

## **Names of God**

## **Leader's Guide**

*Names of God is a four-part Bible study meant to help Christians better understand what God reveals about himself through the various names he uses for himself. Each session should be about an hour long, depending upon the amount of discussion.*

This study was written by Marilyn Miller, a WELS staff minister at Abiding Word Lutheran Church, Houston, TX. The theological content was reviewed by Professor Lyle Lange.

# Lesson 1

## God the Creator (Elohim)

***O LORD, our Lord, How Excellent is Your Name in all the Earth! –  
Psalm 8:1***

As the Holy Spirit inspired the writing of the Bible, he gave us many different names for God, each of which tells us a bit more about the essence of God and the awesome work that he does. Some of the Old Testament names are difficult for us to understand because the Hebrew names are so much richer in meaning than what we read; much is lost in the translation into English. The purpose of this study is to gain a deeper appreciation for God through the various names he uses to reveal himself to us.

### Opening Prayer

### Introduction

How important is your name to you? How do you relate to it? How do others react when they hear your name?

*Go around the room and have others in the class say what first comes to mind when you say each person's name. Notice how a key piece of their personality or character seems to be a major theme. This same principle applies to God as he uses the various names he gives himself.*

### Elohim (el-o-HEEM) – God the Creator

Elohim is the first name God calls himself in the Old Testament. This is the God of Genesis 1, the Creator. Elohim is used 31 times in the creation account alone and over 2500 times in the Old Testament. It is usually translated simply "God". Scan the creation account in Genesis 1 and identify 4 or 5 qualities that God reveals about himself.

- 1) From verse 1: He is eternal, existing before time/our history began, before anything existed.*
- 2) He is almighty, using NOTHING but his voice to bring the world into existence: all things, the human race, laws of nature, math, space, energy, the solar system, colors, emotions and family, everything. He acts independently, not needing anything or anyone but himself. Surely he is deserving of the reverence of all his creation.*

3) *He is wise, knowing how to make everything work as it should, not too much or too little, creating the desire/ability to procreate and continue the existence of the universe, establishing an order to his creation so that it will run smoothly.*

4) *He alone determines and defines what is good. The created have no say in what is good and proper or what is pleasing to God*

5) *He is kind and compassionate, giving us a beautiful world in which to live and others to share it with, filled with vibrant colors, delicate flowers, majestic mountains, exquisite flavors, companionship and intimacy; everything necessary to make our lives comfortable, beautiful, enjoyable. He created a day of rest, knowing that his creation also needed what we call “rest and relaxation”. He gave us the ability to praise and worship him. He knew it was not good for man to be alone so he made a helper, a specially designed woman; together they complement and complete each other.*

6) *He is awesome. We can't even comprehend what creation is. There is so much we can't understand about the human body alone: how we eat, hear, think, remember, procreate, have emotions... yet God made all this and more in one day with only his voice. When we contemplate creation, we must stand in awe of the God who did this.*

7) *He loves/cherishes the human race; there is a special intimacy as he made us in his image compared to “let there be” for everything else. People are special and above the rest of his creation. He gave them the ability to reason and make decisions thereby giving them the ability to honor and worship him. He put them above the rest of creation with the command to care for it. As we get to the 3rd chapter of Genesis, we will know just how much he loves us, even though we are so undeserving.*

God gave human beings a special place in his creation, telling them to “fill the earth and subdue it...rule over it” (Genesis 1:28). How does the way we take care of this world reflect the honor we have for its Creator?

*Depleting the resources, polluting, randomly destroying plants, animals, resources and even our own bodies, is not showing honor to the Creator. To put it into a simple comparison, we might want to think how we would feel if someone came into our home and began carelessly destroying those things we hold dear, versus if someone came into our home and praised what they saw, taking great care of everything there. We also honor the Creator when we honor life, when we take proper care of our bodies and those of others, when we respect God's will in the formation and ending of human life.*

Elohim is the plural version of El, a word meaning God and often paired with other words that help us understand additional attributes of God; for example: El Elyon (el El-yuhn) – The God Most High, El Olam (el o-LAHM) – The Eternal God, or El Roi (el ROY) – The God Who Sees Me; Roi is also the God of Psalm 23, the Good Shepherd. Of all the Semitic languages, only Hebrew has this plural form for God. What additional things might we learn about God as he uses this plural name for himself?

1) *A word in the singular is not large enough to encompass all of what God is; the one true God is majestic, the God of gods, the highest of all, more majestic than the most majestic, beyond anything we can comprehend.*

2) *While we know there is only one God (Deuteronomy 6:4), this majestic God is more than a single person, as we are. Within Elohim, there is a hint of the Trinity we come to know in the New Testament.*

Where in the Creation account do we see a hint of the Trinity? How does John 1:1-3 add to this?

*Genesis 1:2 the spirit of God*

*Genesis 1:26 let us make...in our image*

*John—Jesus, the Word, is also God and participated in creation*

As people moved about and began speaking different languages, the true nature of Elohim and El was corrupted as people began worshiping the sun, moon and numerous other idols. To see how the word Elohim is used in a way other than to point to God the Creator, look at the following passages:

- Genesis 35:1-4

*The Elohim said to Jacob....build an altar to El...get rid of foreign elohim...gave Jacob all the foreign elohim...*

- Genesis 31:19

*Rachel stole her father's elohim (idol)*

- Exodus 32:3-4

*The golden "elohim" (calf)*

**For your meditation:** Have you ever abused God's name, in either your thoughts or your actions, by elevating something or someone above him? Have you ever trashed his name with your words? Pause for repentance, beg for mercy, accept God's forgiveness, ask God to help you guard your thoughts, words and actions in the future.

*To help us understand the impact of abusing God and his name, you may want to think how we would feel if someone said horrible things about our mother or someone else we hold dear—how terribly it would hurt us.*

What is God trying to do when he uses the word elohim in reference to idols in Exodus 20:3?

*He is trying to restore the name to its original and rightful owner. He is trying to guard his people from sin and keep them faithful to him alone.*

(Note that our English Bible translations, through capitalization, usually make it clear when the word Elohim is being used as God's name and when it is being used in reference to an idol.)

The name Elohim is used in a secondary way in Exodus 4:14-16 ("...Elohim to him"), in Psalm 82:1, 6, and several other places in the Old Testament. Why would God use this term for a human being?

*He is saying that those whom he calls or puts into positions of responsibility over others, such as Moses or the judges, are given their position by God's appointment, whether they recognize it or not. They are not elevated to the same level as God but are "standing in" for him here on earth and are to reflect God's love in their dealings with others.*

Discuss what this means to someone put into a position of authority over others in the church/family, as well as what it means to those put under the authority of a leader.

When have you stood in awe of Elohim, God the Creator?

If you would pray to God, Elohim, what might you include in that prayer?

*Thanksgiving for his many material and spiritual blessings, repentance for those times when we have not been faithful to him or acknowledged him as the source of all things, for his guidance and blessings on our leaders and repentance for when we have not given them the honor due as his representatives, his continued preservation of our lives and world, praise and honor for the magnitude and wisdom of his creation...*

**For your personal study:** Read Psalm 68, where Elohim is used 26 times. How does the meaning of this name enhance your understanding of the psalm?

## Closing Prayer

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty CW 234 vs 1, 2, 5

*Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation!  
O my soul, praise him, for he is your health and salvation!  
Let all who hear Now to his temple draw near, Joining in glad adoration!*

*Praise to the Lord, who o'er all things is wondrously reigning  
And, as on wings of an eagle, uplifting, sustaining.  
Have you not seen All that is needful has been Sent by his gracious ordaining?*

*Praise to the Lord! Oh, let all that is in me adore him!  
All that has life and breath, come now with praises before him!  
Let the Amen Sound from his people again; Gladly forever adore him!*

## References:

Girdlestone, Robert Baker, *Synonyms of the Old Testament*, WM B Eerdmans Publishing Co, Grand Rapids, MI, 1951. Pg 18-44  
Jeske, John C, *Connecting Sinai to Calvary*, NPH: Milwaukee, WI, 2005  
Rose Publishing, *Names of God* pamphlet  
Spangler, Ann, *The Names of God*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 2009

## Lesson 2

# God Almighty (El Shaddai) & The Lord (Adonai)

*O LORD, our Lord, How Excellent is Your Name in all the Earth! –  
Psalm 8:1*

### Opening Prayer

### El Shaddai (el-shaw-DIE) – God the Almighty

When God calls himself El Shaddai, he is reminding his people that he is God Almighty, the God who provides every good and perfect gift, the God who makes even the impossible happen. This name is most often translated “God Almighty”.

The first use of this name is in Genesis 17:1-2. Why might El Shaddai be a good name to use at this time?

*God is saying Abraham would have a child but, from a human perspective this would seem impossible because of his age and the age of his wife, Sarah. Put yourself in Abraham’s sandals to imagine how even nature would have to do something contrary to itself to make this promise become a reality; then we realize we can’t begin to fathom the might of El Shaddai.*

Look at other places where El Shaddai is used and discuss how knowing the meaning of this name helps us better understand the message of the passages.

- Genesis 28:3-4

*Isaac uses this name, associated with the covenant God made with his father, Abraham, in a prayer as his son, Jacob, leaves on a long, dangerous journey fleeing his brother Esau. What a comfort to Isaac, knowing that he could put his son into the hands of Almighty God for safekeeping. No problem or situation is ever too big for the Almighty God, for El Shaddai. We also can put those we love in the arms of El Shaddai, confident that God will watch over them and do what is best for them.*

- Genesis 35:9-12

*God repeats to Jacob the covenant made with Abraham. He returns with his wives, children and large flocks after many years spent with Laban. Jacob had certainly experienced the physical blessings of the Almighty God and now he is reminded of the spiritual blessings and promises also.*

- Genesis 49:22-25

*On his deathbed Jacob blesses his son, Joseph. Since El Shaddai was not a popular name for God, using it as God's covenant name repeated generation after generation would bring back thoughts of the first time it was used with Abraham and how God had been faithful to his promises all those years. As we look back over our life, or even all the way to Abraham and before, we also see how very faithful God has been; certainly he will care for me today.*

Have you ever experienced the power of El Shaddai, God Almighty?

If you were to pray to El Shaddai, what might you include in that prayer?

*Awe at his preservation of all things, thanksgiving for all of his physical and spiritual blessings, praise for his mercy and faithfulness, help for us to remain confident in his promises, confidence/conviction that for him nothing is impossible, help with leading a life that reflects what he has done for us, glorify him for giving us a Savior, patience to wait on his timing, repentance for when our thoughts and actions have not given him the honor he is due.*

## **Adonai (ah-doe-NI) – The Lord**

Adonai is a Hebrew word meaning Lord (distinct from LORD), a name of respect that implies a relationship: God is Lord, we are his servants. Adonai and Yahweh (God's personal name or LORD—to be studied later) often appear together. In these cases, the NIV translates it as "Sovereign LORD," while other translations use "LORD God". In the NIV, the word sovereign refers more to God's position of headship exemplified by his grace and mercy, rather than to his supreme or unlimited power. Like Elohim, Adonai is a plural, giving a hint of the Trinity.

God uses this name more than 300 times in the Old Testament. Read the following verses and discuss what we learn about God and our relationship to him.

- Psalm 8

*The majesty of his world evokes wonder and praise even from infants and children, from all creation. Even grander than the world is the grace and mercy God exhibits in the gift of a Savior, his Son, who rules over all creation. We can't help but join David in exclaiming, "O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!"*

- Isaiah 40:3-5

*The Old Testament promise of a voice calling for repentance that leads to salvation. The Old Testament people would be delivered from their enemies in a way that glorified God among all the people of the world. In the New Testament, we know this voice is that of John the Baptist, pleading with the people to repent in preparation for the coming of Jesus.*

What does it mean to us, in everyday life, to live in a master/servant relationship to the Lord?

*We have been created to live under him, not beside him as an equal. We may not disagree with him, argue with him or pick and choose which of his commands or words we will obey. He is due unrestricted, absolute obedience.*

In Exodus 4:1-5, 10-15, Moses calls God his Lord, Adonai, (verses 10, 13) while also expressing reluctance to obey him. Have you ever done the same? What held you back from doing what the Lord was asking?

What does Psalm 114 tell us about the Lord, Adonai?

*Even nature submits to the Lord's control as he opened a path through the sea and made water flow from a rock in the desert. The earth itself trembles in the presence of God. If the universe stands in awe of the Lord, so much more so should we humans, the crown of his creation.*

If you were to pray to Adonai, what might you include in that prayer?

*Help to know and submit to his will for our lives, praise for his grace and mercy which overflows in our lives, repentance for our pride and our misplaced priorities, acceptance of his commands and realization that he does all for our good, honor him for his wisdom...*

## **Closing Prayer**

**Take My Life and Let it Be CW 469, vs 1, 5, 6**

*Take my life and let it be  
Consecrated, Lord, to thee.  
Take my moments and my days;  
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.*

*Take my will and make it thine;  
It shall be no longer mine.  
Take my heart—it is thine own;  
It shall be thy royal throne.*

*Take my love, my Lord, I pour  
At thy feet its treasure store.  
Take myself, and I will be  
Ever, only, all for thee.*

### **References:**

Girdlestone, Robert Baker, *Synonyms of the Old Testament*, WM B Eerdmans Publishing Co, Grand Rapids, MI, 1951. Pg 18-44  
Jeske, John C, *Connecting Sinai to Calvary*, NPH: Milwaukee, WI, 2005  
Rose Publishing, *Names of God* pamphlet  
Spangler, Ann, *The Names of God*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 2009



## Lesson 3

### LORD (Yahweh or YHWH)

*O LORD, our Lord, How Excellent is Your Name in all the Earth! –  
Psalm 8:1*

#### Opening Prayer

#### Yahweh (ya-WAE) – LORD, God’s personal name

In Isaiah 42:8a we read “I am the LORD; that is my name!” This is his personal name; all others are descriptive names.

For Jews this was a sacred and incommunicable name. It was spoken aloud only by priests worshipping in the Jerusalem temple. After the destruction of the temple in 70 AD, the name was not pronounced at all. “Adonai” was substituted for Yahweh whenever it appeared in the biblical text, and eventually the correct pronunciation was lost. In Hebrew this name is formed with four consonants: YHWH. In the tenth century, Jewish scholars began supplying vowels to Hebrew words. Since Adonai had been substituted for YHWH, the Hebrew vowels for Adonai were inserted making it YaHoWaH, or Yahweh, or Jehovah.

But God has told us he does want us to know him and call on him. Through the Scriptures he has revealed exactly what he wants us to know. Though he uses his personal name, Yahweh, over 6,800 times in the Hebrew Bible, many still may consider him hidden because he reveals himself in such mind-boggling ways we can’t begin to comprehend the magnitude of who he is. Yet we know him intimately because of the faith he has put in our hearts and the ways he continually feeds and guides us.

In Exodus 3:14-15 God tells Moses his name: “I AM WHO I AM... (tell them) I AM sent you.” The letters of the Hebrew stem for the word “I AM” are the same letters used in Yahweh. After God calls himself “I AM”, he closely connects “I AM” with the name “the LORD”, the God of their fathers, and sends Moses on his way to lead Israel. We see “I AM” frequently in both the Old and New Testaments.

In our Bibles this name is translated LORD (as opposed to Lord, for Adonai). It is sometimes used in a shortened version as “Jah”, as in Hallelujah (Praise Jah [the LORD]) and Elijah (God is Jah [the LORD]).

Yahweh, LORD, is the name most closely associated with God’s covenant relationship with his people; this is the God of the patriarchs and of Old Testament worship.

What was instituted in Genesis 4:25-26 and why?

*We have the beginning of public worship, calling on the name of the LORD in public rather than only in the family. Looking earlier in chapter 4, we see a description of what was important to those in the line of Seth, the son of Adam and Eve, given “in place of Abel”. They honored the LORD in their hearts and lives, and publicly proclaimed his marvelous works. This is written in contrast to the line of Cain as we read of the proud, self-reliant boast of Lamech who took on the mark of Cain and felt free to take lives, live in polygamy, with no respect for God.*

What is the significance of the name Yahweh, LORD, in Genesis 12:1-3 and Genesis 13:3-4?

*Yahweh is the Old Testament Savior name. Yahweh chose Abram and promised that he would be a blessing to all the people of the earth through a Savior who would come from his descendants. Abram wasn't chosen for this honor because of how godly he was; in fact Abram had just sinned greatly by “giving” his wife to Pharaoh. The covenant promise of a Savior was entirely Christ-focused, a free gift of grace.*

*In Genesis 13:3-4, Pharaoh sent Abram away after discovering his deception of calling Sarai his sister instead of his wife. During his journey from Egypt to Canaan, Abram stopped at Bethel to worship at an altar that he had previously built. He had witnessed God's grace and forgiveness in his deliverance from Pharaoh. He needed and wanted to express his repentance as well as his gratitude to the LORD. Do you have times when you truly thirst for a worship service and the sacrament?*

In the People's Bible, Jeske says, “God deals with us as he dealt with Abram, not in terms of demand but primarily in terms of promise.” (p119) What does this mean?

*Yahweh is the God of absolute faithfulness. He voluntarily puts himself under obligation to us. He is the God of free and faithful love. When he calls himself Yahweh, it's in connection with his promise of salvation. He is an unchanging, independent, ever-living God, faithful through the generations, and in him we put our trust. We can do nothing to reconcile ourselves to him; his is a one-sided covenant.*

It has been said that Yahweh, LORD, is the God who controls and directs history, and that his actions are directional and their goal is his kingdom. Do you agree? What does this mean for you in your life?

*God has a plan for every minute of every day for absolutely everyone and everything. Nothing happens that he doesn't control. History is not a random cycle, it is not a set of cause and effect situations, it is not controlled by world powers for their purposes, nor is life like that of a hamster on its wheel always running but never going anywhere. Rather it is a purposeful line into the future, toward a God-appointed goal of a new world without sin, the New Jerusalem of Revelation 21. This knowledge and conviction shapes our attitude, decisions, priorities, worship, and is the source of our confidence and motivation.*

From Philippians 3:7-11, 13b-14, what did this truth mean to Paul?

*Paul was able to call every one of his own accomplishments the filthiest of trash, of absolutely no value, even a hindrance to what is important. He states a total denial of self. His focus is entirely on getting to*

*know the LORD more intimately, to worship him more fully, to serve him more completely. As an athlete focuses only on the goal line, so all of Paul's energy went into attaining the heavenly goal God has designed for him and all believers. This makes quite a personal mission and vision statement!*

**For discussion and personal meditation:** What specific things are hindering your complete focus on this God-ordained goal?

What do we learn about Yahweh, LORD, from Isaiah 43:1-3a?

*He desperately wants to be with us, to reconcile us to himself. He calls us by name, we are his! He protects us from every calamity and is always with us. And why does he do this? Because we are precious and honored in his sight and because he loves us (43:4)! Meditate on this amazing thought for a while.*

How might this passage influence your life?

*Try making this passage very personal by inserting your name in place of "Jacob", "Israel", and "you". The truth of this message and the magnitude of the love and power of Yahweh truly create a WOW moment and must influence what each of us perceives as our purpose for being in this world. LORD, forgive me for returning your absolute love with my wretched thoughts, words, and deeds.*

What do we learn about Yahweh, LORD, from Exodus 34:6-7 and what does this mean to you?

*Gracious, compassionate, slow to anger, abounding in love, kindness and truth, forgives all sins, is just. What an encouragement as we reflect on our sins in repentance. What a comfort as we seek to turn from sin. What a motivation for lives of service and worship.*

The phrase "the LORD your God" is used in 240 of the 959 verses of Deuteronomy, for a total of 280 times. Over 50% of the occurrences of this phrase are in this book of law. What does this teach us about God's law?

*We have a gospel motivation for keeping the law! The law is not simply a list of must-and-must-not. Rather, because of who he is and what he has done, the LORD is instructing and encouraging his people to truly be his people. He is telling us "I, Yahweh, am your God." Yahweh is the God of the commandments and they are for our welfare and teach us what pleases the LORD. This applies in New Testament times as well as Old.*

If you were to pray to Yahweh, LORD, what might you include in your prayer?

*Repentance for my constant pride, grievous breaking of his commandments, and thoughts that I am in control, a willing spirit and his guidance to follow his will for my life, thanksgiving for his boundless grace and mercy, praise and awe at the immensity of his love and grace, thanksgiving for a Savior, help to focus on my heavenly home and not get diverted to worldly interests, a passion for sharing the gospel message far and wide, humility...*

## Closing Prayer / Psalm

### Psalm 103 (NIV 11)

<sup>1</sup> Praise the LORD, my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name.  
<sup>2</sup> Praise the LORD, my soul, and forget not all his benefits—  
<sup>3</sup> who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases,  
<sup>4</sup> who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion,  
<sup>5</sup> who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.  
<sup>6</sup> The LORD works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed.  
<sup>7</sup> He made known his ways to Moses, his deeds to the people of Israel:  
<sup>8</sup> The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love.  
<sup>9</sup> He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever;  
<sup>10</sup> he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities.  
<sup>11</sup> For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him;  
<sup>12</sup> as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.  
<sup>13</sup> As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him;  
<sup>14</sup> for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust.  
<sup>15</sup> The life of mortals is like grass, they flourish like a flower of the field;  
<sup>16</sup> the wind blows over it and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more.  
<sup>17</sup> But from everlasting to everlasting the LORD's love is with those who fear him, and his righteousness with their children's children—  
<sup>18</sup> with those who keep his covenant and remember to obey his precepts.  
<sup>19</sup> The LORD has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all.  
<sup>20</sup> Praise the LORD, you his angels, you mighty ones who do his bidding, who obey his word.  
<sup>21</sup> Praise the LORD, all his heavenly hosts, you his servants who do his will.  
<sup>22</sup> Praise the LORD, all his works everywhere in his dominion.  
Praise the LORD, my soul.

### References:

- Girdlestone, Robert Baker, *Synonyms of the Old Testament*, WM B Eerdmans Publishing Co, Grand Rapids, MI, 1951. Pg 18-44  
Jeske, John C, *Connecting Sinai to Calvary*, NPH: Milwaukee, WI, 2005  
Jeske, John C, *The People's Bible – Genesis*, NPH: Milwaukee, WI, 1991  
Rose Publishing, *Names of God* pamphlet  
Stein, Stanley C, *Theological and Practical Aspects of the Tetragrammaton*, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Essay File, 2000  
Wendland, Ernst H, *The People's Bible – Exodus*, CPH: St Louis, MO, 1992

## Lesson 4

### New Testament Names

***O LORD, our Lord, How Excellent is Your Name in all the Earth! –  
Psalm 8:1***

#### Opening Prayer

#### Jesus – The Personal Name of the Son of God

Jesus' name is intimately linked to Yahweh; his name means "Yahweh is Savior." What comes to mind when you say the name "Jesus"?

*Through Jesus, God bends down to us, becomes one of us, brings his mercy to us, is nailed to the cross to pay for our sins, rises from the dead to show us the way to heaven. Certainly "Jesus" is a name above all names, is a name to be praised.*

Jesus was a common name in first century Palestine. To distinguish him from others, Jesus is sometimes referred to as Jesus of Nazareth, Jesus the son of Joseph, or the carpenter's son.

Read Matthew 1:20-21 to see how we are introduced to Jesus in the New Testament.

Comment on any significance of giving the Son of God the name of a common man.

*By the miracles of God's will, he became a true man in all ways, so that he could live on this earth, suffer the same trials that we suffer and die a human death. Yet, he lived this human life without sin. He was able to rise from the dead to lead us to heaven. He is a living, breathing God.*

Why did Jesus come to this earth? Luke 19:10, John 3:16, Romans 5:9-11

*He came to save mankind, to live the perfect life that man cannot live, to pay the price required to reconcile us with God. Notice in the Romans passage how his names are stacked one on top of another: Lord Jesus Christ.*

## Immanuel – God With Us

Though it seems a common name to us, the name Immanuel is used only three times in Scripture. Look at Isaiah 7:14, Isaiah 8:8 and Matthew 1:22-23. How does knowing that God is always with us make a difference in your life? (Also see Psalm 139:7-12, Matthew 28:18-20, John 14:15-21, John 15:9-12, 1 Corinthians 3:16)

*When we go about God's work, he will always be there guiding us and giving us the energy and the very words and ideas to use. We aren't in this life on our own; God is always there no matter where we find ourselves—a great comfort and also a warning that we can keep no secrets from God. Our very bodies are God's temple; you can't get any more personal and close than that.*

## Christ / Messiah – The Anointed One

In the New Testament Jesus is identified as Christ or Messiah over 530 times, often in his own words. If anyone else claimed this title, it would be blasphemy. The Hebrew name “Messiah” and the Greek name “Christ” both mean “the Anointed One.” What does it mean to be anointed?

- Exodus 30:22-32

*The Tent of Meeting and its contents were anointed, set aside for a special purpose, along with Aaron and his sons as priests. In the OT, anointing with oil is symbolic of bestowing the gift of the Holy Spirit or setting something/someone aside for a highly spiritual purpose. Notice how exceptionally special the oil was and it was never to be used in any other way.*

- 1 Samuel 15:1

*Samuel anoints Saul as king of Israel, and then tells Saul to listen to what God Almighty has to say. Saul was chosen by God for a special purpose.*

- 1 Samuel 16:11-13

*Samuel anoints David as king, following God's command. From a human perspective he was not the most likely candidate, but David was the one God chose.*

Why can we call Jesus the Messiah, the Anointed One? Read Isaiah 61:1 and Luke 4:16-21; also read Matthew 26:62-64a.

*This is Yahweh, the LORD, speaking in Isaiah. Jesus himself says that he is the fulfillment of this prophecy of a Messiah. Jesus IS the promised Messiah. Jesus is the only one who can complete the work described in Isaiah and this is the purpose for which he became a man.*

When was Jesus anointed?

*He was anointed when he was baptized, not with oil but with the Holy Spirit. The Father said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." (Matt 3:17) Jesus was sent here for the very special purpose of reconciling mankind to God. (Acts 10:37-38)*

The word "christen" comes from the Greek verb *chrio*, "to anoint". How does this expand on your view of the blessings of christening or baptism?

*In baptism I receive the forgiveness of sins and I am also made a child of God. As a child of God, I am set apart from others, my life is sanctified; I receive the gift of the Spirit, am given strength to face each day and have confidence in eternal life. Also notice how much of the blessing of baptism is lost when we make it into something that we choose to do on our own or make it a way that we give ourselves to God rather than coming to God in humility and faith, letting him be the focus, receiving his blessings.*

## **Jehovah - I AM**

As we learned last time, in Hebrew God's personal name is formed with four consonants: YHWH. In the tenth century, Jewish scholars began supplying vowels to Hebrew words. For centuries, Adonai had been substituted for YHWH, so it was natural for the Hebrew vowels for Adonai to be inserted making it YaHoWaH or Yahweh or Jehovah. Jehovah is the New Testament (Latin) Yahweh, the God of the covenant promise.

In Exodus 3:13-14 God identifies himself as "I AM", and the Jewish people always knew him as Yahweh, the true God, the God of the covenant promises. What do we learn about Jesus in John 8:48-59?

*Jesus is the true God, Yahweh. The people knew exactly what Jesus was saying when he said "before Abraham was, I am"; and for them, this was either the greatest of blasphemies or Jesus was indeed true God. The Bible proves itself over and over as we see Jesus confirm that he is the fulfillment of the promise of a Messiah.*

Can you think of other "I am" statements that Jesus made about himself? What do these images reveal to you about Jesus?

*I am the bread of life...the good shepherd...the resurrection and the life...the way, the truth and the life...the vine...the gate for the sheep...*

Has this study of God's names given you new insights into your Bible reading and worship? What meant the most to you?

## Closing Prayer

### Christ the Word of God Incarnate CWS 750, vs 1, 6

*Christ, the Word of God incarnate, Lord and Son of Abraham;  
Christ, the radiance of the Father, Perfect God, the great I Am;  
Christ, the Light, you shine unvanquished, Light and life you bring to all;  
Light our path with your own presence, Grant us grace to heed your call.*

*Christ, the Alpha and Omega; Christ, the first-born from the dead;  
Christ, the life and resurrection; Christ, the Church's glorious head:  
Praise and thanks and adoration And unending worship be  
To the Father and the Spirit And to you eternally.*

### References:

Jeske, John C, *Connecting Sinai to Calvary*, NPH: Milwaukee, WI, 2005  
Lange, Lyle W, *God So Loved the Word*, NPH: Milwaukee, WI, 2005  
Spangler, Ann, *The Names of God*, Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI, 2009