

# The Names of God

A study prepared for the Fairview MBC Winter Bible study series

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Reading lesson: **Psalm 148:1-14**

Lesson text: **Psalm 148:13** "Let them praise the name of the Lord: for his name alone is excellent; his glory is above the earth and heaven."

## Introduction

Names are significant and proper names, specifically, often reveal truths concerning character and establish relationships of various levels of intimacy. For instance, a stranger may be referred to as a man or woman; an acquaintance, Mr. Johnson or Mrs. Jones; a friend as John, James or Jan; but a Christian brother / sister as Brother Jake or Sister Janice. Each appellation indicates a different level of intimacy and familiarity with the person described.

In addition, especially in Biblical times, names were chosen to reference God's blessings and/or a person's attributes or reputation. For this reason, we see several men having their names given or changed by God Himself. Anyone know someone named Ichabod ("the glory has departed"), Delilah, Jezebel or Judas? Likely not as each has strong connotation of an unsavory reputation. We all do know individuals named Ruth, David, Mary, and Paul; names with a positive connotation. God also named or changed names accordingly to reflect individuals manner of life such as Abraham "a father of many nations" (*Genesis 17:5*), Jacob "supplanter" (*Genesis 25:21-26*) who became Israel "to strive with God" (*Genesis 32:28*) and Nabal "foolish" (*1 Samuel 25:2-38*).

## I. The Names of God

Understanding the importance of God's use of names for His Creation, it is of great interest to us the names which God uses for Himself.

a. The names of God are revelatory and not according to human discovery. Men have not and do not give God a name; He gives Himself a name. God's name is, therefore, most of all God's revelation of Himself whereby He actively and objectively makes himself known.

b. The names of God are descriptive of the panorama of His nature and are provided for frequent reference by man to His attributes and activity. Hence, the names of God are designed to constantly focus our attention upon who God is in particular, that is quite apart from a mere basic confession of His existence.

c. The names of God are progressively revealed. God was known as God Almighty or El Shaddai (*Genesis 17:1*) to Abraham, but later a greater revelation was given to Moses and Israel in the name Jehovah or Yahweh (*Exodus 6:3* <sup>3</sup> "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." Later, Jehovah was more fully revealed in the New Testament in His Triunity as God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit (*Matthew 3:16-17; 28:19*).

## II. The Primary Names of God in the Old Testament

### a. The primary name of God as Elohim

Elohim is the most general name for God and means, "the Exceedingly Strong and Mighty One" and is first used in *Genesis 1:1*, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Other forms of this name include: **Eloah** (singular), **Elah** (Aramaic) and the simple **EI**. Worthy of note here, Elohim as used in *Genesis 1:1* is plural and the object created singular. Thus, the original text infers a plural God created a singular creation. This is the type of wonderful revelation we lose in translation! Nevertheless, Elohim is generic as it can refer to both God and pagan deities. It also is used to refer to human judges at times.

Compounded names used with El / Elah / Elohim include:

#### 1. El Shaddai or "God Almighty" (*Genesis 17:1-8*)

This was the primary patriarchal name for God (*Genesis 28:3, 35:11, 43:14, 49:25*) and was prior to the revelation of Jehovah or Yahweh during the Exodus (see *Exodus 6:3* as previously noted).

#### 2. El Elyon or "God Most High" (*Genesis 14:18-22*)

#### 3. El Roi or "God Who Sees" (*Genesis 16:13*)

#### 4. El Olam or "God Everlasting" (*Isaiah 40:28*)

### b. The Primary name of God as Jehovah or Yahweh

This is, strictly speaking, God's one personal name which was revealed through Moses to Israel (*Genesis 3:13-15*) in which God refers to Himself as, "I AM WHO I AM". This four-lettered, consonantal word (tetragrammaton) was commonly pronounced as Jehovah or Yahweh and was self-disclosed by God Himself apart from human discovery.

To avoid the defamation of God's name, which was punishable by death (*Leviticus 24:16*), the Jews avoided transgressing the third commandment by interjecting the generic "Lord" (**Adonai**). God's proper name, as revealed by God Himself, was felt to unutterable and referred to as **Hashem** (the Name).

The root meaning of Jehovah is believed to be the verb "to be" so that God reveals Himself to His people as "the self-existing One". In addition, He described Himself to Moses as the "I AM" God of Israel then also the "I Will Be" who is covenantally and irrevocably committed to continually saving and sanctifying His people.

As Jesus prayed in *John 17*, He gives us indication of the importance of the glory and might of His Father's name. *John 17:6* "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word." And then **verse 26**, "And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them."

Compounded names using Jehovah or Yahweh

#### a. Jehovah Elohim "LORD God" — *Nehemiah 9:7, Psalm 84:11*

#### b. Jehovah Adonai "Lord GOD" — *Genesis 15:2, Psalm 71:5*

- c. Jehovah Elohay “the LORD my God” – Daniel 9:4
- d. Jehovah Elyon “the LORD most high” – Psalm 7:17
- e. Jehovah Jireh “the LORD will provide” – Genesis 22:13-14
- f. Jehovah Nissi “the LORD my banner” – Exodus 17:15
- g. Jehovah Shalom “the LORD is peace” – Judges 6:24
- h. Jehovah Sabbaoth “the LORD of hosts” – I Samuel 1:3
- i. Jehovah Maccaddishkem “the LORD who sanctifies you” – Exodus 31:13
- j. Jehovah Raah “the LORD is my shepherd” – Psalm 23:1
- k. Jehovah Tsidkenu “the LORD our righteousness” – Jeremiah 23:6
- l. Jehovah Gmolah “the LORD is the God of recompense” – Jeremiah 51:56
- m. Jehovah Neka “the LORD who strikes” = Ezekial 7:9
- n. Jehovah Shammah “the LORD is there” – Ezekial 48:35
- o. Jehovah Rapha “the LORD who heals” – Exodus 15:26
- p. Jehovah Hoseenu “the LORD our maker” – Psalm 95:6

c. The Primary name of God as **Adonai**

Adonai is the generic name, commonly translated as LORD, meaning master or sovereign as a king has dominion over his servants. However, it is most frequently used in the Scriptures as either a substitute or a qualifier for the name Jehovah. One commentator writes that Adonai “indicates the truth that God is the owner of each member of the human family and that He consequently claims the unrestricted obedience of all.”

Compounded names using Adonai

- a. Adonai Elohai “O Lord my God” – Psalm 38:15, 35:23
- b. Adonai Adonim “the Lord of hosts” – Deuteronomy 10:17

### III. The Primary names of God in the New Testament

#### A. Theos (God)

The generic equivalent to Elohim of the Old Testament, though it can specifically refer to Jehovah (Acts 2:17). Generally describes the deity of Israel (I Corinthians 8:6; Hebrews 6:13), but also is used for pagan gods (Acts 14:11). Theos is also used with reference to all three persons of the Trinity.

##### 1. God the Father

**John 8:41** “Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God.”

##### 2. God the Son

**John 20:28** “And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.”

##### 3. God the Holy Spirit

**Acts 5:3-4** <sup>3</sup> But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? <sup>4</sup> Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.”

## B. Kurios (Lord)

Another generic title that is most frequently used as an equivalent to Jehovah from the Old Testament as seen in **Matthew 3:3** (from **Isaiah 40:3**) "*For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.*" It also infrequently translates **Adonai** (**Matthew 1:22-23**). Kurios also describes angels (**Acts 10:4**), idols (**1 Corinthians 8:5**), kings (**Acts 25:26**) and is a common title of respect at the human level (**Matthew 13:27; 21:30**).

## D. Despotes (Lord)

Yet another generic title equivalent in meaning to Adonai in the Old Testament, that is, God is absolute Master and Owner. However, as it is generic, it also is used to refer to human masters (**1 Timothy 6:1-2**).

The Trinity or Triune nature of the Godhead is clearly taught in the New Testament as is evidenced below:

1. **The Father is God**, but distinct as the person of leadership, generation and gracious benefaction.

**1 Corinthians 11:3** "<sup>43</sup> But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God."

2. **The Son is God**, but distinctively He is the person of precise representation and implementation.

**Colossians 1:15** "*Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature*"

3. **The Holy Spirit is God**, but distinctively is the person of holy presence and dynamic enablement.

**John 16:7-8** "<sup>77</sup> Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. <sup>8</sup> And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment"

## IV. Jesus Christ, the Son of God

- Jesus took names which identified Him as the incarnate God of Israel

a. He purposely took the "I AM" name of Jehovah

**John 8:58-59** "<sup>58</sup> Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am. <sup>59</sup> Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by."

b. He took the name of Jehovah itself

**Matthew 3:3** (**Isaiah 40:3**) "*For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.*"

- as well as some compounded names of the same:

**Jehovah Raah** "the LORD is My Shepherd" (**John 10:11**)

**Jehovah Tsidkenu** "the LORD Our Righteousness" (**Jeremiah 23:5-6**)

c. He took the name of God (Elohim)

- As Creator

**John 1:1-3** "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> The same was in the beginning with God.*

<sup>3</sup> All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that were made."

- As the Almighty

**Revelation 1:8** "<sup>8</sup> I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, smith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty."

### **i. Cornerstone**

**1 Peter 2:7-8** <sup>17</sup> *Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, <sup>8</sup> And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.*"

### **j. Lamb of God**

- incorporating both the Passover Lamb and the messianic lamb of **Isaiah 53:7**; **John 1:29** *"The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."*

### **k. Great High Priest**

**Hebrews 2:17** *"Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people."*

### **l. Last Adam**

**1 Corinthians 15:45** <sup>45</sup> *And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit."*

## **V. The Holy Spirit of God**

### **a. The Holy Spirit**

-literally, "the Spirit, the holy One"; He is holy as are the Father and the Son

**John 14:26** *"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."*

### **b. The Comforter or Counselor**

-Greek: parakletos; See **John 14:26** above

**John 15:26** *"But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me"*

**John 14:16-18** <sup>16</sup> *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; <sup>17</sup> Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. <sup>18</sup> I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you."*

#### **1. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Father**

**Matthew 10:20** *"For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you."*

#### **2. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Son**

**Romans 8:9** *"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."*

### **c. The Power of the Most High**

**Luke 1:35** *"And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."*

- As the Highest

**Luke 1:31-32** <sup>31</sup> *And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. <sup>32</sup> He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David"*

- As Immanuel (God "Elohim" With Us)

**Matthew 1:23** (Isaiah 7:14) <sup>23</sup> *Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us."*

- As Master (Despotes – the equivalent of Adonai)

**Jude 4** <sup>4</sup> *For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ."*

#### d. Jesus Christ

**Jesus** means "Savior" and is the equivalent of Joshua which has the same meaning in the Old Testament; also Yeshua or Yehoshua.

**Matthew 1:21** <sup>21</sup> *And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins."*

#### **Christ ("Christos") or Messiah**

- means "the anointed of God"

**John 1:41** <sup>41</sup> *He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ."*

**John 4:25-26** <sup>25</sup> *The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things.*

<sup>26</sup> *Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he."*

Christ described as equipped to accomplish salvation (**Luke 2:11**) as well as to reign over an everlasting kingdom (**I Corinthians 15:22-25; Revelation 11:15**).

**Revelation 11:15** <sup>15</sup> *And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever."*

#### e. Son of Man

- title most commonly attributed by Jesus to himself (**Matthew 12:8, Mark 9:9, Luke 19:10, John 1:51**)

- refers to the humanity of Christ, but not at the expense of His deity

#### f. Son of God

- title used most frequently in the gospel of John and often used as a synonym for Messiah

- term was readily recognized by Jewish leaders as deity and offended them (**John 5:18; 10:33; 19:7**)

#### g. Root of David

**Revelation 22:16** <sup>16</sup> *"I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star."*

#### h. Chosen One

**I Peter 2:4,6** <sup>4</sup> *"To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious" <sup>6</sup> "Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded."*

## VI. Conclusion

### The Name above all others

**Ephesians 1:20-21** *"Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, <sup>21</sup> Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come"*

**Colossians 1:12-18** *"<sup>12</sup> Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: <sup>13</sup> Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: <sup>14</sup> In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: <sup>15</sup> Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: <sup>16</sup> For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: <sup>17</sup> And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. <sup>18</sup> And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence."*

**Philippians 2:5-11** *"<sup>5</sup> Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: <sup>6</sup> Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: <sup>7</sup> But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: <sup>8</sup> And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. <sup>9</sup> Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: <sup>10</sup> That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; <sup>11</sup> And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."*

## WHAT A LOVELY NAME

by: Charles B. Wycuff

1. There's a name above all others,  
Wonderful to hear, bringing hope and cheer.  
It's the lovely name of Jesus,  
Evermore the same, what a lovely name.

CHORUS:

What a lovely name, the name of Jesus.  
Reaching higher far, than the brightest star.  
Sweeter than the songs they sing in heaven.  
Let the world proclaim, what a lovely name.

2. Thru His name there's wondrous power,  
Power to redeem, making sinners clean.  
By His pow'r He cleansed the leper,  
*Opened blinded eyes, caused the dead to rise.*

CHORUS:

3. He'll return in clouds of glory,  
Saints of ev'ry race, shall behold His face.  
With Him enter heaven's city,  
Ever to proclaim, what a lovely name.

CHORUS: