

What is God's Name?

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“And those who know Your name will put their trust in You” (Psalm 9:10, NKJV)

There are many names used for God in the Bible. Does it matter which one we use? Some would say yes. An entire cult has been built on the emphasis of this distinction (Jehovah's Witnesses). Some folks today are claiming that YHWH and Yeshua are the only valid names to use when referencing God the Father and God the Son. Such people are missing the larger picture. Let each come to their own conviction, but the debate amounts to splitting hairs and tends to promote spiritual pride for those who see themselves as 'in the know'. The name of a person in Bible days not only denotes the actual name, but also refers to the attributes or characteristics of a person. God, with His many characteristics and attributes, is therefore called by many names, and given many titles, in Scripture. As long as the Bible refers to God, be He Father or Son, after a particular name or title, we are on good ground using them in our prayers and praises. In this manuscript, many names and titles of God are presented, and if you search your Bible, you will find many more.

When Moses asked God what His name is, the answer came back “I AM WHO I AM” (Exodus 3:13-14), which is derived from the Hebrew “havah”, which means “to be.” “I AM” is one perfectly good way to refer to God, as this is how we find it. The personal name of God, derived from that, and used in the Old Testament, is “YHWH”. When the vowel points are supplied in order to pronounce the name, it is pronounced “Yahweh.” In order to avoid the taking of the Lord's name in vain, the Jews would generally not speak this name. There are two similar views as to how we got “Jehovah.” The first is that it came from “YAH havah”, the shortened form of God's personal name followed by the Hebrew word for being. The second view is that the Y was changed to a J and the W to an H (letters to which they correspond), to get JHVH. When vowels are inserted there, you get “Jehovah.” Technically, Jehovah is not in the Bible, but Yahweh is. In the KJV and many other Bible translations, the personal name for God is rendered in all caps as “LORD.” Is this the only name for God the Father in the Old Testament? No, it is not. According to Deuteronomy 10:17, “YHWH” is one and the same with “Elohim.” “El” is the general word for God, while “Elohim” is the plural word for God.” “Elohim” refers to the majesty of God (Psalm 66:5), and includes the concept of the Trinitarian God (Compare Genesis 1:26 with John 1:1-3). The fact that this title is used independently of “YHWH” allows for its use in reference to God's name. In Psalm 68:4, God is called “YAH.” This is the shortened form of the divine name. In Genesis 17:1, God introduces Himself as “El Shaddai”, translated “Almighty God.” In Isaiah 6, we find God referred to and addressed as “Adonai”, translated “Lord” (3 lowercase letters, to distinguish from YHWH). In fact, God is addressed this way in 6:11. In

Isaiah 54:5, God is called "Maker", "LORD of hosts", "Redeemer", "Holy One of Israel", and "God of the Whole Earth." In other places, further descriptions are added to God's name(s). In Genesis 22:14, God is called "YHWH Yireh", which means "The LORD will provide." In Jeremiah 23:6, we are told that God "will be called: YHWH Tsidkenu", meaning "THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS."

Now we shall address the name of the Son. Yeshua is the Hebrew birth name of the "Son of God." The meaning of the name is "The Lord is salvation." This name is closely related to Joshua (Yehoshua). In Hebrew, he was called by this name. But in the New Testament, which was written in Greek, He is Iesous. The anglicized form of that is Jesus, originating from the Latin. We find this given Name for Him in Matthew 1:21. Yeshua/Jesus is the personal name for God in the New Testament (Hebrews 1:1-3), just as Yahweh is the personal name for God in the Old Testament. In Matthew 1:23, the Son is also given the name "Immanuel", meaning "God with us" (Cf. John 1:14). He is called the "Word" (John 1:1-3). This name comes from the Hebrew/Aramaic concept of "Memra", which identifies Him as both the agent of creation and agent of salvation. In terms of His office, Jesus is "the Christ" (Hebrew: Messiah), which means the anointed One (Matthew 16:16). God the Son is also called the "Lord Jesus" (Romans 10:9), the "Alpha and the Omega" (Revelation 1:8,11), and "the Lamb of God" (John 1:29; Revelation 5:8). In the last days, "He (Jesus) has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS" (Revelation 19:16).

The most important thing you will get out of this paper is an appreciation for who God is in all of His attributes. May the "Lord of Glory" (1 Corinthians 2:8) be magnified in all things! Pray to Him now, accepting His blood sacrifice on your behalf, and in faith looking forward to meeting the "Firstborn from the Dead" (Colossians 1:18), who leads the faithful into resurrection life.