

Names of God, Pt 13 - Conclusion

Names of God Series

By Pastor Matt Morrell



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Fourth Baptist Church

900 Forestview Lane North
Plymouth, MN 55441

Website: www.fourthbaptist.org

Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/fourthbaptist

This evening we conclude our summer and fall series on the names of God and so, for the final time, allow me to read for you what Charles Spurgeon said on January 7, 1855 from the New Park Street Chapel in Southward, England when he was just 20 years old.

Charles Spurgeon said this:

“The highest science, the loftiest speculation, the mightiest philosophy which can ever engage the attention of a child of God is the name, the nature, the person, the work, the doing and the existence of the great God whom he calls his Father. There is something exceedingly improving to the mind in the contemplation of the divinity. It is a subject so vast, that all our thoughts are lost in its immensity; so deep, that our pride is drowned in its infinity. No subject of contemplation will tend more to humble the mind than thoughts of God. While the subject humbles the mind it also expands it.”

Charles Spurgeon went on to say:

“He who often thinks of God will have a larger mind than the man who simply plods around this narrow globe. The most excellent study for expanding the soul is the knowledge of the godhead. Nothing will so enlarge the intellect, nothing so magnify the whole soul of man as a devout, earnest, continued investigation of the great subject of the deity. Plunge yourself into the godhead’s deepest sea. Be lost in his immensity and you shall come forth as from a couch of rest refreshed and invigorated. I know nothing which can so comfort the soul, so calm the swelling billows of sorrow and grief, so speak peace to the winds of trial as a devout musing upon the subject of the godhead.”

And toward this end we have spent the past many months studying 12 different names of God. And here they are on the screen before you as we come to learn them. In your midweek prayer bulletin you will find a small cheat sheet, a book mark of sorts that Sarah Killion put together for us to keep in the cover of our Bibles. I trust you all received one of these. And we can keep it in the cover of our Bibles. We can put it on the refrigerator or the dashboard of our car. Perhaps you want to make it part of your personal devotion time with the Lord or include it in your prayer journal. But I simply want it to be a tool for us to use on a regular basis. And in a moment I want to further explain how we can use these names of God in a very practical way.

However, before then, I want to take the final opportunity to remind us of the premise of our study and do a bit of review. The premise of our study has been this. God has progressively revealed himself to us by introducing himself with and identifying himself by different names at different times. God's names were given to man by God himself during the specific time of man's need so that we might know that God is our all in all.

And with this in mind, I want us to look back again at the list of names that are printed there on your cheat sheet and I want us to identify, not the names or the meanings of those names, for you have those memorized perhaps. But rather I want us to remind ourselves of the occasions when God revealed himself in these ways.

Now you reference your card and I will give you the context and the occasion for each name in the screen, perhaps out of order as they are printed there in your card. But you will remember first אֱלֹהִים (el-o-heem'), the eternal triune creator from Genesis chapter one. In Genesis one we learned as much about the creator as we would ever about the creation. אֱלֹהִים (el-o-heem') is found more than 30 times, I believe 32 times, in the first chapter of the Bible. In the beginning אֱלֹהִים (el-o-heem') created the heavens and the earth. And אֱלֹהִים (el-o-heem') is our eternal triune creator.

Next we studied יְהוָה (yeh-ho-vaw') and we learn of יְהוָה (yeh-ho-vaw') in Exodus chapter number three where Moses was confronted by God at the burning bush. And when God called Moses to lead his people out of Egypt, Moses had two objections. First Moses said, "Well, who am I? Who am I that I might lead your people out of Israel? I can't speak and et cetera, et cetera." His second objection was, "Well, God, who are you?" And that is when God answered Moses introducing himself as יְהוָה (yeh-ho-vaw').

The third name of God that we studied was אֵל שָׁדַי (ale shad-dah'- ee) or God almighty. And you recall from Genesis 17 how God repeated his covenant promise to Abraham and when Abraham was 99 years old the Lord appeared to him and said, "I am almighty God. I am אֵל שָׁדַי (ale shad-dah'- ee)." And there God rehearsed and repeated his covenant promises to Abraham. In Genesis 18, then, Abraham's wife Sarah laughed within herself at the possibility of having a son in her old age and the Lord said to Abraham, "Is there anything too hard for the Lord?" There in that context God introduced himself as אֵל שָׁדַי (ale shad-dah'- ee), God almighty.

You might remember we studied the name רַעֲדָנָסִי (ad-o-noy') meaning Lord or master in our English Bibles. The title for master. And it was Moses who said, "Oh, my Lord, רַעֲדָנָסִי (ad-o-noy'), my master. I am not eloquent. I am slow of speech. "Oh, my Lord, רַעֲדָנָסִי (ad-o-noy'), master. Send someone else." It wasn't just Moses. It was also Gideon who said, "Oh, my Lord, רַעֲדָנָסִי (ad-o-noy'). How can I save Israel?" And then also, of course, David, "Who am I, oh Lord, רַעֲדָנָסִי (ad-o-noy'), God?" And in each of these cases these men recognized God as their master or Lord and understood their appropriate position in relation to their master or Lord.

We studied the name יְהוָה יַרְאָה (yeh-ho-vaw' yir-eh') meaning the God who sees or provides from Genesis chapter 22. Abraham and Isaac made their way up Mount Moriah. You will recall the occasion when Isaac asked saying, "Father, I see the fire and the wood. But, father, where is the lamb?" And Abraham answered that God would provide. The name of the place became יְהוָה יַרְאָה (yeh-ho-vaw' yir-eh') meaning the Jehovah sees or Jehovah provides.

And, again, these are not necessarily printed in this order on your cheat sheet there, but we also studied the name יְהוָה רָפָא (yeh-ho-vaw' raw-faw') meaning God who heals. And after Israel crossed the Red Sea they journeyed into the wilderness where they found themselves without water there in the desert sand. And when they did at last come to water they couldn't drink it because it was bitter water. And in Exodus 15 God worked a miracle of rthem in turning the bitter water of Mara sweet. He did so saying, "I am the Lord, יְהוָה רָפָא (yeh-ho-vaw' raw-faw'), the Lord who heals you." And God used the object lesson of the bitter water to teach the people about their bitter hearts and the necessary healing that they needed.

We studied the name יְהוָה שָׁלוֹם (yeh-ho-vaw' shaw-lome'), God our peace. And perhaps you will recall the cycle that Israel went through. First they served the Lord. Then they fell into sin and idolatry. They were enslaved. They cried out to the Lord. God had raised up a judge to deliver them and over and over again repeatedly Israel followed this cycle. But it was seven years that Israel suffered at the hands of the Midianites and the Midianites were causing strife. In fact, the word Midian, if you will remember, means strife. So Israel was suffering strife. The Midianites were invading Israel's fields and ravaging Israel's land. Israel was living in fear. Hey were stressed. They had no peace. And so Israel cried out to God. And God raised up a judge as you see there in the diagram. His name was Gideon. And God appeared to Gideon and said, "Peace be with you, Gideon. Do not fear." And Gideon built an altar there to the Lord and called it יְהוָה שָׁלוֹם (yeh-ho-vaw' shaw-lome'), the Lord is our peace. And, of course, God mightily used Gideon to bring peace to a troubled nation.

We studied the name יְהוָה שִׁמְךָ (yeh-ho-vaw' shawm'- maw), God who was there in Ezekiel 48. Ezekiel declared the prophetic promise of the presence of God in the new Jerusalem. And whereas the departure of God's presence was an expression of his judgment, the permanence of God's presence is a sign of God's blessing. And Ezekiel assured the people that some day God's presence would be permanent among them.

We studied the name הָוָה יִסְךְ (yeh-ho-vaw' nis-see'), God our banner. And you will recall from Exodus 17 how that Israel was in conflict with the Amalekites and the occasion for God's self revelation of himself as הָוָה יִסְךְ (yeh-ho-vaw' nis-see') is when Moses held up his hands—and I have highlighted the portion of that painting there where Moses' hands were uplifted. And as Moses held up his rod Israel prevailed over the Amalekites. When Moses' hands became heavy Amalek prevailed. And you will recall

that the rod was not the rod of Moses. It was the rod of God or the banner or the ensign of God and there God is declared to be **הָוָה יִסְךְּ** (yeh-ho-vaw' nis-see'), God our banner.

Are you following me, some of this coming to your memory? We studied **וְנִקְדוֹצַת הָוָה** (ye-ho-vaw' tsid-kay'- noo), God our righteousness. And it is probably during the reign of king Mattaniah or king Zedekiah that Jeremiah's great prophecy of **וְנִקְדוֹצַת הָוָה** (ye-ho-vaw' tsid-kay'- noo) was given. During the time in which Nebuchadnezzar, you will remember this, Nebuchadnezzar sarcastically renamed the last king of Judah to sit on David's throne, Mattaniah, he renamed him Zedekiah meaning righteousness of Jehovah. God spoke to Jeremiah and promised another king whose name would be Jehovah our righteousness. Nebuchadnezzar conquered Judah and took king Mattaniah and changed his name to king Zedekiah, sarcastically declaring Nebuchadnezzar's action to be the righteousness of Jehovah. And Jeremiah then spoke to God's people and said that Jehovah would be true righteousness.

יְהוָה קָדֵשׁ (ye-ho-vaw' kaw-dash), the God who sanctifies from Leviticus 20 verses seven and eight the Bible says "Kodesh or sanctify yourselves, therefore, and be kodosh or be holy of I the Lord your God. And you shall keep my statutes and perform them for I am **יְהוָה קָדֵשׁ** (ye-ho-vaw' kaw-dash)." And there is really a play on the Hebrew words there, Kedosh and kedesh and there is really minor differences between the trilateral roots there of those words meaning to sanctify or to make holy. And God is declared to be **יְהוָה קָדֵשׁ** (ye-ho-vaw' kaw-dash) because he is kedosh. He is holy and he wants his people to be holy and sanctified.

And then, I believe, perhaps, the last of the names that we studied specifically was **הָעָרָה יְהוָה** (ye-ho-vaw' raw-aw), in Psalm 23. And our intention in studying Psalm 23 was to discover the character of God embedded in Psalm 23. However, we hardly began the reading of Psalm 23 when we stumbled upon another name of God, **יְהוָה הָעָרָה** (ye-ho-vaw' raw-aw), the Lord is our shepherd, **יְהוָה הָעָרָה** (ye-ho-vaw' raw-aw).

Now we have reviewed these things. And we understand the self revelation of God himself to us at different occasions of man's need so that we might know that God is our all in all. But what do we do with these dozen names that are there in the screen, that are printed there for you there in that cheat sheet? What do we do with this list or perhaps even greater than that, how do we add to this list?

And I would like to spend the balance of our time here this evening in what I would call God focused devotion. Now I didn't say devotions as in the Christian discipline of a personal quiet time with the Lord. We are not talking about the 10 minutes that you might spend before breakfast or the time reading the daily bread before bedtime. I am talking out a life practice of being God focused. And I would recommend to you that, number one, we discover his names. There is no greater discovery in life than the discovery of God as illustrated by those living in Athens during the days of Paul in Acts 17 there. Man is religious by nature.

All men, all humanity for all of history and man attempts to worship someone or something greater than himself even if he doesn't know who or what he is worshipping. And so there in Acts 17 Paul in his sermon on Mars hill said, "The one whom you worship without knowing, him I proclaim to you. God who made the world and everything in it, since he is Lord of heaven and earth does not dwell in temples made with hands, nor his he worshipped with men's hands as though he needed anything since he gives to all life, breath and all things," Acts 17:23-25. And you see many times like those in Athens, we worship a God we don't know. Or at least we don't know him as we ought to know him. So how do we discover God? He has revealed himself to us in his Word.

And specifically in the last many months we have been learning of God through the revelation of his names and from his names we learn of his attributes and we learn of his activity. We learn of his worth and we learn of his works. And we need to spend our life time learning about God and discovering God. We can discover God here in the pages of Scripture. And many, many times I have encouraged you. When you read the Scriptures don't read thinking about yourselves. How does this apply to me? What can I get out of this today? How is this relevant to the 21st century? Read the Scriptures and look for God.

Jesus told the Pharisees in the New Testament, "You search the Scriptures for in them you think you have eternal life. But they are they which speak of me." And we need to behold our God in the Word of God.

Secondly, we need to draw near to his name. Now what does that mean? I want you to turn to Genesis 32 with me this evening. In Genesis 32 Jacob was alone, away from everyone else who he knew and loved and Jacob was terrified at the prospect of meeting with his brother Esau after years of estrangement. And it is here in Genesis 32 that God wrestled with Jacob or, we might say, that Jacob wrestled with God.

Now I would like to read Genesis 32 verses 22 through 30, but I want you to notice the capitalization of the pronouns here if you have a modern translation of the Scriptures. It can become confusing when you see that the he. Notice that the he is capitalized, that is a reference, of course, to God. If it is a lower case H that is a reference to Jacob. Verse 22, genesis 32 verse 22.

And he arose that night and took his two wives, his two female servants, and his eleven sons, and crossed over the ford of Jabbok. He took them, sent them over the brook, and sent over what he had. Then Jacob was left alone; and a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of day. Now when He saw that He did not prevail against him, He touched the socket of his hip; and the socket of Jacob's hip was out of joint as He wrestled with him. And He said, "Let Me go, for the day breaks." But he said, "I will not let You go unless You bless me!" So He said to him, "What is your name?" He said, "Jacob." And He said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed." Then Jacob asked, saying, "Tell me Your name, I

pray." And He said, "Why is it that you ask about My name?" And He blessed him there. And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: "For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved."¹

Now I have always been puzzled over this encounter. Specifically for purposes this evening I want to ask one of the many questions that we could bring to this text and that is: what name did God give for himself in verse 29 that revealed to Jacob that Jacob was wrestling with God? Jacob said, "What is your name?" Do you see it there in verse 29? Of course God says, "Why is it that you ask about my name?"

And so Jacob called the name of the place Peniel for I have seen God face to face and my life is preserved.

Among other things, I think that Jacob discovered something about God in this encounter with God. Jacob discovered a name of God that is not given to us. And, of course, we are talking about the names of God. There was some revelation that God gave to Jacob in whatever name it was that God used. But I think also that Jacob drew near to God and that he wouldn't let God go without a blessing.

And I would ask you this evening: Have you ever drawn near to God and wrestled with God, as it were, and not being willing not let go until God blessed you?

Of course we know that the Scriptures promise that if we draw near to God, he will draw near to us. And here in the context of even the revelation of God in a name, Jacob, Jacob drew near to God. And then from this I would suggest this, third. We are still here in Genesis, but for years Jacob had been resourceful and self sufficient, but here in Genesis 32 verse 25 Jacob was given a handicap that would serve as a perpetual reminder of his own frailty. In fact, in Hebrews 11, the hall of faith, the Bible says that by faith Jacob when he was dying blessed each of the sons of Jacob and worshipped, leaning on the top of his staff. And I think that is curious in Hebrews 11 that Jacob would be leaning on the top of his staff. Why would Jacob need to lean? Could it be that it was the very handicap that God gave him in Genesis 32 to teach Jacob a dependence on God?

So it was that when Jacob discovered a name of God, when Jacob drew nearest to God, that he learned how he must depend upon God. And I assure you that as you discover the person and the character of God and you draw near to God's name and God's character, that you will by default and of necessity learn to depend upon God. Perhaps the process will include a handicap, a financial handicap, a physical handicap, some other trial in your life, a hip out of joint, as was the case with Jacob, that will teach you to depend upon the person of God.

Psalm 20 verse seven I think I have included it there on the screen says some trust in chariots, some in horses, but we will remember the name of the Lord our God. In the modern vernacular we might say some trust in money others trust in the military, but we will trust in God.

¹ Genesis 32:22-30.

And you have heard of the name it and claim it theology. I would like to propose a different paradigm. How about the declare it and the depend upon it theology? Not the name it the claim it, but the declare it and depend upon it theology where we can declare the name of God and depend upon the name of God, which leads me, of course, to number four, declare his name.

Psalm 22 verse 22 there on the screen, I will declare your name to my brethren. In the midst of the assembly I will praise you. And the declaration of God's name is a way to praise God in the audience of others.

And I suggest to you that perhaps you keep this on the refrigerator in your kitchen. But then I think, no, no. You need to keep this with you on the dashboard of your car. No, you need to keep it in the cover of your Bible because we need to always be prepared to declare the names of God and who God is, his worth and his works, his attributes and his actions. And, perhaps, not even the cover of your Bible, perhaps your pocket or perhaps your heart and your mind so that we might regularly declare his names.

We can declare his names not only to others, we can also declare his names to ourselves. And we need to be daily rehearsing the person and the character, the names of God to ourselves.

Number five, and then I want to give you an opportunity for some comments or questions. Number five, we need to delight in his names. Psalm nine verse two: I will be glad and rejoice in you. I will sing praise to your name, oh most high. We need to delight in God's name.

Let's pray.

Father God, we declare you to be our Elohim and our Jehovah, our El Shaddai, our Adonai, our Jehovah Jireh, and Shalom and Shemah and Nissi and Tsidkenu and Kodesh and Raah and Rafa and so many other names. Thank you, Father God, for revealing yourself to us in these ways. I ask, Lord, that you would give us a holy passion and desire to further our discovery of you in the revelation of your holy Word. I pray, God, that you would teach us a dependence upon you and may we delight in who you are. I pray, God, that we might make it one of our chief ends to know you more I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.