

## GREAT BIBLE TRUTHS



### 4. Names of God

#### An Introduction

In Bible times the name given to a person was very important. The name was carefully chosen to show what that person was like, or to describe the events of that person's life. Moses name means 'I drew him out of the water', describing what happened to him. Sometimes God gave the child's name to the parents. Zechariah was told by an angel to name his son John, and Mary was told to name her son, Jesus. God has also told us what to call him, giving us his names, showing us what he is like so we can know him. Let's look at the main ones in scripture:-

#### GOD

One of the names given by God in the original Hebrew language is 'El'. This has been translated in English as God, and is the name mostly used by the Patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in the book of Genesis. The Word 'El' means strength and is often combined with others words that describe what God is like.

1. Elohim

This is the plural of El. It is used in Genesis 1:3 and 1:26, and many others places.

Genesis 1:26 says, "Let us make man in our image." The plural is used for God, the first indication that God is a triune God.

2. El Elyon

When El is combined with Elyon it means 'God Most High'. See Genesis 14:19

3. El Shaddai

God used this name for himself, showing he is above every God. This name set him above all others. It means 'all sufficient one' or 'God Almighty'. Genesis 17:1

#### IEHOVAH

Another name God gave himself is 'Jehovah'. In the Hebrew language it is written as 'YHWH' or 'Yahweh', and is translated in our English Bibles as LORD. Notice that capital letters are used, to show the difference to another Hebrew word that is used, 'Adon', for Lord.

Yahweh is the name God gave to Moses at the burning bush, although it wasn't a totally new name. It is used in the book of Genesis in several places. (Genesis 12:8, 13:4, 26:25) However when God revealed himself to Moses, he had a deeper understanding of this name. It means 'I am that I am'. God was showing Moses that he is the same God whom his ancestors worshipped. He is the eternal, unchanging God, and will always be true to his name. This was a name God was giving his people as part of his covenant relationship with them. It was just as if God was saying to them, "this is my personal name, you can use this name when you speak to me."

Often the name Jehovah or LORD is used together with other words in Hebrew to describe what God is like:-

<i>Name</i>	<i>Reference</i>	<i>Meaning</i>	<i>English translation</i>
Jehovah Jireh	Genesis 22:14	The one who provides	The Lord who provides
Jehovah Rophi	Exodus 15:26	The one who heals	The Lord who heals you
Jehovah Nissi	Exodus 17:15	The one who fights for us	The Lord my banner
Jehovah Mekoddishkem	Exodus 31:13	The one who makes you holy	The Lord who sanctifies you

Jehovah Shalom	Judges 6:24	The one who gives peace	The Lord is peace
Jehovah Tsidkenu	Jeremiah 23:6	The one who justifies	The Lord our righteousness
Jehovah Sabaoth	1 Samuel 1:3	The one who is over all (Almighty)	The Lord of hosts/armies
Jehovah Shammah	Ezekiel 48:35	The one who is present	The Lord is there
Jehovah Rapha/Roi	Psalms 23:1	The one who cares for us	The Lord my shepherd

## **LORD**

Another Hebrew word that God gave himself is 'Adon', which is translated 'Lord'. Notice it is in small letters, to show it is different from Yahweh or LORD. (Psalm 86:8) Over time the Jewish people felt that Yahweh was too holy to be used, so they used Adon instead. This word shows God as the Sovereign Lord, the creator of the universe.

In the New Testament it is the word 'kurios', meaning master or lord. This was how Jesus was addressed, taking the place of Adon and Jehovah. It is used in Romans 10:9, when it says, "If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord ... you shall be saved."

## **FATHER**

Some think that the name 'Father' was only used by Jesus, but just as the Son and the Holy Spirit were there from the beginning, so was the Father. God is spoken of as Father in relation to:-

### 1. All creation

God is the Father of all he has created on heaven and on earth. 1 Corinthians 8:6, Ephesians 3:14-15

### 2. Children of Israel

Moses spoke of God as the Father of the children of Israel, and so did Isaiah. Deuteronomy 32:6, Isaiah 63:16

### 3. Jesus

When Jesus came he revealed the Father to us in a far deeper way than had even been understood before. He revealed God as Father in two ways:-

a.) Jesus revealed God as *his* father, a relationship that was unique and special. (John 1:14, 18, 5:17, 8:54) Some of the Jewish leaders realised Jesus was placing himself in this unique position with God, and so they tried to stone him. John 10:29-33

b.) Jesus also revealed God as our Father. When we believe in him we become children of God, and can call God our Father. John 1:12, 1 John 3:1

### 4. Spiritual children

All those who believe in Jesus have the inner witness of the Holy Spirit that God is their Father. Romans 8:15-17



*Think about the different names we have studied. What does this show us about God? How does our God compare to the gods others worship?*



**What name for God is the most meaningful to you? Spend time meditating on God's names.**