

The Lord Our God

“. . . that thou mayest know that there is none like unto the LORD our God.”
(Exodus 8:10)

LESSON #1: GOD’S NAME

Every time the terms “Lord” and “God” appear spelled with all capital letters in our Authorized English Bible, they are translated from the Hebrew name “Jehovah” (or “Yahweh”). This name for God is formed from the Hebrew verb that means “to be.” We find an explanation of its significance in God’s words to Moses recorded in Exodus 3:14.

“And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.”

The Names of God

The Book of Genesis was written by Moses in the wilderness between Egypt and the Promised Land. Among other things, it is a book of *basics* about God. The identity and character of God is revealed in Genesis by the names He is given in Hebrew.

1. *El* and *Elohim*. This name is translated “God” in Genesis 1:1 and throughout the Old Testament, and carries the idea of strength. God is the Mighty One who created all things.
2. *Jehovah* or *Yahweh*. In Chapter 2 of Genesis, the Bible starts using the term “the Lord God” (v. 4) putting the name Jehovah with the name God. In Hebrew, the pronunciation of the name expressed in Latin capitals is in dispute. For this reason you will find it rendered “Jehovah” or “Yahweh” or “YHWH” in study books. It is the name we are emphasizing in Sunday School these days. While Genesis 1 deals with creation as a whole, Genesis 2 begins emphasizing God’s relationship with man. This is probably the reason Moses introduced Jehovah to his readers at this point. It is a name associated with God’s relationship with man.
3. *Elyon*. The term “*the Lord God*” is used throughout Genesis 2 and 3. Then in chapters 4-13, from Adam’s expulsion from Eden through God’s covenant with Abram, God is called either *Elohim* or *Jehovah*. At Abram’s meeting with Melchizedek in Chapter 14, a new name is used for God, “*El Elyon*,” the Most High God (vs. 18-24). This term, of course, emphasizes His sovereign authority. It is a term often used in connection with Gentiles (people not related to God by covenant) and even demons. See how it is used in Numbers 24:15-17 (by a Gentile), Deuteronomy 32:7-8 (about the Gentile nations), II Samuel 22:14 (about His sovereignty), Psalm 92, Daniel 4:17-31, Mark 4:7, and Acts 16:17.
4. *Adonai*. In Genesis 15:1-2, Abram calls God “*Lord God*.” Of course, “*God*” with all capitals is the translation of Jehovah, but “*Lord*” with only the first letter capitalized is a new term for God, Adonai. Adon or Adonai means Master. Abram recognized and respected God as his own personal Master (Genesis 15:8, 18:3). So should every

Christian.

5. *Shaddai*. In Genesis 17, we are introduced to another name for God, translated “*the Almighty*.” In verse 1, “*the Lord*” (Jehovah) says to Abram, “*I am the Almighty God (El Shaddai)*.” Shaddai (Almighty) with or without El (God), is used many times in the stories of the patriarchs of Israel (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Genesis 12-50). In Exodus 6:2-3, God explains the use of this name.

“And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the Lord: And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them.”

Of course, the patriarchs *did* know the name Jehovah (See this in Genesis 8:20, 12:7, and 15:1-2), but their experiences with God demonstrated to them the meaning of Shaddai. They knew *Him* by this name! It was to Israel under Moses that God revealed Himself according to the meaning of Jehovah. They came to know *Him* by *this* name! We notice also that Shaddai is used many times in the Book of Job, which tells the story of a man who lived before Israel’s exodus from Egypt (Note Job 6:4, 8:3, 13:3, and 21:15).

There is some dispute over the root meaning of Shaddai. It is clear, however, that the significance of this name has to do with the fact that God is able to keep His promises. Notice the question in Genesis 18:14, “*Is anything too hard for the Lord?*” Of course, the answer is “No.” Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob found out by experience that God is able to keep His promises even in the most unlikely situations (See Genesis 15:1-5, 17:1-8, and 15-19). Our Lord is the God Who is able!

We know God by His names. He is the Mighty Creator (Elohim), the One Who is able (Shaddai), our Lord and Master (Adonai), and the Sovereign Ruler of Heaven and Earth (Elyon). He is also Jehovah.

The Significance of “Jehovah”

As we have seen, Jehovah is the name for God constructed from the verb “to be.” God says, “I AM THAT I AM” (Exodus 3:14), and tells us to call Him “I AM.” There are two powerful truths brought out by God having a name that means “I AM.”

1. He is self-existent.

The Lord brought everything into existence, and everything’s existence depends on Him. He has no beginning or ending, and He is dependent on nothing. “Jehovah” means that He is absolutely *unlimited*. He demonstrated His limitless power through the plagues He put upon Egypt (Exodus 7-12) and the opening of the Red Sea (Exodus 13-15).

2. He is everything His people need.

Remember that Jehovah is used in relation to God’s relation to His people. In the wilderness (Exodus 16-17 and beyond), He shows that He is everything they need! Roy Hession said that God’s name is an unfinished sentence: “I AM _____ (fill in the blank).” He is their Healer (Exodus

15:26), their Supplier (Exodus 16), their Satisfier (Exodus 17), and their Deliverer (Exodus 18:8). In the weeks ahead, we will examine the wonderful truth that the Lord is everything we really need! Don't miss a single class.