

Who Is Like Our God: The Divine Name – Week 16

HOOK

A name: gives identification, recalls history, labels with reputation, helps make connections, and even describes authority.

BOOK

Psalm 8:1,3-4,9 - *O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth! You have set Your glory above the heavens. When I look at Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have set in place, what is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You care for him? O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth!*

- Tonight, we are looking at the name of God.

LOOK

2 Chronicles 7:14 – *God’s people are called by His name.*

Proverbs 18:10 – *His name is a strong tower.*

John 1:12 – *The children of God are those who believe in His name.*

Psalm 148:13 – *His name alone is to be praised and exalted.*

Scripture says, _____ :in His name

We pray... We give thanks... We ask forgiveness... We have faith...

Miracles are performed... We are baptized... There is life...

With ALL the scriptural emphasis on His name, no series of the person of God would be complete without a serious study of His revealed name.

Context: For thousands of years, God was known only by His titles:

- Creator/Possessor of Heaven and Earth (**Qoneh shamayim wa’arets**) (Creator)
- All Sufficient, All Mighty God (**El Shaddai**) (Aseity)
- God Eternal (**El Olam**) (Self-Existent)
- God Most High (**El Elyon**) (Sovereignty)
- God Who Sees (**El Roi**) (Omniscience and Omnipresence)
- God All-Powerful (**Elohim**) (Omnipotent)
- God of Israel (**El Elohe Yisrael**)

Notice:

1. God had been revealing His attributes through His names. (cool)
2. Virtually all His names/titles began with “El,” the generic name for a god/deity. Attaching a title to “El” was how He was identified for until Exodus 3 (2-3,000 years of human history). – Ex.6:3 (crazy!)
3. A title recognizes a certain level of distance. Consider the difference in relationship suggested between someone calling “excuse me, Mr. President” and “Hey, Joe.”

EX. This is the difference between being new at a church and seeing a pastor preach and calling him Pastor VS. meeting him at a church function where he saw you, crossed the room, put out his hand, and said, “Hi, my name is...” Everything about your relationship moved forward a mile in that simple but profound interaction. Ever become friends with that pastor? Yes, he may still stand on a stage. You still learn from him. But, your connection is deeper and more invested because he invested in you. It began with “Hi, I’m...”

- **God makes a huge step in self-revelation** by giving Moses, the soon-to-be-writer of ¼ of the bible, His divine name.
 - Ex.6:3 - *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.*
- Thereby, out of love shared His name with us. This is a leap relationship.

(Context) Abraham had 12 great-grandchildren who expanded a family of 72. Through a series of God-awesome-events, one of them, Joseph, was separated from his family in Canaan and became second in command of all Egypt. Canaan, who is largely dependent on rain experienced a famine. Joseph used his position to save his family by bringing them to Egypt, a land not dependent on rain, but the Nile River. After Joseph died, a Pharaoh came into power who didn’t remember Joseph and saw the quickly multiplying Israelite foreigners as a threat. He enslaved them and put them to forced labor. It backfired and they multiplied even faster. God maneuvered one of the Israelite babies into Pharaoh’s house and kept his identity a secret. This man, Moses, saw an Egyptian beating an Israelite and protected his kinsman by killing the Egyptian. Now, wanted for murder, Moses escaped into the wilderness. There, he married into a pagan priest’s family and became a shepherd for 40 years until...

Exodus 2:24-25 – *And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. 25 God saw the people of Israel—and God knew.*

- Each of these was visited by God and received the same promises.

Exodus 3:1-6 - *Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian, and he led his flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. 2 And the Angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked, and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed. 3 And Moses said, "I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned." 4 When the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." 5 Then he said, "Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." 6 And He said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.*

- **V.1** – Moses had been so humbled, he didn't even have his own flock.
- **V.4** - It has been over 400 years since God has spoken. The last recorded speech of God was in Gen.35 in the covenant made with Jacob.
 - Yet, the Creator, All Powerful GOD knows his name. *shocking
- **V.5** – Foreshadowing the Israelites around the mountain and told not to get close to it.
- **V.5** – Being barefoot was a sign of being a house servant.
 - Further, it was customary to remove your filthy shoes when you entered someone's house. Moses was now in God's house as a servant.
- **V.6** - Identifies Himself by Moses' heritage, yes. But most importantly God is raising the point of His covenants between Moses' fathers and Himself.
 - **Ex. 2:24** - *And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.*
 - God is being faithful to His covenant. (Not just because He pities them.)
- **V.6** – Not long from now, Moses' relationship with God will have grown to him asking to see God's glory (face).
 - It would be known of Moses that God would speak to him "*face to face, as a man speaks with his friend*" (**Ex. 35:11**).

(Context) Moses will be stepping into a highly wicked pagan culture. Egypt was a nation saturated in mythology around their idols, their empty deities. There were **several things all of these man-made gods had in common.**

Psalm 115:4-8 – *Not to us, O LORD, not to us, but to Your name give glory, for the sake of Your steadfast love and Your faithfulness! 2 Why should the nations say, “Where is their God?” 3 Our God is in the heavens; He does all that He pleases. 4 Their idols are silver and gold, the work of human hands. 5 They have mouths, but do not speak; eyes, but do not see. 6 They have ears, but do not hear; noses, but do not smell. 7 They have hands, but do not feel; feet, but do not walk; and they do not make a sound in their throat. 8 **Those who make them become like them...***

- They are blind, deaf, mute, static, and stupid; They are figments of their imagination with only the powers that people project on to them.
- We become as blind, deaf, and purposeless as those idols we serve.

Exodus 3:7-8 - *Then the LORD said, “I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters. I know their sufferings, 8 and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.*

- The God Moses is encountering is completely different. This God is perceptive, knowing, and **is about to take action on behalf of His people.**

Exodus 3:10-12 - *Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.” 11 But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?” 12 He said, “But I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain.”*

- He asked about his own lack of credentials, his own lack of reputation and authority, his own lack of power and abilities.
- But the freedom of the Israelites has nothing to do with Moses. It was the wrong question, so God doesn’t answer it. Instead, God answers the question that mattered.
- The right question was, “Will You be with us?”
 - “When we know the God who is with us, we can step forward confidently to do His will.” – David Guzik
 - **EX.** Moving a cubby box with the kids. I do all the lifting. They just get to have their hands on the box as I carry it.
 - **God can ask the impossible of us when He’s with us.**

Moses had learned this by **Ex. 33:15**. God tells Moses because of the Israelites sin, He will send them to the Promised Land and even give them the blessings, but His presence will not be with them.

- *“And he said to Him, ‘If your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here.’”*

Exodus 3:13-15 - *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?” 14 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.’” [...] This is My name forever, and thus I am to be remembered **throughout all generations.***

- I AM = Hebrew: YAHWEH
- There is no equivalent for God but God. If you place God on one side of an “equal” sign, there is nothing to put on the other side but Himself.
 - (God = ... only God)

What God is revealing about Himself through His name?

1. In a world of empty idols, of gods which are not, He is the great I AM.
2. He is completely self-sufficient: lacking in, depending on, and needing nothing.
3. And He is self-existent: He doesn't rely on anything for life. (Aseity)
4. God is eternal, existing forever in both directions on the timeline. He is not “I was” or “I will be.” He was eternally before the beginning of time already, “I AM” and will be eternally after the end of time, “I AM,” and at every point in between He is, “I AM.”
5. He is Creator, the Originator of all things. All things which are **MUST** be from the only self-existent God.
6. His character is unchanging. All His attributes are immutable, and He is not in the process of becoming something different than Who He is.
7. He is exactly Who He's revealed Himself to be and more, but **NEVER** less.
 - a. He exists above and apart from any box we try to invent for Him in our desperate attempt to make Him understandable – to make Him like us.

The Jews gave such reverence to the divine name of God that they chose to stop speaking it for fear of “speaking it in vain.” They even began to stop writing it in making copies of O.T. books. For a period of time, YHWH was represented as “....” (four dots - see Dead Sea Scrolls).

Most bible translations still hold to the Greek tradition of using the word “Lord” but to identify that it’s the name of God, instead of simply “Lord (kyrios),” they write it as “the LORD.”

- EX. **Psalm 8:1** - *O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth!*

God is initiating relationship by 1) giving His name and by 2) making Moses and His people a promise. **Exodus 3:12** – *I will be with you... (fire/smoke, temple, prophets)*

I Will Be With You

It was no mistake that Matthew picked up on this and shared it with us, his readers. Look how he bookends his gospel.

Matthew 1:22-23 – *All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us).*

Matthew 28:19-29 - *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I AM with you always, to the end of the age.”*

- Matthew is identifying Jesus as being GOD, being YHWH, the great I AM, being the fulfillment of God’s covenant and promises.
- Paul makes the same profound claim.

Philippians 2:9-11 - *Therefore God has highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

- Jesus was a common name. It was “yehoshua,” the name Joshua – “YHWH saves” or “YHWH is salvation.”

What gives the common name of Jesus power and elevates it above every name?

He, and He alone, can stand on the other side of the equal sign.

- **Colossians 1:15-17** - *He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things*

were created through Him and for Him. 17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

- **John 14:8-10** - Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.” 9 Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know Me, Philip? Whoever has seen Me has seen the Father. ... I am in the Father and the Father is in me

God’s promise (His covenant) to be with His people is more than a commitment for proximity. He is omnipresent already. It’s not a matter of physical distance. It’s a matter of relationship. **We are separated by our rebellion.** Our idolatry in worshipping “self” is adultery against GOD. And it was Jesus (“YHWH Saves”) who made it possible for us to be **with Him** through His substitution.

1 John 4:10 - *In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*

- “Propitiation” – Sufficient appeasement to God’s just wrath towards us.
- To make a way for us to be with Him, the Great I AM gave Himself to keep His promise.

And it’s the God of this unchanging name above all names **that changes our names** forever. (ex. Abram to Abraham)

EX. Pilgrim’s Progress: One of the most significant theological fictions ever written. It’s an allegory about a man on a journey through life. At one time, it was the highest selling book other than the bible & has been translated into 200 languages.

Anyone who is familiar with the story can quickly tell you the name of the pilgrim, the main character – Christian, but few remember his original name.

Porter: What is your name?

Pilgrim: My name is now Christian, but my name at the first was Graceless.

Charles R. Swindoll – “Our name is now Christian, but it has not always been so. That title was given to us the moment we believed... Prior to the name change, we were Graceless, indeed.”

- Therefore, we wear the name of our savior as a sign of our salvation and the high cost of that gift.
- May we revel in the joy of our salvation and love the label of “Christian” because it’s a signpost glorifying the name above every name.

Psalm 8:1,3-4,9 - *O YHWH, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth! You have set Your glory above the heavens. When I look at Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have set in place, what is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You care for him? O YHWH, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth!*

RECAP

- God revealing His name to us was an intentional step for relationship with us.
- God's name is Yahweh meaning "I AM."
- His name is represented as "the LORD" in your bible.
- God promises to be with His people.
- God's promise to be with us was fulfilled in Jesus Christ who is Yahweh.
- Through the sacrifice of Jesus, we can be WITH God and carry His name.

FURTHER INQUIRY

Did Jesus ever actually claim He was God? – see **John 8:12-59**

TOOK

Challenge 1: Tell someone you're a Christian this week.

Challenge 2: Whenever you read the Old Testament, insert "YHWH" where you see "the LORD." Start with a Psalm or Genesis 2 or Exodus and enjoy.

Challenge 3: Read the book of John and highlight all 8 of Jesus' I AM statements.

- The Bread of Life, The Light of the world, The Door of the sheep, The Good Shepherd, The Resurrection, The Way, the Truth, and the Life, The True Vine
- Before Abraham was, I AM.

Soli DEO Gloria

eGroup Questions /// Who Is Like Our God: The Divine Name

Pray.

Scripture: Psalm 8:1,3-4,9 - *O YHWH, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth! You have set Your glory above the heavens.*

Questions:

1. Do you know someone who used to be intimidating until you got to know them, and they're a friend now? (a coach, a step-parent, a principal, etc.)
2. Why did Moses ask the question, "Who am I" in response to God's assignment?
3. What did God mean by, "I'll be with you?"
4. What are some examples in the bible where God was with His people?
5. What are some of the meanings behind God's name, "I AM"?
6. What does Jesus' name mean? How is this significant to you?
7. Why do we shy away from being identified as a Christian?
8. How can we be more aware that God is with us?

Remind of Challenges and ask who'll do them:

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Ask for prayer requests. Pray.

Fill out student contact sheet in your folder.