

The Names of God – Part 1 | 10/29/17

- Introduction
 - In the Old Testament God has revealed Himself to us by many different names.
 - When we think of names generally people only have one. An individual isn't called Justin, John and Bob.
 - So why then does God have several names that He has revealed to us?
 - These names are descriptive and tell us more about His character and who He is.
 - **In Scripture, and especially with the Hebrew language, a name also means a sign or distinctive mark.**
 - A name is used to identify someone in the usual sense but also points to the character of that person.
 - Names had significant meaning
 - Noah means "one who brings relief and comfort"
 - Jesus means "savior"
 - In Scripture there are many instances where people are given NEW names that reflect a change in their life and a change in their character.
 - Abram became Abraham – Genesis 17:5
 - Jacob became Israel – Genesis 32:28
 - God gave them different names as their life and their character changed.
 - God has revealed Himself by different names for us to better understand His character and who He is.
 - They describe His attributes in the use of the names.
 - **We get a better understanding of this infinite being is that ultimately is beyond our understanding.**
 - It does NOT mean that there are many Gods or that He has changed.
 - There are those who like to discount the single "God" and say that the Jewish people had many god's since they called him different names.
 - Or that at different times they worshiped a different "god".
 - Of course, by actually reading the Scriptures you find that this isn't true at all.
 - Isaiah 43:10
 - "You are my witnesses," declares the LORD, "and my servant whom I have chosen, that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me. I, I am the LORD, and besides me there is no savior."
 - Reading the Scriptures and knowing the meaning and background of the names of God.
 - A significant benefit of knowing the meaning and background behind the names of God is that while you are reading Scripture, you understand the significance of their use in various passages.
 - When you see Lord or LORD you know there is a difference in its use and it provides greater insight into the text itself.
- Elohim - God
 - There are two primary words that are used to identify God in the Old Testament, one is Yahweh (yhwh) and the other is Elohim.
 - In the New Testament the Greek word used for "God" is "Theos" as in John 1:1
 - Background
 - Elohim is used over 2000 times in the Old Testament primarily as a reference to God (big G).

- Sometimes Elohim is used and other times it is Yahweh, but we are referring to the same God.
 - When Scripture is speaking about God in a general since we see the use of Elohim.
 - But when Scripture is speaking of God in the context of a relationship, we see the use of Yahweh.
 - The name has both a singular and plural use.
 - The word is plural in form, but it is most often used as a singular meaning as in “God”.
 - Singular - God, god or deity
 - Plural – gods, angels, rulers or judges
 - Other uses of Elohim
 - There are a few other uses of Elohim though where we are NOT talking about God where the word is used in its general since to refer to pagan gods (Genesis 31:30), angels (Psalms 8:5), men (Psalms 82:6) and judges (Exodus 21:6).
 - Elohim is used when expressing the majestic power of God in creation.
 - We are introduced to it in the first verse in the Bible when God creates the heavens and the earth.
 - Genesis 1:1
 - “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.”
 - In fact, it is repeated 35 times through Genesis 1 and 2 as God is creating our world and everything within it.
 - **Except for however when in Chapter 2 where a more detailed account of the creation of man and woman is provided. Here God turns to the personal relationship and instead of Elohim we have Yahweh.**
 - **This name is used to show God’s awesome power that He has as being the creator of all things, having everything under His control.**
 - Everything that has life is because He allowed it to be, He is Elohim.
 - Elohim is used during the covenant promises and blessings that he gave Abraham.
 - In Genesis 17 Elohim is used predominantly.
 - As in the power of God in creation, we see this manifested also in His promises. He is ever faithful and unlike humanity, He will always keep them.
 - Elohim is used to show God’s power when he released the Israelites from their bondage in Egypt, preserved them in the wilderness and prepared them for the Promised Land.
 - Throughout Deuteronomy we see a significant use of the combination of Elohim and Yahweh stated as “the LORD your God” or Yahweh who is your Elohim.
 - Deuteronomy 1:21
 - “See, the LORD your God has set the land before you. Go up, take possession, as the LORD, the God of your fathers, has told you. Do not bear or be dismayed.”
 - Deuteronomy 1:30
 - “The LORD your God who goes before you will himself fight for you, just as he did for you in Egypt before your eyes,”
 - **How does God’s power demonstrated through creation, have an impact on the promises that He makes us?**
 - **What does this tell us about His character?**
- Yahweh (yhwh) – Lord, Jehovah

- Yahweh is the what we would consider to be the name that truly identifies who God is, it is His proper or divine name.
 - When we want to use one Hebrew word to truly describe God in the personal sense Yahweh (yhwh) is the word we use.
 - Deuteronomy 4:20
 - “But the LORD has taken you and brought you out of the iron furnace, out of Egypt, to be a people of his own inheritance, as you are this day.”
 - **This is also the most common name used for Him in the Old Testament as it occurs over 6,500 times.**
 - While we say and spell it as Yahweh the actual Hebrew is simply “yhwh”
 - The technical word for the four-letter proper name of God is called a tetragrammaton.
 - It is these 4 Hebrew letters יהוה transliterated (converted Hebrew into English) into YHWH.
 - **But you will notice there are now vowels.**
 - The ancient Hebrew language is written ONLY in consonants.
 - Interestingly the ancient Hebrew language when in a written form (like the Old Testament) it is written in ALL consonants, there are NO vowels or punctuation.
 - They have 22 letters and are written from left to right.
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- **The proper pronunciation was passed down orally which wasn't an issue while Hebrew was a spoken language.**
 - Since the Hebrew Scriptures were written, they have been preserved by various Jewish groups throughout the years (Levites, Sopherim, Talmudic and Masoretic)
 - The last of the groups known as Massorettes (A.D. 500-950) added vowels and punctuation to the written Hebrew alphabet.
 - This is the “dots” that you see in the image above.
 - **Side note: the oldest complete OT manuscript that exists today is the Leningrad Codex dated at 1008 A.D**
- The name of God (Yahweh) is actually just four consonants YHWH.
 - **The vowels are simply added in for pronunciation however the ones they used were not so the reader could actually pronounce it, but instead remind them to say Lord instead (more below).**
- This is the name that God told Moses would be His name forever.
 - **Yahweh (YHWH) is quite significant and is what God specifically said would be His name forever.**
 - Exodus 3:15
 - “God also said to Moses, “Say this to the people of Israel, ‘**The LORD**, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Issac, and the God of Jacob, has

sent me to you.' **This is my name forever**, and this I am to be remember throughout all generations."

- 'the LORD' – YHWH (Yahweh) – Adonai (Lord) - Jehovah
 - 'the LORD' (capital letters) is how 'YHWH' is translated in our English Bibles.
 - **There is another word for 'Lord' (lower case) and that is Adonai.**
 - In the 3rd century BC the Jews began substituting 'YHWH' (Yahweh) with 'Adonai' (Lord) when reading the Scriptures out of fear of blasphemy.
 - The Jews were so concerned with violating God's command to not take His name in vane that they began to substitute Yahweh with Adonai (Lord) when reading the Scriptures.
 - Exodus 20:7
 - **In the Septuagint which was the Greek translation of the Old Testament used by the Apostles they substituted it with 'Kurios' (Lord).**
 - The Massorettes then inserted **the vowel markings** from Adonai to remind themselves to pronounce it (Adonai) instead of saying Yahweh.
 - This way a reader would not accidentally say the divine name of God.
 - **However, because of this we truly do not know EXACTLY how YHWH was to be pronounced because the Massorettes inserted the vowel markers from Adonai in their place.**
 - **However, the majority opinion today is that the most likely appropriate way to pronounce "YHWH" is Yahweh.**
 - So what about "Jehovah"?
 - Jehovah came about sometime around the 1600's as a way to put an English word to 'YHWH'.
 - To get there they took the Latinized transliteration of the Hebrew YHWH which turned it into JHVH and then inserted vowels to make it "Jehovah".
 - In the King James Version of the Bible, Jehovah is used 7 times in the place of 'YHWH' as in Exodus 6:3.
 - **This was the common way to pronounce "YHWH" until later it was determined this was not likely the appropriate way to pronounce it and therefore was no longer used in later translations of the Bible. This is why "the LORD" is most commonly used.**
- Yahweh tells us that He is faithful, merciful, gracious and loving.
 - Exodus 34:5-7a
 - "The LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD, The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, the LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin..."
 - The many traits of God should all come to mind when we think of Him. His name means so much that is beyond anything we can fully understand.
 - **God has shown us through His Scriptures that He is a faithful God who has kept His promises and covenants that He made.**
- I am who I am
 - God gives further definition to who He is His conversation with Moses when he speaks of His name (Yahweh).
 - Exodus 3:13-14

- “Then Moses said to God, “If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you, and they ask me, what is his name? what shall I say to them? God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” And he said, “Say this to the people of Israel, “I AM has sent me to you.’”
 - These simple words say so much.
 - While we may naturally want more than “I AM” this is all God needed to say to describe Himself.
 - God is the great I AM He is the one who is and will be.
 - God is eternal and never changing.
 - God has no beginning or ending He is eternal and forever.
 - He is the God of the patriarchs (verse 15)
 - He is the same God as of their forefathers, the God who guided them from centuries before.
 - He is the God of the present.
 - God is with them in the present sense and will be with them.
 - Jesus identified Himself as Yahweh (yhwy)
 - Jesus to further signify exactly who He was, He identified himself as Yahweh
 - John 8:53-58
 - **What does “Yahweh” mean to you?**
 - **What does God being the Great I AM mean for you? How does that impact your life?**
- Adonai - Lord, Master, Ruler
 - Background
 - **Adonai is the plural form of the word “adon” which means master, ruler, owner, lord.**
 - The name itself is plural but again used primarily in the singular as a name for God.
 - In the Greek it is ‘kyrios’
 - Adonai is found 434 times in the Old Testament.
 - Although it was spoken significantly more as this is the word that the Jews used as a replacement when saying or reading “YHWH”.
 - Its first use in Scripture is Genesis 15:2
 - “But Abram said, “**O Lord GOD**, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?”
 - Lord = Adonai
 - GOD = YHWH
 - The significance of Adonai
 - Adonai is used frequently during personal communication between the believer and God.
 - **The use of Adonai shows us who God is, I that He is our Lord, our master, the ruler of our lives.**
 - The Scriptures in it use, show the submissiveness of the believer to Him.
 - Psalms 16:2
 - “I say to the LORD, “You are my Lord; I have no good apart from you.”
 - LORD = YHWH
 - Lord = Adon (singular use)
 - Seeing God as truly Lord and master of our lives.
 - **There is a difference between seeing God as simply some far and distant being as opposed to a God whom you have a personal relationship with.**

- God is not some far off distant being who has no cares for our lives, He instead is intimately involved in every minor detail.
 - We must see God for who He truly is, in that He is our Lord and Master of our lives.
 - Lord definition:
 - Master; ruler; owner, one having power and authority over others.
 - If Jesus is truly Lord of our lives, then we WILL submit to Him.
 - **Our relationship with God is not that we just come to Him when we need Him or to give Him attention when it is convenient for us.**
 - To see God as Lord and Master means to be submissive to His authority.
 - We must truly give all aspects of our lives over to Him, let Him guide and direct us in everything that we do.
 - Our salvation is not purely an intellectual decision or thought, it is a condition of the heart that we truly believe in WHO He is and He is our Lord.
 - **How would you describe what it means to truly see Christ as the Lord of your life?**
- El Shaddai - Lord God Almighty
 - Background
 - “el” is another name in the Hebrew language that is translated as God.
 - It is used in conjunction with other words to denote aspects of God’s character.
 - “shaddai” is translated into English as “the Almighty”
 - The Greek word for this is ‘pantokrator’.
 - “el shaddai” is translated as “God Almighty”.
 - “el shaddai” is how God revealed himself to the patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob).
 - Exodus 6:2-3
 - “I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty, but by my name the LORD I did not make myself known to them.”
 - God Almighty = ‘el shaddai’
 - LORD = ‘YHWH’
 - “el shaddai” appears 7 times in Scripture primarily in Genesis, but God is also referred to as simply ‘shaddai’ (Almighty) in other places especially in Job.
 - Lord God Almighty
 - **God Almighty quite clearly tells us about the character of God, in that He is all-powerful, He is supreme, sovereign ruler and there is no equal to Him.**
 - This speaks to God’s omnipotence.
 - This powerful name of God is used when speaking of the end times at Christ’s 2nd coming and in the New Testament it is used almost exclusively in Revelation.
 - Isaiah 13:6
 - “Wail, for the day of the LORD is near; as destruction from the Almighty it will come!”
 - Joel 1:15
 - “Alas for the day! For the day of the LORD is near, and as destruction from the Almighty it comes.”
 - Revelation 1:8
 - “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty”.
 - Revelation 19:6
 - “Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns”

- **Do you think we fully comprehend what it means for God to be “God Almighty”?**
- **What else does this say about Him in relation to our lives and the world?**