift through the things that you've heard over the years from your parents, from teachers and from different places. Our faith, what

we believe, what we proclaim, is not something that we have made up. It is based on realities that are external to us. It is not a subjective belief that we proclaim but an objective one, one that is outside us. Beloved, beloved, the Scriptures are true, the cross happened, God has made himself known and that is true whether you or I had ever existed. It was true before we were born. It will be true after we die. This doesn't depend on my subjective opinion. Our faith is in response to what God has revealed about himself and what God has done in time and space history. It's vital to understand that because it is not simply our opinion, this is not our opinion that we proclaim. We proclaim realities that exist independent of us and, therefore, our faith is well grounded in what we believe, what we proclaim, and what we defend, and those realities are the only reason to live. Those realities are the things upon which we base all of our lives. You can take away all the external circumstances, all the relationships of life, and these things are unchanged. These things are untouched by the change in our circumstances, but give us the world, give us all worldly prosperity, give us every relationship that we ever wanted and take away the cross, take away the Bible, take away the God who has made himself known, and everything collapses. There is nothing to live for then. It's all a matter of eat, drink and be merry because when you die, it's all over and there is no purpose apart from these realities of which we speak; there is no purpose apart from the reality that God has made himself known. This is the key to interpreting existence and it is a key to the purpose of existence. It's that vital and I'm grateful for every one of you that care enough about those realities to be here on a Tuesday night and to build them in more deeply into our lives together.

Now, with those thoughts from verse 3 ringing in our mind, we move on in the text with the geographic setting established and celebrated, the Psalm now describes the destruction of the Assyrian army in poetic terms, and in verse 4, speaking to God it says,

4 You are resplendent, More majestic than the mountains of prey.

To be resplendent means that God is bathed in light. He manifests his glory in unsearchable light. It expresses his glory and his glory now displayed not only in light but displayed in this recent victory over the Assyrian army. His glory displayed at the temple, his glory displayed in his victory over this mighty army, and that victory, that conquest, shows the surpassing greatness of God and shows that God is to be known – mark it – God is to be known as one who is infinitely exceedingly great because that is what he has shown himself to be like in his destruction of the army.

Look at verse 5. It says,

5 The stouthearted were plundered, They sank into sleep; And none of the warriors could use his hands. 6 At Your rebuke, O God of Jacob, Both rider and horse were cast into a dead sleep.

The psalmist here is picturing the enemy camps and God defeated them in their sleep. So weak and helpless were they before the majestic power of God that they never even woke up to mount a defense. They didn't even raise a hand to resist him. God defeated them so

completely that they offered no resistance whatsoever, and what God had done in that time was he had fulfilled his promise to Hezekiah that seemed so improbable at the time.

Go to Isaiah 37, if you will. Isaiah 37. This is exactly what God had said he would do before it happened. Isaiah 37:33. This of course, is part of what we looked at last time, last week on Tuesday. Verse 33,

33 "Therefore, thus says the LORD concerning the king of Assyria, 'He will not come to this city or shoot an arrow there; and he will not come before it with a shield, or throw up a siege ramp against it. 34 By the way that he came, by the same he will return, and he will not come to this city,' declares the LORD. 35 For I will defend this city to save it for My own sake and for My servant David's sake." 36 Then the angel of the LORD went out and struck 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians; and when men arose early in the morning, behold, all of these were dead. 37 So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and returned home and lived at Nineveh.

Now, the spiritual significance of this is heightened, is exposed, is put on full display when you remember how Assyria had been taunting Jerusalem during the siege and how defenseless the people were in response to it, and then in a single night this great army lay dead in its own camp. Its invincible power, its great invincible power measured on human terms, its strength and might was nothing but defenseless weakness before the surpassing greatness of the power of God. Do you want to know how great God is, this psalmist says? Remember what he did in our recent past in slaying this great army and defending us from an enemy that we were too weak to respond to ourselves. God is known and he is known by what he has done and what he has done is he has slain this army that no other human force, that no earthly power could resist. Therefore we know God to be greater than any human power. We know him to be sovereign over every nation. If he is sovereign over the greatest nation without breaking a sweat, then it's obvious that he is sovereign over all the other nations as well. And you step back in silence, you step back in wonder, you step back in amazement, "That is who God is! That is a great power! That is omnipotence made manifest in our very midst!"

So here in Psalms 76, he's not praising God in a general way, not praising him according to abstract theology, he is praising God for the power that God has shown in time and space on behalf of his people, a thought worth expanding just a moment there. This wasn't simply an arbitrary act of God to show who was boss. God displayed his power in connection with his faithfulness to his people. When Christ went to the cross, he displayed his power over sin, death and Satan, for sure, but understand, beloved, that he did that in faithfulness to his purposes to redeem his elect, to redeem his people, and his power is manifested, his love goes forth, his greatness acts in time and space in order to manifest and secure the well-being of his people because that's who he is, because he is a God of loyal love to his people, a God of steadfast goodness to his people, a God who can be trusted in every circumstance.

That's who God is. God is known and what we are to do with that here this evening is to, first of all, understand that, believe it, affirm it to be true, affirm it to be true independent of anything else, and then also to let that inform our faith, inform our trust, inform our confidence as we look to the future as those who have been redeemed by the sweet and precious blood of the Lord Jesus. We look at that, we look at what's happened in the past, we look at what's happening now and we say, "I belong to that God by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, therefore, these circumstances are not what they might otherwise seem to be. I am in the hands of a mighty God who has made himself known. I am in the hands of a merciful and faithful God who acts on behalf of his people to deliver them from their distress." And in that kind of faith, in that context, in that faith responding to how God has made himself known, we find our comfort, we find our confidence, we find our peace, we find our reason to continue forward even if things continue to go against us because we are walking by faith in this God who has revealed himself, who has made himself known, and not by the circumstances that assault us and like flames lick at our feet as though they threatened to burn us up. No. No. We look past that and we let our entire perspective on the world and on life be informed by the reality of who this God is and our confidence that he has made himself known, and by this sweet comforting work of the Holy Spirit deep in our hearts to affirm, "I belong to him. I am his and he is mine."

Now, what should the reader take to heart from this great victory that has just been described in the first six verses of the Psalm? In verse 7, we come to our second part of the Psalm, second heading for your notes if you're taking notes: God is to be feared. God is to be feared. God's defeat of Assyria showed his sovereign power over nations and, beloved, we're meant to think these things through, we're meant to say, "This is what happened and let me meditate on the consequences of what that means for reality, for the way that things really are." You think this way, when the greatest nation on the earth melted before God like wax before a hot fire, what shall become of other nations, lesser nations, much less, what will become of individuals before this great and holy God? What will become of the one who boasts in his atheism, his so-called atheism, as he testifies against his own conscience when he says such things, what will become of the one who boasts against this God? What will become of nations who boast and lift themselves up against this God? What can the outcome possibly be? Can it possibly turn out well for them? Can it possibly come out well for you who have to this moment still refused to bend the knee to Christ in light of who this God is? How could that possibly go well for you? You see, the entire world has a lesson to learn from this. They need to look on this display of God's power over the Assyrian army and recognize that the strongest army on earth was nothing but weakness before the righteousness and power of Yahweh, and if the greatest could not resist him, there is nothing that any of the rest of us could do either, and as a result of that, in the presence of this God who has made himself known, who has displayed his omnipotence with amazing vigor to defend his people, there is only one proper response to make. We need to recognize, we need to bow down, we need to affirm with the psalmist what we see expressed in verses 7 through 9. "You," he now speaks directly to God using the second person manner of address.

7 You, even You, are to be feared; And who may stand in Your presence
when once You are angry?

"They couldn't stand before you. God, I understand that I could not do so either." Then as he goes on, the nature of judgment and the nature of the fear that is called for, expands out beyond the people of Israel and encompasses the people of the entire earth, of all time, covering even the inhabitants of the world to this day.

Verse 8, speaking to God still,

8 You caused judgment to be heard from heaven; The earth feared and was still
9 When God arose to judgment, To save all the humble of the earth.

Now, you could understand these two verses as being a continuation of the description of the destruction of Assyria, that would be legitimate, it was the immediately prior context, but I think that when you look at the full context of this statement, it's describing something much greater. It is expanding the realm of judgment beyond that event in time in Israel's history to encompass even the coming judgment that is still future to us here today.

God here is no longer pictured as a lion in the lair of Jerusalem. Look at it here in verse 8, this is talking about a judgment that comes from heaven. This is no longer a judgment that is talking about the people of Israel, this is referring, look at verse 9, "To save all the humble of the earth." This is talking about a comprehensive judgment that is in mind and the idea, I believe in line with other commentators, is that here the author is using what is called a prophetic perfect. It's a prophetic device, a prophetic use of the past tense, and what he's doing is this, he is talking about a judgment that is in the future but the judgment is so certain, so absolutely inevitable, that it can be spoken about as if it were a past tense event; something in the future so certain to happen that you can describe it in past tense terms in order to show its inevitability in what is to take place. And you see that as the future tenses are used in verse 10,

10 For the wrath of man shall praise You; With a remnant of wrath You will gird Yourself.

So here's what I want you to see, beloved, as we're talking about this: the realm of this judgment has expanded beyond the defeat of the Assyrian army. This is a judgment from heaven. This is over all the humble of the earth. The earth fears, verse 8, look at it, "The earth feared and was still." This is much greater than any single event. This is looking forward to a final judgment, a final, prophetic, yet to come event so certain that it is a call upon all of the earth to humble themselves before this great God.

You see, it's not just the humble of Israel that God saves. Look at verse 9 with me, he saves all the humble of the earth. He hasn't done that yet in time. This is looking forward to something still future and here's what we are to draw from it, we are to draw a certainty and a confidence and a strength to our faith from these things to look back and say, "God judged a nation with great power and finality back then. Here as I live in the

midst of a wicked world, I take comfort, I take heart knowing that God is going to exercise a future judgment over those nations. He has already shown that he will not forever tolerate the blasphemies of nations against himself. The nations today are blaspheming. People are wicked. People reject and mock Christ and mock his word. There has to be an endpoint to this." That's the lesson for us today and that certain deliverance provides a comfort to his people and it warns his enemies in this way, in the simplest, clearest, plainest ways of incomprehensible import, judgment is coming. God judges his enemies. People of the earth, you should prepare accordingly. You should not neglect this warning that comes to you from God's word. God is known and God is to be feared. You should submit to him and serve him rather than rebel against him still further. You are in the face of irrepressible might, unconquerable power is before you, is declared to you, a power that demolishes his enemies. The only wise thing that you could do in response to this God who has made himself known is to fear him, to submit to him and to serve him. So there's a great message to be taken from this conquest of Assyria, a message that says there is meaning in the event in itself, and this event itself has implications for what God will do in the future. Scripture, as you know, says that men and nations rebel against God. What God did to Assyria was a preview of coming attractions, a preview of what he will one day do against all of his foes.

So what's the response? Verse 11, there is a call to repentance. There is a call to faith here in verse 11.

11 Make vows to the LORD your God and fulfill them; Let all who are around Him bring gifts to Him who is to be feared.

All people who are under his authority should render their obedience, their allegiance, their worship to him, and the Psalm ends on a word of warning. It says there will be consequences for those who refuse. At this very moment, I'm really glad to be reconciled to God through faith in Christ. Verse 12,

12 He will cut off the spirit of princes; He is feared by the kings of the earth.

Beloved, God will defeat all men of power who reject him, will defeat all men of power who resist him. In the end, they will fear him. In the end, they will fear him even as they go down to defeat. And remembering that this is a look to a future judgment still to come, we can look to the New Testament where we find this end time victory of Christ described in detail.

Look at Revelation 6. In Revelation 6:12, and I'm going to read through verse 17,

12 I looked when He broke the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth made of hair, and the whole moon became like blood; 13 and the stars of the sky fell to the earth, as a fig tree casts its unripe figs when shaken by a great wind. 14 The sky was split apart like a scroll when it is rolled up, and every

mountain and island were moved out of their places. 15 Then [here we go] the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains; 16 and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; 17 for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

Go back to Psalm 76. In that moment, in that time of judgment still yet to come, we will see God manifesting his power to do exactly what is described prophetically in Psalm 76:12, "He will cut off the spirit of princes; He is feared by the kings of the earth." Look, we gladly sing the hymn, "What a friend we have in Jesus," and for those of us that have been saved from the wrath of God through the sacrifice of the Lamb, we are indeed considered friends of God but, beloved, we must understand that this is a God to be feared. This great God has made himself known and he is a God of power. He is a God not to be trifled with. As we saw in the book of Jonah on Sunday, to realize that he will sometimes exercise his power to discipline his erring children. The fear of God leads us to a fear of sin which provokes his wrath. It leads us to a fear that worships him. It leads us to a fear that flees evil and wickedness in order to take safety and to find harbor in the shed blood of Christ. Beloved, if you have been reconciled to God through faith in Christ, what Psalm 76 tells you is that you owe him your allegiance for the way that he has delivered you from sin, from death, and from hell; that you owe him as Christ says in Matthew 22, you owe him your deepest, your highest loyalty and love, to love him with all of your heart, soul, strength and mind. Why? Because he's made himself known and because he's a God to be feared, he's a God to be treated as holy.

Look at Philippians 2, and in that place of refuge in Christ, we gladly bow the knee now in time. We bow the knee before that time of judgment comes and we echo with the Apostle Paul what is said in verse 9 after it speaks of his glorious death on the cross. Verse 9,

9 For this reason also, God highly exalted Him [that is, Christ], and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow [bowing in worship, bowing in reverence, bowing in the fear that is owed to him], of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

You and I who are in Christ now, we make that confession in time, we make it in advance of judgment. We gladly bow the knee and declare these things to be true of our glorious Lord Jesus, but we fear for those who reject him because we realize how great the fearful position is that they are in. Christ will not tolerate their refusal to honor him in the way that he is due forever. One day when God's judgment comes, those who refuse to bow the knee in this life, who refuse to voluntarily bow the knee to Christ in this life, will be forced to do so in the future before they are cast away into judgment. So for those of us who know him, we see, we tremble, we rejoice, we thank God for the deliverance from

that judgment that is to come. For everyone else, we ask the simple question: will you come to Christ now for salvation? Will you come to him now or will you be broken and judged with all the rest? It's laid before us. This is what God has made known. This is the God who is to be feared.

Let's bow together in prayer.

So, our God, we thank you for the reality of a faith grounded in time and space history, not silly myths, not fables fit only for old women, but Father, the truth of what you have made known. You have made yourself known in the skies, made yourself known in the Scriptures, made yourself known in the outworking of Providence as you rule over history, and made yourself known at the cross. We are surrounded by a great cloud of testimony testifying to the reality of who you are and, God, we know these things to be true. They are certified to us by the power of your own Holy Spirit and we bow before you. We render you our worship. We render to you the fear that is due to your name and we do so in the context of the love of a Savior who died and rose again to reconcile us so that our sins would be washed away and there would be no cause for judgment to be found in us on the final day. Thank you for that, our God. Thank you for our Lord Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come. Father, we pray for your mercy to go forth on those who stubbornly and foolishly continue in their rebellion. Father, may your Spirit strike a chord in their heart that prompts a response of repentance and faith that they might flee from the wrath that is to come and to be found secure and safe now and in the final day in the loving arms of Jesus Christ. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

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