

Our Great God

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In the early 1920s an English missionary named Stuart K. Hine travelled to Russia. It was there that he learned the Russian version of a song written in 1886 by a Swedish man named Carl Boberg. Hine would later adapt the lyrics of that song into English, and develop his own arrangement of the Swedish melody. Then, in 1957 J. Edwin Orr took Hine's translation and introduced it into the United States. We know that song today as the beautiful and soul-stirring hymn titled *How Great Thou Art*.

Indeed our God is great, and no truer words have ever been penned about Him. Yet, the statement only touches the hem of the garment. God's greatness is so wonderful that we cannot comprehend its totality while living on this side of eternity, because it is far superior to our finite understanding. But, in both the Old and New Covenants the scripture loudly and reverently proclaims the greatness of Jehovah that we might appreciate it and be in awe of it, to the best of our ability. In the English language the term "great" has a wide variety of meanings. As it pertains to our current study, the definition that stands out is "remarkable in magnitude, degree, or effectiveness." Similarly, in the Hebrew and Greek language the idea of greatness is diverse. Basically, when speaking of God's greatness the scripture has in mind the idea of superiority. The two most common ways that the Bible explains God's greatness is in (1) who He is and (2) what He does.

Psalm 48:1 is an acclamatory proclamation of the greatness of Jehovah—"Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness." The declaration is emphatic and forceful. There is no question that God is GREAT and GREATLY to be praised! He is great because of who He is. He is described in Psalm 48 as the great King of all the earth who occupies the highest place in the Universe. In Psalm 95:3 He is exalted high above false gods and idols created by man—"the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods." Psalm 97:9 says, "For thou Lord, art high above all the earth: thou are exalted far above all gods." Jehovah is Lord of the whole earth (Ps. 97:5); King of the nations (Ps. 99:2; Dan. 4:17); and creator of the heavens and the earth (Ps. 95:4-6; 96:5; c.f. Gen. 2:1). Our God is of great power and infinite wisdom (Ps. 147:5); because He is holy His name is great and His judgment is righteous (Ps. 99:3-4). How great is our God!

Not only is God great because of who He is but also because of what He has done. In 2 Samuel 7 God promised that through David's seed He would raise up a King to sit on David's throne. Consequently, the sweet singer of Israel magnified God by saying, "Wherefore thou art great, O Lord God: for there is none like thee..." (2 Sam. 7:22). He further stated that His great name would be magnified in the fact that He would fulfill His promise (2 Sam. 7:26). Years before, the children of Israel stood on the banks of the Red Sea in awe of Jehovah. They feared the Lord and believed in Him because they saw "that great work which the Lord did upon the Egyptians" (Exod. 14:31). Indeed, "the works of the Lord are great" (Ps. 111:2). He keeps covenant and mercy (Neh. 1:5), He "formed all things" (Prov. 26:10), He shows lovingkindness (Jer. 32:18), and He is able to do "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Eph. 3:20).

In Exodus 34:1-2 Moses was commanded to be ready to present himself before Jehovah the following morning. The word "present" means, "to stand, step up, or stand

firm.” So, God commanded Moses to come and stand before Him. When he did, “the Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord” (Exod. 34:5). On that occasion Moses bore witness to the greatness of God and he was not standing for very long. Instead “Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped” (Exod. 34:8). Though we can neither comprehend completely nor put into words adequately the greatness of our God, when we consider it we, like Moses, ought to be humbled. This issue of the Christian Worker is designed with that thought in mind. May we reverently and prayerfully develop a greater appreciation for the greatness of our God.