

THE NAMES OF GOD

NAME	MEANING	PASSAGES	APPLICATION
EI	The Strong One	Ex 15:2; Num 23:22; Deut 7:9	More powerful than any god. Will overcome all obstacles. Can depend on God
Elohim	Creator	Gen 1:1-3; Deut 10:17; Psa 68	God is the All Powerful creator of the universe. God knows all.
EIElyon	God Most High (Sovereign)	Gen 14:17-22, Psa 78:35; Dan 4:34	He is the Sovereign God in whom we can put our trust.
Jehovah	Self-Existent One. The "I AM"	Ex 3:14; 6:2-4; 34:5-7; Psa 102	God never changes, His promises never fail, We need to obey Him
EIRoi	The God Who Sees	Gen 16:11-14; Psa 139:7-12	Nothing escapes His Fatherly care. God knows us and our troubles.
EI_Shaddai	The All Sufficient One	Gen 17:1-3; 35:11; 48:3; 49:25; Psa 90:2	God is the all-sufficient source of all blessings. Nothing is too big for God
Adonai	The Lord, My Master	Psa 8; Isa 40:3-5, Ezek 16:8; Hab 3:19	God is the Master and majestic Lord. God is our total Authority
EIOlam	The Everlasting God	Gen 21:33; Psa 90:1-2; Isa 40:28	He is the Beginning and the End, He works His purposes. Strength to the weary
Qanna	The Lord is a Jealous God	Ex 20:5; 34:14	God is a jealous God - all our praise should be for Him.
Jehovah-jireh	The Lord will Provide	Gen 22:13-14; Psa 23	God will meet our needs, He provides a Substitute for our sins
Jehovah-rophe (rapha)	The Lord Who Heals	Ex 15:25-27; Psa 103:3; 147:3	God can heal us. Heals our spiritual, physical and emotional sickness in Jesus
Jehovah-nissi	Lord is My Banner	Ex 17:15-16; Deut 20:3-4; Isa 11:10-12	God gives us victory against the flesh, Our battles are His battles
Jehovah-M'Kaddesh	The Lord Who Sanctifies You	Ex 31:12-13; Heb 13:12; 1 Thes 5:23-24	God sets us apart as a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a people of His own.
Jehovah-shalom	The Lord is Peace	Num 6:22-27; Jud 6:22-24; Isa 9:6	God defeats our enemies to bring us peace. Jesus is our Prince of Peace
Jehovah-tsidkenu	The Lord Our Righteousness	Jer 23:5-6; Ezek 36:26-27; 2 Cor 5:21	We are saved by His Righteous Acts when we obey the LORD
Jehovah-rohi (raah)	The Lord is My Shepherd	Psa 23; Is 53:6	The Lord protects, provides, directs, leads, and cares for His people.
Jehovah-shammah	The Lord is Near (Companion)	Ez 48:35; Psa 46; Matt 28:20; Rev 21	God is accessible to all who love and obey Him
Jehovah-Sabaoth	The Lord of Hosts	1 Sam 1:3; 17:45; Psa 46:7; Mal 1:10-14	The Lord of Hosts will always fulfill His purposes

The Names of God, Lesson #1

Trusting in the Names of God

By Larry Brown

So much of our confusion, our pain, our indecision, and our wrong decisions come because we do not know God. We may know about Him – we may know what others know or say about Him – but do we know what God says about Himself? *Daniel 11:32* (ESV) assures us that “*the people who know their God will display strength and take action.*” In other words, when we know God as He really is, there’s a power in our lives – the ability to stand firm.

Names are important. By our names we are called, and we respond to our names. Can you remember the agonizing struggle to name your first child? You wanted to choose a name that wouldn’t cause your grown child to question your early sanity (like naming “*A Boy Named Sue*”). You wanted to pick a name that would be unique, but not strange.

Names are important because they are a method of self revelation. When two people meet for the first time, our first question is usually “*What is your name?*” Most of us have several names to which we respond; I am called Lawrence, Larry, LB, Laraby, Honey, Babe, Sweetheart, and my favorite “Daddy”

The way various names are used speaks of relationship. Lawrence is used by those who do not know me very well (or my mother when I was in trouble), Larry is used by those who are regular acquaintances of mine like friends and co-workers, and Laraby is used by my brother (don’t ask me why).. Only two people can call me “*Daddy*” and only one person can call me “*Babe*”.

Even though we assign great significance to names and titles today, they were far more important to the men and women of ancient times. *Abram* was changed to *Abraham*, *Sari* to *Sarah*, Jacob “the deceiver” was changed to Israel as he wrestled with the angel. The prophetic pathos (an appeal to the emotions of the audience - one of Aristotle’s modes of persuasion) in the naming of the children of Hosea cannot be overlooked. The first child was named *Jezreel* (God Sows). The second child was *Lo-Ruhamah* (no more compassion), and the third child was named *Lo-Ammi* (not my people). When you read the book of Hosea, you will see that the names of the children were full of meaning concerning God’s judgment upon His people. Jacob and Moses asked the question “*What is your name?*” (Gen 32:24-32; Exodus 3:13)

WHY STUDY GOD’S NAMES? Many might ask why we should study the Names of God? What difference will it make in our personal walk with Him? Remember Jesus’ prayer just before He went to Calvary: “*that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent*” (*John 17:3*). The goal of Paul’s life was “*that I may know Him*” (*Phil 3:10*). God’s name represents His character, His attributes, His nature. Why study His names? Here are several reasons;

First; **THE COMMANDMENT TO HONOR THE NAME:** We have been commanded to honor His name (*Exodus 20:7 – “You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain.”*) Isn’t it interesting that on Mt Sinai, God only listed Ten Commandments and one of them focused on His name? This commandment means more than avoiding using God’s name in a slang or profane way. It means that those who are in a relationship with Him must honor His name in their lives. As we shall see in this study, the Names of God have to do with His character, and when we live in a covenant relationship with Him, we become accountable for reflecting His character.

A father was saying goodbye to his oldest son as he left for college, and the father said *“Son, I’ve only got one piece of advice. I’ve only got one thing of value to give you and that’s my name. Don’t take my name anywhere I wouldn’t take it, and don’t do anything with my name that I wouldn’t do with it. That is my only request as you go off to college.”*

Do you realize that when you are in Christ, when you put on His name, that you bear His name? Your behavior reflects upon Him. When we take the name Christian, we must remember the commandment that says *“You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain”*

Second, **THE PRAISE FACTOR:** Another reason to study the names of God is simply because of the inherent greatness of His name.

Psalms 8:1 says; O LORD, our Lord, How majestic is Thy name in all the earth ...

Psalms 9:2 tells us “I will be glad and rejoice in You; I will sing the praises of you name, O Most High.”

In Psalms 48:10, the psalmist states; As is thy name O God, So is Thy praise to the ends of the earth ...

The psalmist Asaph frequently begins his praise of God with a reference to His name. *Psalms 75:1– We give thanks to Thee, O God, we give thanks, For Thy name is near; Men declare Thy wondrous works.*

He begins Psalms 76:1 by saying: God is known in Judah, His name is great in Israel.

Understanding the names of God will help us understand how to praise and worship Him more effectively. For this reason alone, we should hunger to understand the significance of the names of God.

Third, **THE PROTECTION OF THE NAME:** Read Proverbs 18:10 *“The name of the LORD is a strong tower; The righteous runs into it and is safe.”* In other words, God’s name is like a fort that provides protection for the believer. In this study we will come to understand the significance of Jehovah Rophe and Jehovah Nissi. In each case, we will learn how understanding that name becomes a spiritual fortress. For example, we will discover that Jehovah Rophe can bring healing, thus turning bitter experiences into sweet. We will find that Jehovah Nissi is a banner of protection that can give us spiritual victory. We will discover that Jehovah Jireh is a God of infinite provision.

As we grow in our understanding of the nature and character of God, we will find ourselves running to His name to find safety and strength. His name is like a strong tower. What do you trust in? Where do you go when you are in trouble, when you worry, or afraid? It is the name of God that we should run to, trust in and hold on to. *Isaiah 50:10* tells us to “*trust in the name of the LORD and rely on your God*”. *Psalms 20:7* says “*Some boast in chariots, and some in horses, but we will boast in the name of the LORD, or God.*” In those days chariots and horses were means of protection and escape and to “boast” meant to have confidence or to trust in something. As His children we are not to run to man for protection, we are to run to God (*Psa 50:15; Jer 17:7-8*)

It is essential to know God’s name because we bear that name and we are commanded to live in such a way that will bring it honor. As we come to know the significance of each name, we will enhance the breadth of our ability to praise God and to live in His protection.

As we enter this study, it is important that we constantly keep several important principles as to the overall significance of why God revealed His names to us.

A GIFT FROM A LOVING FATHER: These names are names that God revealed to us. I know that seems rather obvious, but it is a critical issue and will aid our understanding of the Old Testament. These names are not the creation of men who were trying to define and describe God. For example, *Yahweh* (Jehovah) was revealed to Moses when he asked God in Exodus 3 whom he should say had sent him. In other cases, God simply declared His name. When Abraham was prepared to sacrifice Isaac, God revealed Himself to be *Jehovah Jireh*, the God who provides.

God in His infinite mercy has revealed Himself on the stage of human history that we might come to know Him in a personal relationship. As God reveals Himself, He discloses His character and nature through the expression of His names.

THE KEY TO A GROWING RELATIONSHIP: By giving His name, God demonstrates His desire to know and to be known by us. He is a God who reveals Himself so that we can know Him personally. As we study these names and understand the truth that is taught and the significance of the names, we need to ask ourselves “*Do I know God in my own life, and am I manifesting this truth in the way that I live?*” For example, one of the names we will study is the name *Adonai* which means Lord or Master. We easily and frequently call Him Lord, but does our life reveal that we have relinquished our will and that He, and He alone has ownership of my life? Through this study, it is my prayer that we will all grow in our relationship to God. God has revealed Himself fully so that we might experience His fullness.

THE CHARACTER OF GOD DISPLAYED: In *Psalms 23* David says; “*He guides me in the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake (v. 3)*”. That does not mean that God is acting to save His reputation, it means that God leads in paths of righteousness because He is by nature a righteous God. This truth means that we can joyfully and confidently follow Him, because we know that He is righteous and thus could not lead us in paths that would be harmful to us.

Through this study, we want to come to truly know God. Knowing God will alter the course of your life. Knowing God will change how you live, influence the decisions you make, and shape your responses to trials and adverse circumstances. As we study these names, we will learn more and more about the loving character of our God. We will discover that He is our Provider, Sustainer, Healer, Shepherd, and much, much more. Our goal is to be drawn to Him and to be passionately committed to Him, and to experience the joy of surrendering to His Lordship.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. If someone were to ask you to describe God, what would you say? Write down the words that come to your mind when you think of God.

2. Read Jeremiah 9:23-24, what attributes of God will we learn when we truly “understand and know” God? What does it mean to “know” God?

3. How do you know what God is like (Romans 1:19-20). What does the word “revelation” mean?

4. Read the following verses, and write down the verbs that describe what the people of God did regarding God’s names:
 - Gen 26:25
 - Psalms 69:30
 - 1 Kings 8:33
 - Dan 2:20
 - Micah 4:5
 - Psalms 9:10

5. What does it mean to “not take the name of the Lord your God in vain” (Exodus 20:7)

6. How might knowing God’s names assist us in Praising Him? (Psalms 46:10; 22:22; 138:2)

7. How can we grow in our trust in God and in His protection? (Psalms 9:10; James 4:8)

THE NAMES OF GOD (Lesson #2)

Trusting in ELOHIM: אלהים He is Your Creator

As we said in our introduction, most of us are known by a number of different names. The more you know about the different names that I am called by, the better you would know me. The more that we know about the individual names of God the more we are going to know about God.

Gen 1:1 - In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. (NAS) (Gen 5:1)

The Bible begins with this simple but profound declaration of faith – *in the beginning there was only God*, nothing else. Everything else that comes to be comes as the result of the activity of God.

The first name for God that is found in the Bible in Genesis 1:1 is *Elohim*. What does this name mean? In the context of Genesis 1:1, it is a declaration that God (*Elohim*) alone is eternal. In a humanistic system, the universe becomes god-like, creating life out of lifeless matter through some mindless random system. By declaring that *Elohim* alone is eternal and is the Creator of all that exists, scripture gives dignity and meaning to our life and existence. We can know that life has meaning and purpose. If we are to discover that purpose, we must know the one who alone is eternal, our Creator. Further, it lays open the possibility that we can have eternal life. Mankind has always sought to find the secret to life after death, to eternal life. But it's no secret! Eternal life can only be found in a relationship to God, to *Elohim*, who is eternal.

The word “*El*” means mighty, strong, and prominent. The name “*El*” is most frequently found in compound names such as *El Shaddai*, or *El Elyon*. In Numbers 23:22 God is spoken of as the “*El*” who brought Israel up out of Egypt. In *Deuteronomy 10:17* we read that “*Jehovah (Yaweh) your God (Elohim) is God of gods, and Lord of lords, the God (El) who is great, mighty, and dreadful.*” It was under the name “*El*” that God made great and mighty promises to Abraham and Jacob (Gen 17:1, 35:11).

Thus we learn that when God uses the name *Elohim*, He is expressing His greatness and glory. The name *Elohim* contains the idea of creative and governing power, of omnipotence and sovereignty. We can clearly see this from *Genesis 1:1* and *2:4*. It is the *Elohim* who by His mighty power creates the vast universe; who says, and it is done; who brings into being what was not; by whose word the worlds were framed.

The first thing God wanted us to know about Himself is that He is the Creator of the heavens and the earth. It is most appropriate that by this name, *Elohim*, God should reveal Himself – bringing cosmos out of chaos, light out of darkness, habitation out of desolation, and life in His image. This is a critical component of our faith. Once we lose confidence in *Elohim* as Creator of all things, then it is just a short journey to doubt Him as our Savior. All of the other attributes of God are based on this affirmation that He existed prior to, is independent of, and sovereign over His creation – that the world reflects His glory.

Another word from which some say *Elohim* is derived is “*Alah*”. *Alah* is said to mean “to declare or to swear”. Thus it is said to imply a covenant relationship. In either case, whether *Elohim* is derived from “*EL*” or “*Alah*” the idea of the omnipotence of God is expressed. To make a covenant implies the power and right to do so. Please look at Genesis 17 and perhaps we can see both “*EL*” and “*Alah*” in this passage. In verse 1: “*I am the Almighty-God (EI-Shaddai); walk before me and be blameless.*” In verse 7 “*I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generation, for an everlasting covenant, to be God (Elohim) to you and your descendants after you.*” *Elohim* is mighty and powerful and wants to be in a covenant relationship with them. Other passages that speak of a covenant and *Elohim* are Gen 6:18; Gen 9:15-16; Gen 5:24; 1 Kings 8:23.

It is also interesting to note that the name *Elohim* is a plural word and used as a noun, yet the verb or adjective that follows are often in the singular. “*I am Elohim and there is no Elohim beside me.*” (Deut 32:39; Isa 45:5, 22). However, sometimes *Elohim* refers to Himself as “*Us*” as in Genesis 1:26 “*Let Us make man in Our image*” and Genesis 3:22 which speaks of man becoming like one of “*Us*” or Genesis 11:7 when God says: “*Let Us go down and confound their language.*”

Colossians 1:16 tells us that by Him or in Him were all things created. But, based on what we have already studied, we know creation was an act of *Elohim*. Therefore, Christ is in the *Elohim* or Godhead. In Ephesians 1:3-14 we find all three persons of the Godhead “*The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.*” Other scholars argue that the plural *Elohim* may have simply an intensifying sense, indicating God’s majesty in the fullness of His power.

A. What does the Name Elohim Mean Concerning God?

1. Elohim means that God is a Creating God. And that's what we have in English. In the beginning God created. We know all of this is here because God created it but what does it really mean in the detail that God is Creator. We must understand that there is not anything here that He did not have a part in creating. *Job 26:7 says. . . “He stretches out the north over empty space, and hangs the earth on nothing” (NASB).*

Heb. 11:3 by faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible. (NASB). God is first of all *Elohim*, the creator.

2. Elohim means that God is a Controlling God: In *Psalms 147:4 He counts the number of the stars; He gives names to everyone of them.* And in *Job 4:2 – I know that Thou can do everything, and that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You.*

To *Elohim*, even the stars are important. The scripture says that even a sparrow that falls is important. If the sparrows and the grasses of the field (that *Elohim* created) are important – how much more important are we? We can take comfort in the fact that the Creator is in control. No matter what situation or mess you find yourself in, trust in *Elohim*, let Him have control of your life. This means that *Elohim* answers prayer. Understanding that God is *Elohim*, the Creator and Sustainer of all that exists, gives us confidence to face life’s difficulties.

3. Elohim also means that God is a Choosing God. God (*Elohim*) makes choices. In *Eph. 1:4* just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him, In love (NAS). What a glorious thought – *Elohim* created all things, and of all the things He created, He chose me and you to be His. He predestined or chose those who believe (truly believe in Him with all their heart, soul, mind and strength) to be one of His cherished children.

4. Elohim also means that God is a Covenant Making God. *Elohim* is interested and willing to enter into a covenant with His people. He says I am God, you will be my people, and here is what I will do for you. And here are the conditions of this covenant. There is also a relationship of this word *Elohim*.

B. What does the Name Elohim Mean Concerning Man?

1. Elohim means God Has Value for Man. *Matt. 12:12* "Of how much more value then is a man than a sheep! So then, it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath Day."

We are so valuable that God sent His Son to die on a cross for us. Like the words of Ethel Waters as she says, "God don't make no junk!" You are valuable to God. Many, especially our youth, feel that life is nothing but a chance evolutionary process. It is important that we know that no matter what you have heard, God formed you (*Psalms 13:13-16*). He uniquely knit you together from the very beginning, and He knows your name!

2. Elohim means God Has Vision for Man. *Jer. 29:11* 'For I know the plans that I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope. We have a purpose; *Elohim* has a plan for us. *Elohim* has confidence in you that you can accomplish this great purpose. By declaring that everything that exists was the act of a sovereign, loving, and knowable God, that He made everything that is, including us, means we have unique purpose. We are here by design and by divine providence.

What does God being the God of creation mean? It means that you have been created in the image of a personal God (*Gen 1:27*). This means that you are (a) **RELATIONAL** - you have been created to enjoy a personal relationship with your Creator. It also means that you are (b) **RATIONAL** - We know that this relationship has been altered by sin and we know that we have all sinned (*Romans 3:23, 6:23*). The glorious news of the Bible is that our *Elohim*, our Creator is also our **REDEEMER** and He sacrificed Himself so that we might be restored to our Creator (*2 Cor 5:21*). This is not complicated, and we are rational – we can understand these truths. But it also means that we are **RESPONSIBLE** – we must make the decisions to commit our lives to Christ and obey Him (*Romans 10:9-10*).

There is blessing and comfort in this great name of God signifying supreme power, sovereignty, and glory on the one hand, for "Yours (*Elohim*) is the power and the kingdom and glory"; and on the other hand signifying a covenant relationship which He is ever faithful to keep. Thus He says to us, "I will be to you a God (*Elohim*)", and we may say "My God (*Elohim*) in Him will I trust" (*Psa 91:2*).

QUESTIONS:

1. What assurances do we gain by understanding that Elohim is our Creator? (Isaiah 40:25-27)?
2. How can knowing Elohim heal broken relationships? (Malachi 2:10)
3. Read Isaiah 43:1-7 and Isaiah 50:10 and describe why Elohim made you and what this means:
4. What does it mean that we have been created for His glory? (What does “glory” mean):
5. Since Elohim is mighty and strong and the Creator of all things, what can He do for us in times of trouble, or when we are weary? (Psalms 91:2; Isaiah 40:28-29)

EL ELYON: אֱלֹהֵי יְיָ

Names of God #3

El-Elyon – He is Your Sovereign the God Most High

Gen 14:18-23

The Name El-Elyon.

The names of God reveal His multifaceted character. It is like viewing a diamond. As we turn the stone in our hand, we see different facets of its beauty revealed as light is refracted into prisms of color. In like manner, God's many names reveal unique aspects of His nature and character.

*Gen 14:18-23 - And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; now he was a priest of God **Most High**. 19 And he blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abram of God **Most High**, Possessor of heaven and earth; 20 And blessed be God **Most High**, who has delivered your enemies into your hand." And he gave him a tenth of all. 21 And the king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give the people to me and take the goods for yourself." 22 And Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have sworn to the LORD God **Most High**, possessor of heaven and earth, 23 that I will not take a thread or a sandal thong or anything that is yours, lest you should say, 'I have made Abram rich.' (NAS)*

It was the Most High God who was and is the Redeemer of Israel (*Psalm 78:35 – then they remembered that God was their rock, and the Most High God (El Elyon) their redeemer*). And it is the Most High God who rules today over the affairs of men. Daniel 4:34-35 – *"For His dominion is an everlasting dominion and His kingdom endures from generation to generation. And all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, but He does according to His will in the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of earth; and no one can ward off His hand or say to Him, 'What has Thou done?'; and Nebuchadnezzar blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever."*

What does this name mean, and what comfort or encouragement can we derive when we understand that God is El Elyon?

What The Name El - Elyon Means Concerning God – not only is God our *Elohim* – our Creator; He is also our *El Elyon* – the Most High. To trust *El Elyon* is to know who is in control of your life. *El Elyon* reveals He is Sovereign, He is in Control, and He Rules over all things.

This name is derived from a combination of two words “*El*” and “*Elyon*”. *El* is a general term that expresses majesty and power. *El* is a common Hebrew, Aramaic, and Arabic word for deity. For example, Exodus 34:14 – “For you shall not worship any other god (el), for the LORD (*Yahweh*), whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.” The Hebrew words for *El Elyon* are translated “*God Most High*” and mean elevated, high, exalter – the Supreme Being (the true God). When God revealed Himself as *El Elyon* it stressed the absolute superiority of God to the multitude of gods and goddess worshipped in Canaan.

In Genesis 14 God revealed Himself as *El Elyon* to Abram following Abram’s great victory over enemy kings from Chaldea and Persia (Genesis 14). Abram’s nephew, Lot, had been taken captive and Abram and his men attacked the kings and defeated them. Following the victory, Abram was approached by two kings, the king of Sodom and Melchizedek. Melchizedek, “*the priest of the Most High God (El Elyon) said ‘blessed be Abram of God Most High (El Elyon), possessor of heaven and earth. And blessed be God Most High (El Elyon), who delivered your enemies into your hand.’” (Gen 14:19-20)*. Melchizedek identifies *El Elyon* as the possessor of heaven and earth.

In stark contrast, the king of Sodom attempted to bribe Abram. “*Give me the people and keep the goods for yourself” (Gen 14:21)*. Abram was suddenly faced with a choice of trust, belief, and perspective. Would he live his life as a self-reliant man or a God-Reliant man? Was he (Abram) the one who had gained the victory over the enemy kings, or was *El Elyon* the provider of victory, as Melchizedek had said?

Abram wasted no time in answering the king “*I have raised my hand to the Lord, God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth and have taken an oath that I will not accept anything belonging to you ... so that you will never be able to say “I made Abram rich” (Gen 14:23)*. Abram was a man of faith, of trust in *El Elyon* as his God, sovereign and supreme over every detail of his life. Abram had already discovered that God Most High is the owner of everything. He refused to look for resources for victory from anyone else. Abram chose to rely on God.

El - Elyon Means God Is the Supreme God, The name or title “*Elyon*” emphasizes God's uniqueness and his **supremacy** above all others. It reminds us he is the Creator of heaven and earth and the Owner of all.

Psalms 91:1-2 – “He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, ‘He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.’” We need to resolve to live a life in light of *El Elyon*, our Sovereign God, who is supreme over all.

People trust in many things (jobs, money, family, friends) but only *El Elyon* is “... *the Lord Most High over all the earth; You are exalted far above all gods” (Psalms 97:9)*

El - Elyon Means God Is the Strong God. v 20 *And blessed be God **Most High**, who has delivered your enemies into your hand."*

Abram knew that He was God who is Most High, who has delivered them from all of his enemies. When you think about your enemies or opposition, if you will remember that your solution is God – *El Elyon* and that God is the Supreme God; then any kind of opposition, any kind of difficulty that you are faced with is not as big as our God. *Elyon* is the Strongest. He is the Strongest of the Strong. No other is as great in power and possession. He is the ultimate God, the God of Gods, the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords.

Over and over again in our lives we are reminded and we acknowledge that God is our *El Elyon* – our Sovereign. When we are faced with difficulties or challenges, you will be tempted to believe in chance or luck. Isn't it comforting to know that *El Elyon*, God Most High, is in control and that nothing can happen in His universe without His permission? No person, no circumstance of life can thwart His plan and purpose for you. Do we see that *El Elyon* rules supremely over all, and because He does, you can understand how "*all things work together for good to those that love God, to those who are called according to His purpose*" (Romans 8:28). In everything you can "*give thanks, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus*" (1 Thess 5:18)

Who is the one you can count on when everyone and everything seems to be working against you? Who is in charge of your life? His name is *El Elyon*.

El - Elyon Means God Is the . Sovereign God. v 21-23 -21 *And the king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give the people to me and take the goods for yourself." 22 And Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have sworn to the LORD God **Most High**, possessor of heaven and earth, 23 that I will not take a thread or a sandal thong or anything that is yours, lest you should say, 'I have made Abram rich.'* (NAS)

If we boil all of that down; Abram was saying God is the Sovereign God. If I am made rich, it is going to be to the Glory of God. If I am made poor, it can still be to the Glory of God. Whatever happens, it is going to be the Sovereignty of God. He has everything. He is sufficient within Himself to do everything that He wants to do. He is the one who is to be held highest and in the most esteem. Abram knew the Sovereign God made him what he was. Another way of looking at the name *El Elyon* is that He is the Possessor of all things – meaning to hold or contain something. Everything I am, everything I will be, and everything that I have, I owe to *El Elyon*. He is my Sovereign, He is my Possessor, He Rules over all things.

Application

What The Name *El - Elyon* Means for Mankind.

El-Elyon Means Man . . Can Praise His Strength.

Ps 57:1-2 1 Be gracious to me, O God, be gracious to me, for my soul takes refuge in Thee; and in the shadow of Thy wings I will take refuge, until destruction passes by. 2 I will cry to God Most High, to God who accomplishes {all things} for me. (NAS)

El-Elyon should be praised for His strength. We need to praise Him over and over again for His strength. Knowing and living that God is my *El-Elyon*, the Strong God, my enemies, my difficulties, my trials and tribulations, my troubles of any kind will not seem so great. We need to fight the temptation of the King of Sodom who was self-reliant and that our resources are from within us.

Elyon Means Man . . Can Praise His Supremacy.

Ps 138:2 I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy loving kindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name. (KJV)

This Psalm 138:2 and I quoted the King James. The last phrase of the King James is "*for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.*" When you really think about that if your word isn't any good, then your name isn't either. If we have an inerrant God then why can't we have an inerrant scripture? It is just that simple. If you have a problem with the Word of God, it is because you have some kind of problem with God. You magnified Your Word, above all of YOUR NAME! *The WORD was made flesh and dwelt among us, and HIS Name is JESUS! HALLOWED BE THY NAME! The Lion and the Lamb, Jesus.*

El - Elyon Means Man . . Can Praise His Sovereignty.

Romans 9:20-21 – "*...does not the Potter have power over the clay ...*" The song "Have Thine Own Way" was written with this passage in mind. Can we sing this song and truly mean it? Do you really give God, El Elyon, control over your life as Sovereign?

Since He is *El Elyon*, the Most High God who possesses the heavens and the earth, then He has the right to be worshipped by us, in the way He has revealed to be worshipped, and He alone can provide the way for sinful man to have access to Him. Unlike those who say "all roads lead to heaven and as long as you are good and sincere you will be saved." *El Elyon* demands to be worshipped as the Most High God and He demands that we tell others about Him in contrast to the many false gods that men worship.

We know that Satan desires to exalt himself and say I'm going to be like the Most High. Read Luke 8:28; "*And seeing Jesus, he cried out and fell before Him, and said in a loud voice, "What do I have to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg You, do not torment me."* Hell recognizes Jesus and hell recognizes that *El-Elyon* is the Most High God. So interesting in the New Testament times, the scribes and the Pharisees deep and skilled in the Word in the Old Testament they didn't recognize Jesus as the Most High, but demons did. Today is no different, people will look to Jesus and see a nice man, a good man, but they do not see El Elyon – God Most High.

Application

El Elyon is: Strong, Supreme, and Sovereign.

We need to be careful that, like Lot, who made decisions based on sight rather than faith, that we don't make choices that are dictated by the world's standards of value and success. Sometimes we make decisions about our career based on the promise of financial reward, without regard for the consequences that decision may bring on our family. Instead we need to pray:

"You are *EL-ELYON*, the MOST HIGH GOD, who is the first cause of everything. You are the POSSESSOR of both the heavens and the earth. I worship and adore You, You are the EVERLASTING GOD, the LIVING-GOD, the MERCIFUL GOD, the FAITHFUL GOD, the MIGHTY GOD. You are TRUTH, JUSTICE, RIGHTEOUSNESS, and PERFECTION. You are *EL-ELYON*, the HIGHEST SOVEREIGN, of the heavens and the earth. HALLOWED BE THY NAME!"

QUESTIONS:

1. Read the Genesis 14 account again and describe the King of Sodom. What did he rely on? Did he have the right to bargain with Abram? Also read Psalms 57:2:
2. Please look up the word "Sovereign" and describe what it means?
3. What other gods (els) do we worship?
4. What does it mean that "the Most High God is your redeemer" mean (Psalms 78:35)?
5. Even when the world seems to be in such a mess with godlessness all around us, how can we say that God is in control (Psalms 47:2; 83:18)?
6. Who and when should we praise and why? (Psalms 92:1-2):
7. Since El Elyon also means "Possessor", what things does He hold on to or possess? (Acts 17:28; Col 1:17; Heb 2:10; Psalms 100:1-3; Numbers 16:22; Ezekiel 18:4).

Lesson #4

Trusting in *JEHOVAH*: יהוה - He is All You Need

In most Bible translations the Hebrew word for *Jehovah* is translated “LORD” in all capitals to distinguish it from another Hebrew word, *Adonai* (Lord – with an upper case “L” and lower case “ord”). *Jehovah* is by far the most frequently used name for God in the bible. It occurs 6,823 times. The first time it is used is in *Genesis 2:4* - “*these are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD (Jehovah) God (Elohim) made the earth and the heavens.*” As Gen 28:13 – “I am *Jehovah*, the God (*Elohim*) of Abraham thy father, and the God (*Elohim*) of Isaac ...”

The name *Jehovah* is the most personal, intimate name of God. It is often referred to as God proper name (Psalms 68:4; Isa 42:8) It is spelled YHWH or Yahweh. The name *Jehovah* is derived from the Hebrew verb *havah* “to be” or “being”. This word is almost exactly like the Hebrew verb *chavah* “to live” or “life”. We can see the connection between “being” and “life”. When we read the name *Jehovah*, or LORD in capital letters, in our Bible, we think in terms of “being” or “existing” and “life”, but we must think of *Jehovah* as the Being who is absolutely self-existent, the One who Himself possesses essential life, permanent existence. In some cases our English pronoun “he” is similar to the Hebrew word “*havah*” which means “being” and in some passages the word “he” is equivalent to the eternal God – *Jehovah*. For example in Isaiah 43:10-11 – “...*I am He: before Me there was no god (Elohim) formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the LORD, (Jehovah); and beside me there is no savior.*” Or in Psalms 102:27 “*but you are the same (He), and your years have no end.*” *Jehovah* is without beginning or end.

It is interesting to note that all the names for God in scripture are derived from His works except one, and that is *Jehovah*. This is His plain or proper name because it teaches the substance of God, it denotes the person of God. The Jews speak of the Elohim, the true God, in opposition to all false gods. But the Jew never says the Jehovah, for *Jehovah* is the name on the true God only. The Jew speaks of the *Elohim* of Israel, but never the *Jehovah* of Israel, for there is no other *Jehovah*. He speaks of the living God, but never of the living *Jehovah*, for he cannot conceive of *Jehovah* as other than living.

The origin and meaning of the name *Jehovah* is especially brought out in relation to Israel when Moses is at the burning bush (Exodus 3:13) when he says to God “*If I come to the people of Israel and say to them “The God (Elohim) of your fathers has sent me to you, and they ask me “What is His name?” what shall I say to them? God said to Moses “I AM WHO I AM”* These words could be rendered “I will be that I will be”. *Jehovah* reveals His intention to deliver His people from Egyptian bondage and He was going to use Moses as His instrument. Moses’ question “Who am I?” is both irrelevant and irreverent. *Jehovah* had already promised that He would deliver Israel, Moses was merely an instrument.

The point is that when God wished to make a special revelation of Himself, He used the name *Jehovah*. ***Jehovah is the God of Revelation***. In Exodus 6:2-3 it says “*I am the LORD (Jehovah). I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty (El-Shaddai), but by my name the LORD (Jehovah) I did not make myself known to them. I also established my covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan...*” While the name *Jehovah* had been used as early as Genesis 2, these passages suggest (1) that the full significance of the name *Jehovah* was not revealed to the Patriarchs, and (2) the name *Jehovah* is used in connection with God’s covenant and promise to the people. So when God wanted to reveal Himself to His people and the unchangeableness of His promises, His redeeming mercy, and His moral and spiritual attributes, He uses the name *Jehovah*.

This revelation of Himself was a fearful thing to His people. Perhaps that fear was based on Moses’ injunction that they should not profane that name and the penalty of death was imposed for blasphemy of the name *Jehovah* (Lev 24:16). To this day the name *Jehovah* is never read in the synagogue nor uttered by the Jews, the word *Adonai* (in our bibles *Adonai* is usually written Lord as opposed to LORD when *Jehovah* is used) is substituted for it, and many simply say “*the Name*”. In the Dead Sea Scrolls where the name Yahweh should be, the scribes only used four dots. Their reverence for His Holy Name prohibited them from even putting ink to paper to write the letter YHWH. Because of its lack of use, the original pronunciation of *Jehovah* has been lost. What a contrast to our use of His name today. The use of God’s holy name is common and profane. It means nothing to many today – just a part of normal everyday speech. However close and personal *Jehovah* is to us (and He should be) we must confess that He is wholly other – He is God and we are not.

Jehovah is Righteous. Psalms 11:7 - *He loves righteousness*; Dan 9:14 – *Jehovah our Elohim is righteous in all His word*; Gen 18:25 – *shall not the Judge of all the earth do right*. And *Jehovah* commands that all whoever would follow Him be holy; Lev 19:2 – *You shall be holy for I Jehovah your Elohim am holy*. It is against this righteousness that man sins, and a righteous *Jehovah*, whose holiness has been violated must condemn unrighteousness and punish it. So the Righteous *Jehovah* metes out punishment. Habakkuk 1:13 – *You who are of purer eyes than to see evil and cannot look at wrong...* This *Jehovah* looks on a wicked and corrupt earth and says “*I will destroy*”. It is *Jehovah* that rains down fire and brimstone on Sodom and Gomorrah. It is *Jehovah* that said to Moses “*Whoever shall sin against me, him will I blot out of my book*” Exodus 32:33 (cf Dan 9:14)

We need to humbly approach *Jehovah* as Moses did, “*if I have found favor in your sight, please show me now your ways, that I may know you in order to find favor in your sight.*” Exodus 33:13.

But as ***Jehovah He is also Love***. It is His love that makes Him grieve and suffer for the sins and sorrows of His people. Jeremiah 31:3 – *I have loved you with an everlasting love.*

Judges 10:16 – His soul was grieved for the misery of Israel, and Isaiah 63:9 – *in all their afflictions He was afflicted. And Hosea 11:8 – How can I give you up O Ephraim ... my heart heaves within me.*

So this *Jehovah*, whose righteousness and holiness must condemn, He is also the *Jehovah* of Love, and His love redeems. *Jehovah* seeks to bring man back into fellowship with Himself. Throughout the Old Testament, when man approaches God with blood sacrifices to atone for his sins, he is approaching *Jehovah*, not Elohim. This is brought out in Genesis 6:22 where Noah did all that God (Elohim) commanded him, but in Genesis 7:5 it says that Noah did all that the LORD (*Jehovah*) commanded. The difference is in 6:22 Noah obeyed God by bringing two of every kind of animal into the ark for preservation – to re-populate the earth, where in 7:5 Noah obeyed God by bringing seven pairs of every clean animal to sacrifice to *Jehovah* for forgiveness and fellowship.

So Jehovah who is righteous and holy and love desires to **Redeem** man so that man might be in fellowship with Him. *Jehovah* changes not. This has always been true. Go back to the tragedy in Genesis chapter 4 where Enos (Enoch) is born to Seth. The name Enos means mortal man, denoting a weak and fallen state – helplessness. Man is weak and needs more than the mighty, omnipotent, transcendent Being signified by the name Elohim. Man needs that favor and fellowship with the divine Being for which he was made – *Jehovah*! Our *Jehovah* is loving and personal. The first words he spoke to Moses were his name – He called Moses by his name (Exodus 3:4). Trust in *Jehovah* for He always works according to His own plan and with perfect timing.

That is why the people of God loudly proclaim “*Jehovah is my God*” (Zech 13:9), and “*Turn to me and be saved all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other ... only in the LORD (Jehovah) is righteousness and strength*” (Isa 45:22, 24).

All of life is contained in Him. Why do we look elsewhere? Why do we not rest in His unchangeableness? He has never failed. He is *Jehovah*, the self-existent, covenant-keeping God. Let us never make the same mistake of Belshazzar whom Daniel rebuked for worshipping gods of his own making, but ignored the God who made him (Dan 5:23)

And to this end, *Jehovah* sent us Himself in Jesus. “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I AM” (John 8:58). Jesus proclaimed for all to hear that he was Yahweh. That He existed before Abraham, that He was the same one who spoke to Moses and delivered His people out of Egypt. He is the bread of life that sustains you (John 6:35), He is the Living Water that you might have eternal life (John 4:14), He is your light who shows you the truth (John 8:12), He is the door, who provides the way to eternal life (John 10:7-9), He is your good shepherd (John 10:11,14), He is the resurrection and the life who gives you eternal life (John 11:25), He is the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6) that lead you to salvation and abundant life (John 10:10), and He is the true vine, who provides for your every need (John 15:1,5).

QUESTIONS

1. Read Exodus 34:5-7 – Write down the characteristics of *Jehovah*.
2. What is it the *Jehovah* wants from us (Jer. 31:31-34)?
3. Describe *Jehovah* (1 Chron 16:36; Psalm 72:18-19)
4. What can *Jehovah* do for you (Isaiah 43:2-3)?
5. How does *Jehovah* feel about His people (Isa 43:1)?
6. What does it mean to take the Name of the Lord in Vain?

The Names of God - Lesson #5

Trusting in EL SHADDAI: אֵל שַׁדְדַי - He is All You Need Sufficient

Genesis 17:1 – I am God almighty, walk before me and be blameless. Knowing and trusting in el Shaddai brings you to a place of abundance, where you realize that the God of Heaven that you worship, is All Sufficient, He is All Mighty, and He is everything that you need. Perhaps no other name inspires greater faith and trust than *El Shaddai*.

EL SHADDAI – Whenever you see GOD-ALMIGHTY in the Old Testament – you see your EL SHADDAI. Many translations describe this name as All Sufficient. In *Exodus 6:2-3* ²God spoke to Moses and said to him, “I am the LORD. ³I 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. Even though Jehovah used His covenant name before this time, He was known to the Patriarchs by this name – God Almighty or El Shaddai.

The name (El Shaddai) appears first in connection with Abraham (*Gen 17:1-8*). Jehovah said “*I am God Almighty (El Shaddai) walk before me and be perfect*” “EL” means Might or Power, Omnipotence and Transcendence. Many of God’s names begin with “EL”. This is the name connected with creation (Elohim). *Nehemiah 9:32* – “*Now, therefore, our God, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who keeps covenant and steadfast love ...*”

“SHADDAI” is harder to get to the meaning. Some say that it refers to his Power and Judgments, and have said it means that He is the “GOD of the Mountains”. Others have said it means the “All-Sufficient One”. The Septuagint scholars translated it as “All Sufficient” It has the idea of “One who Pours Forth”. It also has at its meaning a field that has been properly prepared and cultivated to bring forth a bountiful harvest.

So how do we get from *God Almighty* to *All Sufficient*? The root word is that of a nursing mother. It is derived from the Hebrew word for a mother’s breast and it is used figuratively for God (*Isaiah 66:10-13*). Then it came to mean “*Pourer-forth*” and then naturally to mean - *Almighty*. A mother can understand it. A babe is crying, restless, and nothing can quiet it, but the mother can. She takes the babe in her arms and she comforts the babe and gives it peace as she feeds it. Another babe is pining, starving, life is going out. But the mother freely gives of herself, and rescues it and gives it life and nourishes the baby. To the baby – the mother has infinite power. She is Almighty, She is All Sufficient. When connected with “EL” – it means One Mighty to Nourish, to Satisfy, to Supply.

This is *El Shaddai* – the One who POURS FORTH. The one who says “*Come unto me and drink.*” This is the one who offers Himself to sustain, and to bless. In this name, God is seen to be the power or shedder-forth of blessings, the all-sufficient and all-bountiful One. He is Almighty because He is able to carry out His purposes and plans. He is able to

triumph over every obstacle and over all oppositions. He is the Being who nourishes, satisfies, or supplies. *El Shaddai* is the One from whom all blessings flow; the giver of all good and perfect gifts; He is sufficient for all these things. He is able to subdue all things to Himself. He is able to save. And *He is able to do exceedingly, abundantly above all that we can ask or think.* (Eph 3:20)

So our *El Shaddai*, is our *EL*, our God who is all sufficient and all bountiful, the source of all blessings and fullness and fruitfulness. This knowledge of *El Shaddai* brings us to the same realization of Paul that “*God is Able*” (Rom 16:25; 2 Cor 9:8; Eph 3:20-21; Jude 1:24).

Let’s Look At Three Examples of *EL Shaddai*:

THE FIRST THING WE SEE IS THAT *EL-SHADDAI* IS A SUFFICIENT GOD.

Perhaps, more than anyone else Abraham knew God – he left home and family and all he knew because God made him some promises and his faith stood the test of waiting for many years. Then Abrams faith waivered – and he sought to help or assist God in keeping His promises. He took matters into his own hands and had Ishmael through Hagar. God lets Abraham know that the promise is not to come through the will, nor the doings of man, but by the will and the doings of the Almighty. God allows 13 more years to pass until it was no longer possible, according to the flesh, that the child of promise would be born. Abraham was 99 years old and Sarah 89. Then in Gen 17 God was confirming the promise He already made in Gen 12:2, 13:16, and 15:5 - concerning Abraham’s seed and becoming a great nation. It is in this context that God reveals Himself to Abraham as *El Shaddai*, mighty in sufficiency and dispensing of His bounty. Is anything too hard for God Almighty? Abraham and Sarah had to learn that what God promises - only God can give, that the promise was not to be made sure by works of the flesh. Abraham had to be taught his own insufficiency, the futility of relying upon his own efforts and the folly of impatiently running ahead of God. How many Christians are guilty of the same thing? – We don’t trust in His promises, we don’t rely on His Love; We seek to do things our way, ways that seem right to us, because we want to solve our own problems. We don’t wait on *El Shaddai* – He is sufficient to keep His promises, He is sufficient to solve our problems the right way, He is sufficient to always do what is right.

God said to Abram in *Gen 17:1* – *When Abram was 99 years old the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him “I am God Almighty (El Shaddai) walk before me and be blameless.* The word “blameless” or “perfect” might be better translated as “complete” or “wholehearted”. The mighty all-sufficient One demands and deserves our complete faith – a wholehearted faith. This name introduces God to us as the all-bountiful source of all blessings and comforts. He imparts these blessings to all who trust Him and wait patiently upon Him.

Abraham realized that God is Sufficient – *El Shaddai* told Abram in Gen 17 “*I am the Almighty God*” in other words “*Abram, it doesn’t matter what the obstacles are I AM BIGGER*.” Therefore I am to be Patient and Wait on Him.

Secondly, the name *EL SHADDAI ALSO MEANS GOD IS A SHELTERING GOD*. In Psalms 91:1 - “*He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.*” Therefore I am protected. The name *El Shaddai* is used 48 times in the old testament, and it occurs 31 times in the book of Job alone! It is in the story of Job that we learn another application of the name *El Shaddai*. We know the story of Job – how at the end of the story, Job is more blessed than at the beginning. “*Can you search out the deep things of God? Can you find out the limits of the Almighty?*” Job 11:7. The story of Job is a story of enduring faith, and the faith of Job puts many of us to shame. The Lord Almighty, who had called him “*a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil,*” [Job 1:8] had suddenly removed His protective “hedge” around his servant and allowed Satan to strike. Now, prompted by incomprehensible suffering and three challenging friends, Job sought answers to some hard questions. But Job's finite wisdom was no match for God's infinite design. So the *Almighty One* spoke and gave His servant a new perspective of divine Sufficiency. “*Where were you,*” He asked, “*when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements? Surely you know! ... To what were its foundations fastened?*” Job 38:4-6. The mighty Creator of the universe continued speaking. He pointed to His sovereign hand behind light, behind the ocean tides, behind the clouds, and behind the wind currents Job 38:8-34. “*Who shut in the sea with doors, when it burst forth... When I said, ‘This far you may come, but no farther, And here your proud waves must stop!’... Have you comprehended the breadth of the earth? Tell Me, if you know all this. Where is the way to the dwelling of light? By what way is light diffused, Or the east wind scattered over the earth?... Do you know the ordinances of the heavens? Can you set their dominion over the earth? Can you lift up your voice to the clouds, That an abundance of water may cover you?*” Job 38:8-34.

When God finally finished, his humbled servant had learned a vital lesson. Having glimpsed at the mysteries of God's majestic ways, he saw his own limitations. “*I have uttered what I did not understand,*” answered Job. “*Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.*” Today, thousands years later, mysteries and mistakes still abound. Our pride and imagination still feed foolish claims and philosophies that mock the *Almighty*. Even churches reject the truths revealed to Job -- that God created the universe, hung the planets in space, positioned the stars in their galaxies, and breathed life into man.

What we see in Job (in in Abraham), is that to realize God *Sufficiency*, God’s *Sheltering* - we first must realize our own insufficiency. It is not easy to empty self. But the less empty we are of self – the less blessings God can pour in to us. The more pride and self-sufficiency we have, the less fruit we can bear. Psa 91:1 - “*He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.*” Therefore I am protected.

Sometimes only chastening can make us realize this. Many times *El Shaddai* is used in connection with Judging, Chastening, or Purging. In Job's case, even this "*perfect and upright*" man was made MORE upright or whole through sufferings. So when Job is emptied of self, he then can be filled with God. *Eph 3:19 – filled with all the fullness of God*. And Job was filled with double blessings.

The third thing we learn about El Shaddai is that He is a Sinless God. *Job 5:17 – Blessed is the man whom God corrects, so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty. Job 22:23 – If you return to the Almighty, you will be built up; You will remove iniquity far from your tents*. And since He is a Holy God, a Sufficient God, an All Mighty God - I can be pardoned.

This same El Shaddai in the Old Testament is the same One in the New that *chastens those whom He loves so that they may yield the peaceable fruit of holiness or righteousness. (Heb 12:11)* Through all this we constantly see that the ultimate goal of *El Shaddai* is Love and Mercy. He is the same one who wants us to bring forth fruit – John 15:16. But in order to bring forth fruit, we first must know that – "*without Me you can do nothing (John 15:5)*. We see that *Almighty God (El Shaddai)* speaks to us of the limitless stores of His bounty, of the riches and fullness of His grace in His self-Sacrificing love pouring itself out for others. It tells us that from God comes *every good and perfect gift that He never wearies of pouring His mercies and blessings upon His people. (James 1:17)* From this we can loudly sing "*I stand, I stand in awe of you. Holy God, to whom all praise is due. I stand in awe of you.*"

How much comfort does this bring you? To know we serve One who is completely adequate to meet every need. But we must not forget that; His strength is made perfect in our weakness. His sufficiency is most manifest in our insufficiency. His fullness is revealed in our emptiness. And, when we are filled with His blessings, from us may flow rivers of living water to a thirsty and needy humanity.

QUESTIONS:

1. Since El Shaddai means All Sufficient, does this help us understand 2 Corinthians 12:9-10 better? What does this passage mean?
2. What did the revelation of God as El Shaddai mean to Abraham?
3. If the phrase “I have had sufficient” means that you “have eaten enough and don’t need any more”, what does having a relationship with *El Shaddai* mean to you?
4. Is this “sufficiency” enough for you? Or should it be?
5. In light of all this, what does Philippians 4:13 mean?
6. Abraham tried to help God fulfill His promises and this “help” had disastrous consequences. Do we sometimes try to “help” God out when we pray and we either don’t get the answer we want, or the answer doesn’t come quickly enough?
7. How is Jesus All Sufficient to meet our needs? (John 4:13-14; John 6:32)

The Names of God - Lesson #6

Trusting in **ADONAI**: אֲדֹנָי - He is Your Lord

The Names of God we have studied so far have been;

- *Elohim* – translated “GOD”. His creative power and glory.
- *Jehovah* – translated “LORD”. The God of righteousness, redemption, and love
- *El-Elyon* – translated “God Most High” – He is our Sovereign
- *El-Shaddai* – translated “Almighty God” – He is all I need, He is my Sufficiency

While these names do imply or demand a responsibility on the part of man to conform to the Being in whose image we are made, the *Adonai* makes a definite claim for man’s obedience and service for He is Lord and Master. We studied the meaning of El Shaddai last time because it is easier call Him El Shaddai (that He is all you need) than it is to call Him *Adonai* (your Master). Yet you will never know His sufficiency apart from knowing Him as your Lord and Master.

The name *Adonai* is translated in our Bibles by the word Lord in small letters (as opposed to Jehovah or Yaweh which is translated in all capitals LORD), only the first letter is a capital. The same word is often translated, depending on the context, as Master, Lord, or Owner. When referring to man, it is always in the singular (*adon*), but when used of God it is always in the plural (*Adonai*). The name *Adonai* signified ownership or mastership and indicates that God is the owner and master of all. Consequently He claims the unrestricted obedience of everyone and requires worship. An illustration of this truth is found in *Malachi 1:6* – “A son honors his father, and a servant his master (*adon*): if then I be a father, where is My honor? And if I be a Master (*Adonai*), where is my fear? Says the LORD.” They had dishonored God’s name by not worshipping him acceptably. The priests brought reproach upon His name by failing to acknowledge His ownership of all that exists. Their willingness to offer less than the best in sacrifice to God demonstrates their failure to honor His name and recognize His authority as Most and Owner of all. Job also declares that fear of the Lord (*Adonai* – the Lord and Master) is wisdom.

The first time the name *Adonai* is used in is *Genesis 15:1-2* – *Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.* ²*But Abram said, “O Lord GOD, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?”* Having known victory over his enemies and having understood that El Elyon, the sovereign God, brought about the victory, Abram acknowledges God’s Lordship over him. In *Genesis 14:22*, Abram refers to God as LORD (Jehovah) God Most High (El Elyon). But not until *Genesis 15:2*, does Abram address God as his Master. Abram understood what this meant for he too was a lord and master over his slaves. He understood that Lordship meant

complete possession and complete submission. But in these days the idea of slavery did not have the evil and ugly meaning it has today. In Abrams day the slave, although owned and submissive and belonging to his master, had a much nearer relationship to his master than a hired servant. The slave had the right of the master's protection and help. Psalms brings this idea out – *“Behold, as the eyes of servants look to the hand of their master, as the eyes of a maidservant to the hand of her mistress, so our eyes look to the LORD our God, till he has mercy upon us.”* (Psa 123:2). As his Lord and Master, *Adonai* tells Abram that he is his *“shield and his reward”*. Abram can depend on the faithfulness of the Master. And we can rest in the assurance that He is trustworthy and able to provide for our every need. In these days of anxiety and fear, we need to discover that God is *Adonai*.

In this Genesis account of Abram and *Adonai*, Abram expressed some doubt about the promises of God being fulfilled through his offspring because he said “I am childless”. The Lord takes Abram outside and instructed him to look at the heavens and the stars. God reassures Abram that his descendants will be countless like the stars of the heavens. Then Abram believed the LORD (Yahweh) and it was accounted as righteousness and Abram addresses God as Lord God (*Adonai* Yahweh). In a sense, God is saying to Abram *“Do you think your childlessness presents me with a problem? If you really know who I am, you will have no doubt. Go outside, look up and see the stars. Can you even count the vast number of stars that I have created?”* Of course the answer was “No”. Abram had to realize that the God who created those stars could easily bring children to him.

Another example of the use of *Adonai* as Lord is found in Exodus 4:10-14 when Jehovah tells Moses that he must go to Egypt to deliver Israel. Moses addresses God as Lord (*Adonai*), but the LORD replies back as Jehovah. ¹⁰But Moses said to the LORD, “Oh, my Lord, I am not eloquent, either in the past or since you have spoken to your servant, but I am slow of speech and of tongue.” ¹¹Then the LORD said to him, *“Who has made man’s mouth? Who makes him mute, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the LORD?”* ¹²Now therefore go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall speak.” ¹³But he said, “Oh, my Lord, please send someone else.” ¹⁴Then the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses and he said, *“Is there not Aaron, your brother, the Levite? I know that he can speak well. Behold, he is coming out to meet you, and when he sees you, he will be glad in his heart. Why did Jehovah get angry with Moses?”* Moses was calling Jehovah his Lord and Master, the Owner of his life, but was trying to evade his responsibility of carrying out the will of his rightful Lord. Our Master and Lord never asks us to do what we cannot do. He never requires from us a task that is impossible for us to do. Too many people want to call the Lord their El Shaddai (the All-Sufficient One), they even want to call him their Lord and Master, but just like Moses, they do not want to do what their Master commands. They want to do things “their way”, or what “seems right to them”. Religion today is not filled with the humble service to the Lord, our King and Master, and we are just like the

children of Israel “*in those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in their own eyes*” (Judges 21:25)

- *It is Jehovah, Adonai whose name is so excellent in all the earth, who has put all things under His feet (Psalms 8)*
- *The earth trembles at the presence of the Adonai, its Lord (Psalms 114:7)*
- *Adonai is above all Elohim or gods (Psalms 135:5)*
- *My eyes are upon you, O God, the Adonai (Psalms 141:8)*
- *It is Adonai that is looked to for help against our enemies (Psalms 109:21-28)*

We constantly see *Adonai* in the life of Isaiah the prophet. In Isaiah 6:1-8, when King Uzziah dies, it is the Lord, the *Adonai*, that appears to Isaiah as the true Master, and King. *Adonai* says; “Whom shall I send and who will go for us?” And with the humility of a servant – Isaiah responds “Here I am, send me.” Isaiah is called and commissioned for service by *Adonai*, the Lord who claims obedience and service. Those who know God as *Adonai*, as their Master, their Lord, acknowledge themselves as servants.

The same idea of *Adonai* as Lord is also found throughout the New Testament. As we have seen the slave or servant refers to the one who has bought him as his lord or master. 1 Cor 6:19-20 says “*you were bought with a price*” – if we claim Jesus as our Lord and Master – our *Adonai* – then we no longer belong to ourselves – we belong to *Adonai*. The same idea is found in Romans 12:1; and also in 1 Peter 1:14-15 where Peter tells us that we are “*children of obedience to the one who has called us*”, and then in 2 Peter 2:1 – *He is the Master who bought us*. We see Paul as a humble servant to his Lord, when he was called into *Adonai*’s service immediately responding like Isaiah when he says “*Lord (Master) what will have me to do?*” (Acts 9:6).

So we have learned that our *Adonai*, our Master calls us to service. *Adonai* requires, He demands obedience as a slave must obey his master. But we also learn that, just as in the Old Testament, our Lord and Master gives us the gifts we need to equip us for His service. He made some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, pastors and teachers – He equipped the saints to accomplish His work (Eph 4:11-12). He told Abram “*I am your shield*”, He is our rock, our fortress, and our deliverer. When we are in our Masters service – we can accomplish what He is asking. Paul knew this to be true when the Lord stood by him and said “*Be of good cheer*” (Acts 23:11). Again in 2 Tim 4:17 we read – “*The Lord stood with me and strengthened me*”. *Adonai* said to Abram “*I am your exceeding great reward.*” Frequently *Adonai* is said to be our inheritance, the portion and possession of His people (Num 18:20; Psalms 73:26; 16:5; Ezek 44:27-28). So Christ our Lord gave Himself for us and to us. If we are His, He is ours, and He is ours in proportion as we are His.

It is *Adonai* that strengthens us and delivers us. It is also *Adonai* that expects us to serve Him. He will reward faithfulness and He will punish the lack of faith in His servants. We must make it our aim to “*do always those things that please Him*” (John 8:29). To be a servant of the Lord is the greatest liberty and joy of all. Man needs lordship. We need direction, guidance, and authority. Man was born to worship and to serve. But we cannot have two masters – and we will serve something. We will either choose to serve *Adonai* as our Lord and Master, or we choose to be in bondage to the Devil (Romans 6:16).

Throughout the Bible, we see several characteristics of those that lived with God as their Lord (Master). **First**, we see that they acknowledged themselves as servants, they counted it a privilege to serve the living God. **Second**, they understood that their Master can supply all their needs. And **third**, they realize that they can do whatever God calls them to do. Our goal is to serve in such a way that we hear those glorious words “*Well done, good and faithful servant ... enter into the joy of thy Lord*”.

QUESTIONS:

1. What does it mean to say that GOD is my Lord? (John 12:26)
2. How do we misuse His name today, when we call Him Lord, but want to do things our way?
3. How do we know how and what our Master requires of us? Is this easier said than done? What are some of the challenges to truly living with God as our Lord and Master?
4. What can the people of God do, who really know who God is? (Daniel 11:32b)?
5. What did God tell Abram that showed he was the Master and Owner of all (Gen 15)?
6. How can we dishonor His name in our worship as they did in Malachi 1? What does God say about his name at the end of this chapter?

7. What are three characteristics that we have discussed, of those that live with God as their Master?

8. Read Luke 6:46 and Matthew 7:21-23 – what does Jesus say about being called Lord? When we acknowledge Him as our Lord – what does that mean?

9. Does what I do really matter so long as I acknowledge Him as Lord and tell Him I want His free gift of eternal life? Is this legalism?

10. Read these passages, and describe the Master / Servant relationship
 - Psalms 141:8-10 -
 - Psalm 119:125 -
 - Judges 6:14-16 -
 - Psalms 8:1, 6-18 -
 - Psalms 135:5 -
 - Psalms 136:3 -

The Names of God Lesson #7

Trusting in **JEHOVAH-JIREH**: יהוה יראֵה - God Will Provide

Genesis 22:14 – “Abraham called the name of that place The Lord Will Provide”

The name *Jehovah-Jireh* is one of a number of names compounded with *Jehovah*. *Jehovah* itself, which we have learned, reveals God as the eternal, self-existent One, the God of revelation, the God of moral and spiritual attributes – of righteousness, holiness, love and therefore redemption, the God who stands in a special covenant relationship with Israel in contrast to *Elohim*, the general name of God in relation to all nations.

The name *Jehovah-Jireh* comes from one of the most moving and significant stories in the word of God. The story is found in Genesis 22. It is the story of the last and greatest crises in the life of Abraham. Every event in his life has led up to this supreme hour. Through every joy, every trial, every failure, every success and every blessing, every hope of the promise has prepared Abraham for this moment. The promise had been fulfilled, Isaac has been born, and Abraham settles down to live the rest of his life in peace and joyous anticipation of the larger fulfillment of the promise through the centuries, and its final spiritual fulfillment.

In this story, *Elohim* appears to Abraham with the astounding command to offer up as a sacrifice his only and beloved son Isaac. We can scarcely imagine his feeling and emotion. His deep anguish and perplexity must have been beyond words at this request from the God who had been so good to him. Yet his faith, which was astounding in the first place to believe the promise of descendants, was not sufficient enough for an even more staggering demand. The story is a story of faith and submission and *Jehovah's* gracious provision of a substitute.

On the way to the place of sacrifice Isaac cannot contain his curiosity about the lamb for the burnt offering. *“Behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?”* (*Genesis 22:7*). Abraham's answer is that God will provide Himself a lamb. We see Abraham's faith and his hope when he tells the men to wait for him when he says *“I and the lad will go over there and worship and then come back to you.”* (verse 5). But any hope he held to must have vanished as the knife in his upraised hand is about to descend, that the voice of the angel of *Jehovah* stays his hand and says *“Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son from Me.”* And then Abraham looks about and sees a ram in a thicket caught by its horns, which he offers up instead of his son. It is now that Abraham called the name of that place *“The LORD will provide, as it is said to this day; on the mount of the LORD it shall be provided.”* (Verse 14).

The word “jireh” is a verb of to see, or to be seen. The King James Version says “*Abraham called the name of the place Jehovah-jireh, as it is said to this day, in the mount of the LORD it shall be seen.*” What connection can there be between the word “see” and “provide”. With God, we must remember, that “to see” is also to “foresee”. He knows the end from the beginning. God as *Elohim* is all-knowing, all-wise, and all-powerful. Another word for *seeing* is *vision*, from the Latin word *video* – to see. So we can see with God foreseeing is provision. As the Jehovah of righteousness and holiness, and of love and redemption, having prevision of man’s sin and fall and need, He makes provision for that need. For provision, after all, is merely a compound of two Latin words meaning “*to see beforehand*”. And to “*provide*” is simply the verb and “*prevision*” the noun of seeing beforehand. Thus to God prevision is necessarily followed by provision. All this is certainly expressed in the name *Jehovah-jireh*. Abraham is saying “*In the mount of the LORD, God’s provision shall be seen*”

All this is significant because it is a constant reminder of the great deliverance and wonderful grace of *Jehovah*. In this story you see Abraham in despair at the terrible prospect before him – the overwhelming horror that must have flooded his soul at the thought of plunging the knife into the body of his own son, his only son, the son so longed for, hoped for, prayed for, the child of their old age. What a great and glorious deliverance it was that *Jehovah’s* grace had provided. *Jehovah* said “*seeing you have not withheld your son from me*”. He might have added “*Even as I will not withhold my only and beloved Son as the greatest provision for man’s redemption.*” This is perhaps the main lesson of this story – the deliverance of Isaac through the provision of a substitute.

A second lesson that this name points to lies in the expectation of something yet to come. Notice the text says that not only has the LORD provided (by supplying a ram in place of Isaac), but it says “the LORD *shall* provide.” *Jehovah* is a God who is always providing. The place, Mount Moriah, is known as the place of the LORD’s provision “to this day.” This characteristic of the LORD providing is on-going.

Why did the LORD demand Isaac be sacrificed? This experience had to impress on Abraham the temporary nature of animal sacrifices. That it was impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins (Heb 10:4); that they were only a shadow of something more worthy. Animals cannot take away the sins of me (Isa 40:16). Surely God was teaching Abraham that the only sacrifice acceptable to Him is the one chosen and appointed by Himself. “*With what shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? ⁷ Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?*” (Micah 6:6-7)

It was on Mount Moriah, the mount of the LORD, that grace of God’s provision should be seen or provided. The name Moriah also means the “appearance or provision” of God. It

was this Mount Moriah which later became the site of the Temple and the center of Israel's worship, its sacrificial system. In 2 Chronicles 3:1 – “Then Solomon began to build the house of the LORD at Jerusalem in Mount Moriah ...” It is on this site that his father David built an altar on the threshing floor of Ornan to offer sacrifices to the LORD. David said to Ornan that he wanted to pay full price for the threshing floor because he could not offer to the LORD “*that which costs me nothing.*” So it is on this site David offered sacrifices as a substitute to spare his people. And it is on this site that hundreds and thousands of innocent animals would be killed and shed their blood as a substitute for the sins of the people. In 2 Chronicles 7, after Solomon had finished the temple on the Mount of the LORD, Mount Moriah, they offered 22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep to the LORD as a substitute. And it is because of the LORD's grace as seen in this provision that it is recited “*for His steadfast love endures forever.*” (7:3; 6). And it is this place, on Mount Moriah, where the LORD shall provide, that *Jehovah-jireh* announces that He has “*chosen this place for Myself as a house of sacrifice*”; and it is in “this place” that He says “My name may be there forever. My eyes and My heart will be there for all time.”

The climax of God's grace and provision where Abraham announced that “on this mount of the LORD it shall be seen (or provided), this same Mount Moriah became the site of Calvary and the scene of that grand and awful sacrifice of God's only begotten son, who was put under judgment for sin, and became our Substitute. “for God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son ... (John 3:16). And Paul speaks of God as “He that spared not His own Son but delivered Him up for us all” (Romans 8:32). Again Paul says “Who was delivered up for our trespasses ... (Romans 4:25). And John says again: “In this was manifested the love of God toward us, in that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.” (1 John 4:9).

On Mount Moriah Jehovah was teaching Abraham what He Himself was prepared to provide. “*Does it break your heart, Abraham, to give up, to slay, yes, by your own hand, as an innocent sacrifice, your beloved and only son? Then think of the awful and infinite cost to Me of what I am prepared to do for man.*” The thing that Abraham foreshadowed on Mount Moriah was realized, and accomplished, when God's Son upon the cross cried, “*it is finished.*”

Isaac asks, “*Where is the lamb?*” Abraham answers “*God will provide*”. John the Baptist announces “*Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world.*” (John 1:29) And so we see the dramatic ending to this story when the LORD says to Abraham “*and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice*” Genesis 22:18.

Abraham's obedience unleashed God's blessing in his life. Obedience is the key to faith. James 1:23-25 gives us great detail of the unbreakable bond between faith and doing (obedience). If you want to unleash God's blessings in your life, if you want to discover that God is your Provider, then you must obey.

God is sufficient (El Shaddai) to Provide (*Jehovah-jireh*) our every need and fulfill His every promise if we will only trust and obey. In fact, the LORD has already “provided”, He has “seen” to it that you can be saved. Trust and Obey, for there is no other way.

QUESTIONS:

1. Why is it significant that the name Jehovah is combined with other words that describe God’s character?
2. Why did God ask Abraham to slay his son Isaac?
3. Read Revelation 5:11-13 – and describe the Lamb that God has provided.
4. What was it that the LORD foreknew, and in what did He make provision? (1 Peter 1:18-19)
5. List the four significant events that happened on Mount Moriah (Genesis 22; 1 Chronicles 21:15; 2 Chronicles 3; and Matthew 27:32)
6. Is it only in the death of His Son that the LORD provides for us? (Phil 4:19)

The Names of God, Lesson #8

Trusting in **JEHOVAH-ROPHE: יהוה רופא** - The LORD Heals You
“For I am the LORD who Heals You” Exodus 15:26

The name *JEHOVAH-rophe* means *Jehovah* heals. This is the second compound name of *Jehovah* (the first was *Jehovah-jireh*). It seems there is a progressive revelation of *Jehovah* meeting every need as it arises in the experience of His redeemed people – saving, sustaining, strengthening, sanctifying, and so on. Of course we should not be surprised, for the Apostle Paul tells us that the things that happened to Israel were for a reason – *for our learning, they are examples for us today* (1 Cor. 10:6; 10:11).

The name “*Jehovah-rophe*” occurs in Exodus 15. The children of Israel, after 400 years in Egypt, many of those years as slaves, working in the brick pits to make monuments to Pharaoh, were on their way to the Promise Land. They watched the plagues descend from the LORD on Egypt, until finally the death of the first born of Egypt causes Pharaoh to let the Hebrews go. But soon after, Pharaoh changes his mind and he pursues the Israelites to the borders of the Red Sea. The Children of Israel watch in amazement as the LORD parts the sea and they pass over on dry ground and to safety as the LORD then destroys the Egyptian army as the waters roll back to their place. Israel began to sing praises to the LORD for His deliverance. This song of triumph (Exodus 15) is a glorious song of worship and trust.

*I will sing to the LORD, for He is highly exalted;
The horse and its rider He has hurled into the sea
The LORD is my strength and song;
And He has become my salvation;
This is my God, and I will praise Him;
My father’s God, and I will extol Him.
The LORD is a warrior;
The LORD is His name (vv. 2-3)*

But in this same chapter of praise and triumphant song, is also recorded the first murmurings of discontent and bitterness. They departed from the Red Sea and went into the wilderness of Shur, and went three days and found no water – nothing is more paralyzing than thirst. Their throats were parched; they felt their plight becoming desperate. They forgot the might and mercy of the God who had so marvelously delivered them. In their anxiety and anger they murmured against Moses in bitter complaint. Then they saw Marah in the distance and at first it appeared to offer a solution to their problem. Perhaps they saw the palm trees marking an oasis with its life-giving wells. Their hope was dashed to pieces, though, when they discovered that the wells of Marah contained bitter water. The water could not satisfy their thirst or supply their need for life-giving water (Ex 15:23). Can you see their joy turning to doom, to have hope dashed. They were angry and aggravated. What were they to do? Were they and their children to die there of thirst? The people grumbled at Moses, and Moses cried to the LORD “... and the LORD showed him a tree; and he threw it into the waters, and the waters

became sweet. There He made for them a statue and regulation, and there He tested them. And He said, 'If you will give earnest heed to the voice of the LORD your God, and do what is right in His sight, and give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have put on the Egyptians; for I, the LORD, am your healer.'" (Ex 15:25-26) At this point they discovered that Yahweh (Jehovah) is also Jehovah-rophe, the God who heals. Leaving Marah, they made their way to Elim, where they found twelve springs of fresh water and seventy date palms. God took them from Marah to Elim and gave them an abundant supply of water. The crisis was now passed and they had discovered that the LORD can turn the bitter water into sweet.

The word rophe occurs about sixty or seventy times in the Old Testament and always means "to restore, to heal, or to cure", or a physician. It is used with reference to physical, moral, and spiritual healing as well. Jehovah reveals Himself to be the only real source of wholeness. He alone has the power to change the bitter experiences of life into sweet.

Once again it appears that God has demonstrated the ability to provide for Israel's needs. But in reality that is not what happened. This was not a test to see if Jehovah could take care of them. It was not up to Jehovah to demonstrate anything. Who was being tested at Marah? Often we think that our difficult circumstances put God to the test. The truth is that our circumstances test us. God is the same yesterday, today, and forever. God is never put to the test. He has proved Himself from the beginning. He is the Creator and Lord. He is the Sovereign God of the universe. His nature and character are unchanging. God is not tested by circumstances. Yet God, in conformity with His own character, turns the bitter circumstances of our life into sweet. Notice in verse 25 it says "There He tested them" Their test is the same one we face today. They had to listen to the voice of the Lord, do what was right and obey His commandment. That is the pattern for victory when we face bitter circumstances which might otherwise bring discouragement and disillusionment. Listen to God and obey His commands.

Perhaps the **first lesson** we may draw from this story and from this name, Jehovah-rophe, is **man's need of healing**, of a physician. Throughout the Bible, we see God's power in healing the bodies of men. King Hezekiah was not only healed and saved from death, but granted years to his life.

When you experience the difficult circumstances of life, when you come to a place where disillusionment and bitterness fill the wells of your life, remember that *Jehovah-rophe* can turn them sweet. Your bitter circumstances actually test you and teach you to trust God to meet every need of your life. Romans 8:28 "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose."

So how we should respond when we find ourselves in bitter circumstances? The **second lesson** from this revelation of the name Jehovah-rophe is that **we must listen earnestly to the voice of God**. When we get to Marah, to bitterness, we must tune our ears attentively to voice of the LORD. Ask yourself "What is God saying to me?" "What am I supposed to learn from this bitter experience?"

Our **third lesson** is that **we must do what is right**. In other words, behave righteously. Instead of responding by grumbling and complaining when you find yourself at your Marah, do what is right. You can overcome your circumstances by focusing on the reliability of the nature of God. Because He never changes, you can know that He is loving and trustworthy and will meet your every need.

And our **forth lesson, we must obey God's commands**. When you find yourself with bitter waters, look to see if there are areas of disobedience in your life. Our desire to obey Him emerges from the fact that we know His character. Thus our obedience is the response of joyous confidence. As we shall see, many of our bitter circumstances that we face in life, we bring on ourselves due to sin. Sin always has consequences and they are always bitter. Now I am not saying that all bad things that happen to us are a result of sin. James talks about trials and temptations in the first chapter of his great book. Some trials come on man simply because we walk on this earth and not as a result of sin. But, he clearly points out, that trials can be a source of temptation and can lead us to sin, if we don't **(a)** Listen to God – by believing in Him, **(b)** Do what is right – we cannot blame God, and **(c)** Obey God.

Nothing is more obvious and tragic and costly than the toll which sickness has exacted from human life and happiness. Disease is not respecter of persons – it attacks everyone in all classes, all communities, and all climes. Yes, mankind is physically sick and is in constant need of a physician, for healing. According to both the Old Testament and New Testaments – God is the source of all healing and all comfort (2 Cor 1). How appropriate to the physical needs of men is the name *Jehovah-rophe*!

Yet man's need for moral and spiritual healing is even greater. Sin has ravaged our bodies and society. Isaiah describes the moral and spiritual condition of his own people; *"...The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. ⁶ From the sole of the foot even to the head, there is no soundness in it, but bruises and sores and raw wounds; they are not pressed out or bound up or softened with oil."* (Isa 1:5-6). Isaiah compares Israel to a physical body. There is no part of it which is healthy. Mankind is badly in need of a healer, a physician. The world lies in the bitterness and bond of sin. Without proper treatment, the end result of sin is like the waters of Marah. The end is not sweetness and life but bitterness and death. Isaiah holds out the possibility for healing. The world needs to know that God is a God who heals. He can cure the deep wounds which sin has wrought. He is *Jehovah-rophe*.

Yet with all the bitterness, the antidotes to this poison, the remedy for its sickness, is near, it is at hand. For there at Marah, God performed His miracle of healing by the means of a tree growing nearby. It was the tree of God cast into the waters there that healed and sweetened them. Salvation came from a tree! Do you see where this story obviously points us? Our LORD, Jehovah-rophe, even Jesus, hung on a tree. On the tree He supplied the only remedy for mankind's ills – and which alone can sweeten the bitterness of human experience through that forgiveness of sin. Only because Jesus died on the tree can we drink freely of the water of life which will truly quench our thirst (John 4:13-14). From Jesus flows the "rivers of living water" (John 7:37-38). "God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid; 'For YAH, the LORD, is my strength and song; He also has become my salvation.'" ³ Therefore with joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation." (Isaiah 12:3).

Throughout the Bible we see numerous stories of the LORD's healing. In Numbers 12:13 Moses cried out on behalf of Miriam who had been smitten with leprosy. Naaman's healing of leprosy is one of the most gripping stories in the Bible (2 Kings 5:8-14).

Jeremiah talks about sin and its consequences in terms of an incurable wound, "*There is no one to plead your cause; No healing for your sore, no recovery for you.*" (Jer 30:13). But then the LORD declares "*For I will restore you to health, and I will heal you of your wounds* (30:17).

Satan is always attacking us when things are good, trying to bring bitterness into our lives and circumstances that make us want to murmur and faithlessly complain to God. We forget the great salvation and power of God. We come to our "Marah" in our lives, and we ask God to prove to us all over again how much He loves us. Hasn't He done that already?

And just like the tree was near the waters of Marah, the will and the power, and the longing are near in Jehovah to heal. The only obstacle in the way is man himself. The remedy is there – near at hand – "*the word is very nigh unto you, in your mouth, and in your heart*" (Deut 30:14). And the Psalms are constantly reminding us the nearness of God. "*It is God for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord*" (Psa 73:28).

When Jesus began His earthly ministry, he read from Isaiah "*The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor, He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed, to proclaim the favorable year of the LORD.*" (Luke 4:18-19). We see Him cure the centurion's servant (Luke 7), the demon possessed Gerasenean (Luke 8), and the woman with the issue of blood while He was on His way to heal Jarius' daughter (Luke 8). Jesus was indeed the fulfillment of Jehovah-rophe. He turns bitter lives into sweet.

It is so easy for us to get caught up in the stories of Jesus' physical healing that we miss His clear priority for bringing spiritual healing. Physical healing was only incidental to His chief object, which was the healing of the souls of men. His mission was to preach the Gospel, to preach deliverance, to set men free. In Mark 1:29-38 we see this brought out. Jesus heals Simon's mother-in-law of a fever. This created great interest and the whole city gathered at the door bringing all sorts of sicknesses for Him to heal. But Jesus says "*Let us go somewhere else to the towns nearby, so that I may preach there also; for that is what I came for*" (1:38). Jesus knew that His primary mission was to preach the good news of the deliverance from sin. He focused on spiritual healing for this is the true need of man. When asked why He associated with sinners, He replied "*they that are well do not need a physician, but they that are sick, for I have not come to call the righteous to repentance but the sick.*" (Matt 9:12). Constantly Jesus pleads with us to "*Come unto Me and I will give you rest*" (Matt 11:28). Jesus says "*I can cure your souls.*" The church would do well to remember that evangelism is the focal point of what we do.

QUESTIONS:

1. Read Psalms 147:1-6 and write down what Jehovah-rophe does for you?
2. Does sin have a physical effect as well as spiritual? (Psalms 6:2-4; 38:3). What does sin do to us?
3. How are we healed today? (1 Peter 2:24-25)
4. Does the LORD only heal Spiritual sicknesses? If not, how does He heal today?
5. Do we often take for granted the healing power of God?

Names of God, Lesson #9

Trusting in **JEHOVAH-NISSI**: יהוה נסי "The Lord Our Banner."

Exodus 17:15 – Moses built an altar and named it “The LORD is My Banner”

Trusting in *Jehovah-nissi* gives you confidence in every struggle. Moses discovered the secret of victory when he and the people of Israel were attacked by the Amalekites; “*So Joshua overwhelmed Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.*” (*Exodus 17:13*). Following this victory, God revealed Himself again with a new name, Jehovah-nissi. “*Moses built an altar and named it The LORD is My Banner*” (*Exodus 17:15*). Who can you rely on when you face a spiritual battle with a seemingly insurmountable opposition? Run to *Jehovah-nissi* – He is your victory.

The name *Jehovah-nissi* is only used once in the Old Testament, here in Exodus 17:15. But His work is seen throughout scripture. What did God intend for Moses, the people of Israel, and us today, to know about Himself as *Jehovah-nissi*?

The people of Israel, led by Moses, faced many challenges on their journey from Egypt to the promised land. They were chased by the Egyptians, crossed the Red Sea, experienced hunger and thirst, and quarreled among themselves about whether God was really with them or not (*Exodus 17:7*).

Israel would soon find out that water was the least of their worries. As soon as their thirst was quenched, they were attacked by Amalek – a descendant of Isaac and Esau. Amalek became the persistent and hereditary enemies of Israel, a thorn in the flesh, and a constant menace to their spiritual and national life. Jehovah, through Samuel, commands King Saul to utterly destroy the Amalekites so that there should be no trace of them (1 Sam 15:3). King Saul’s failure to carry out God’s command would lead to his own rejection and death (1 Sam 15:26-28). It is interesting to note that it was an Amalekite that would kill Saul. The sinful thing which Saul had spared now returned to slay him. And it is probable that Haman, who almost accomplished the total destruction of all the Jews, was also a descendant of King Agag of the Amalekites. These evil enemies of God’s people have always been trying to destroy them.

Moses sent Joshua to lead the battle as Moses stood on the top of a hill with the staff of God in his hand. When Moses held up his hands high, Israel prevailed in the battle, but when his hands fell, Amalek would prevail. Then Aaron and Hur helped support Moses’ arms high into the air, and the victory was won.

Jehovah had resolved to “*utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven*” (*Exodus 17:14*). Following the words of the LORD, Moses built an altar and named it “The

LORD is My Banner.” Moses realized God as *Jehovah-nissi*, and it was *Jehovah-nissi* – not Moses, not Joshua, and not the people – who was the real victor in the battle.

A Banner in those days was not a flag or a pennant as we think of them today. A Banner was often a bare pole with a bright shining ornament which glittered in the sun. The word here for banner means to “*glisten*”. It is translated variously as pole, ensign, standard, and among the Jews it is also a word for miracle. As an ensign or standard it was a signal to God’s people to rally to Him. It stood for His cause, His battle. The banner represented deliverance and salvation. When Moses held up his hands, the people of Israel relied on God for their assurance and their victory. The word for banner is the same word used by the psalmist as “*lifted up*” in the expression: “*Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.*”

What does it mean then of Amalek’s success when the banner was lowered, and Israel’s success when it was raised? It was to sharply emphasize and deeply impress upon Israel that upon God alone depended their victory. Under His raised banner victory is always assured. Psalms 60:4-6 gives us a wonderful picture of God’s protection and deliverance under the imagery of a banner: “*Thou has given a banner to those who fear you, that it may be displayed because of truth, that Thy beloved may be delivered, save with Thy right hand, and answer it.*”

As mentioned earlier, throughout scripture we learn the LORD will fight for us, the battle is His, and He is the God of deliverance (Exodus 14:14; Deut. 3:22; 1 Sam 17:47; Psalms 68:20). Jeremiah said that Jehovah was with him like a “dread warrior” (Jer 20:11). David described Jehovah’s response to him when he was in distress as “*his stay*” – a sure sign that the LORD was his banner; “*He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from those who hated me, for they were too mighty for me. They confronted me in the day of my calamity, but the LORD is my stay. He brought me forth also into the broad place; He rescued me, because He delighted in me.*” Psalms 18:6-19)

The next time you are in desperate trouble, call out to Jehovah-nissi and remind yourself of these words of David in Psalm 18! What a victory you will experience with the LORD as your Banner!

What does this story mean to us? What does it tell you about yourself? It tells you that you need someone to fight for you and bring victory in your life. What will the Banner of the LORD look like in your life? Many scholars suggest that Moses’ upraised hands represented prayers and petitions and intercession on behalf of the people of God. David mentions banners in the context of God’s saving strength; “*We will sing for joy over your victory, and in the name of our God we will set up our banners. May the LORD fulfill all your petitions. Now I know that the LORD saves His anointed; He will answer him from His holy heaven with the saving strength of His right hand. Some boast in chariots and some in horses, but we will boast in the name of the LORD, our God (Psalms 20:5-7).*

Just as Israel rallied around the banner of the LORD and assured a victory, so we too can trust in Jesus as our victory. *“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might” (Eph 6:10)*. Just like Israel, we are under attack (Eph 6:11; 1 John 2:14-15), but we cannot look to ourselves for the victory we must look to Him for “you are of God, and greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world” (1 John 4:4). And what better Banner for us to rally around, than to know His love – “His banner of me is love” (Song of Solomon 2:4). We must never forget that our enemy cannot defeat us for *“we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.”* (Romans 8:37).

The Amalekites are very much like our enemy – Satan. Remember the words of Moses as he warns Israel concerning God’s laws and the consequences of disobedience? He used the memory of the Amalekites and their attempt to destroy Israel to insist that the people must completely do away with sin. *“Remember what Amalek did to you along the way when you came out from Egypt, how he met you along the way and attacked among you all the stragglers at your rear when you were faint and weary; and he did not fear God”* (Deut 25:17-18). The strategy of Amalek is like that of the devil. *“Your adversary the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour”* (1 Peter 5:8b).

One of the most famous banners in the Old Testament is found in Numbers 21:8-9. Israel was wondering in the wilderness and complained to the LORD. The LORD made poisonous snakes to bite many of the people and they died. They cried out to Moses to intercede for them. So the LORD told Moses to set a *“fiery serpent”* (or bronze) on a standard (banner), and if anyone was bitten by a snake, they would only have to look upon the banner and they would live. What an image – a serpent on a stick. We know that a mere bronze serpent stuck on a pole has no power to bring healing. The healing was from the LORD. The people would have surely died if the LORD did not intervene. But the people had to adhere to the conditions that were set forth by the LORD. God sent the means by which they could live, the people had to meet the conditions.

Jesus uses this same story to refer to Himself when he talked with Nicodemus in John 3. He compared this Old Testament even to His coming crucifixion. *“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whoever believes may in Him have eternal life.”* (John 3:14-15).

Here is the point. Because of their sin, Israel needed salvation from the deadly snake bites, and God commanded Moses to put a bronze snake on a staff. Mankind needs to be delivered from the curse of sin, and God placed a sin offering of His own on a staff – His Son, Jesus Christ, who was lifted up on a cross. (see 2 Cor 5:21 and Isaiah 53:4-5).

What banner do you carry? Is *Jehovah-nissi* your Banner? Or do you carry the banner of self, believing you are the only one to fight the battle? Or do you carry the banner of money, believing if only you could earn a little more money, you could win your war? Or is

your banner the banner of position, believing if only you could have the perfect job, your problems, whatever they may be, will be solved? The bad news is – if you hold any of these banners up – you will fail. The good news is – there is a banner for you to rally around that will give you victory – That Banner is Jesus Christ – your Jehovah-nissi.

QUESTIONS:

1. Describe the banner that Moses held up? Exodus 17:9

2. Why is it called the “staff of God”? What was it used for prior to this story?

3. What kind of banner do we rally around today?

4. In light of this study, look at song 671 in our song books “There’s a Royal Banner” and write what this song means to you.

5. Songs are a beautiful way to praise God for all He has done for us. Another song that deals with this same concept is #396 “Lift Him Up”. Again, write down what this song now means to you.

6. What other songs do we sing that speak of Jehovah our Banner?

The Names of God - Lesson #10

Trusting in **JEHOVAH-M'KADES**: יהוה קדש - The LORD Who Sanctifies You

The name *Jehovah-M'Kaddesh (Mekaddesh)* is found in *Leviticus 20:7-8* – *Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am the LORD your God. And you shall keep My statutes, and perform them: I am the LORD who sanctifies you.* We don't talk much about holiness anymore. Yet God commands Israel to be holy – frequently. And holiness is not an idea confined to passages in the Old Testament. Peter quotes *Leviticus 11:44* as he calls his readers to a radical lifestyle that is fitting for their calling. He tells them they can no longer live their former way of living but must conform; *“but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written “You shall be Holy, for I am Holy” (1 Peter 1:15-16)*

As we have stated, the order in which the *LORD* reveals His various names is highly suggestive and shows both purpose and progression. It appears the *LORD* reveals a little more each time to meet the developing spiritual life and needs of the people. Over and over we will find in our lives that God reveals more and more to us as we come to know Him more and more.

So far we have studied; *Elohim* – the Creator, who is over all the earth. In the name *El Elyon*, we discovered our Sovereign and King, and the wonderful truth that God, and He is the Possessor of heaven and earth. In the name *Jehovah (Yahweh)*, we found that He is the absolutely self-existent One, who established a covenant with His people to allow them to know Him in a personal relationship. We learned that, as *El Shaddai*, He is God Almighty to nourish, Who can provide for all of our needs. We learned that He is *Adonai*, the Lord and Master of all, and that we are to live in joyful submission to Him. In *Jehovah-jireh* we found our Provider, who desires to release His blessings in our life. As Israel journeyed through the wilderness they discovered God to be *Jehovah-ropha*, the God who turns bitter to sweet, providing healing for life. And we are called to rally around *Jehovah-nissi* – the LORD is my Banner who gives us victory in life.

At this point in the life of the nation, Israel is a redeemed people. They have been taken from Egyptian captivity and are being prepared to inhabit the Promised Land. How are they supposed to live? What is their relationship to God supposed to be? How will they maintain their distinctive qualities as a people when they are surrounded by pagans? To answer these questions, God gives us the book of Leviticus. If Genesis is the book of beginnings, and Exodus the book of redemption, then Leviticus has been called the Book of Life. It is about the walk and worship of the redeemed people. Sanctification is the appropriate and very important

theme of Leviticus. Holiness could not be presented properly until redemption was fully accomplished. The first mentioned of sanctification is at the completion of creation, when God sanctified the Sabbath day (*Gen 2:3*). But that day's rest was broken by the entrance of sin, and its privilege lost. The word sanctify is not mentioned again until *Exodus 13:1-2* when Jehovah commanded Moses to "*Sanctify unto me all the first-born ... among the children of Israel*". The point is sanctification could not be resumed until the sin that broke the relationship with the LORD and destroyed the holiness of the creation was dealt with through redemption. Leviticus therefore sets forth that holy way in which a people already redeemed should walk worthy of their calling (*Eph 4:1*). The name *Jehovah-M'kaddesh* – the LORD who sanctifies you, appears six times in two chapters.

The term sanctify is also translated as dedicate, consecrate, sanctuary, hallow, and holy. Its primary meaning, however is to set apart or separate. These various forms appear roughly 700 times in the Old Testament. This attribute or name of God (*Jehovah-M'kaddesh*) is one of the most important for it truly expresses the character of Jehovah and His requirements of His people. If we look at the immediate context of Leviticus 20 we will find prohibitions against turning to mediums, cursing one's parents, and various sexual sins. The positive antidote against such defiling behavior is to keep the statutes of God and to practice them in everyday life.

The idea of setting apart is applied to people, places, and things in scripture. For example, the Sabbath was sanctified by God (*Gen 2:3; Ex 20:8, 11*) and was to be set apart from other days, it was to be a different day. Certain feasts were to be set apart and celebrated as holy by the people (*Lev 23*). The wonderful year of Jubilee which was ushered in with great blowing of trumpets and proclaimed a new beginning of redemption and liberty was also sanctified or set apart (*Lev 25:10*). With regard to places, the camp of Israel, hill of Zion, the city of Jerusalem, and the temple (just to name a few) were also set apart. Certain individuals were also set apart for God's service – such as Jeremiah (*Jer 1:5*), the first-born of Israel (*Ex 13:2*), and the high priest (*Ex 28:36*). And not only the priesthood, but all the people that called themselves His children were sanctified or set apart to Jehovah (*Deut 7:6*).

The point involved in all these instances of how this word is used is contact with God. The Sabbath was holy because God rested in it. The mountain of the LORD was holy because God would dwell there (*Zech 8:3*), and the sanctuary was also the dwelling place of God. So naturally, if all things that come in contact with the LORD must be holy, then especially the people must be holy and set apart for Him!

When we think of the various attributes of *Jehovah* we often think that His love is the foundation upon which all the other characteristics rest. But it is His holiness that is fundamental. When John says that "*God is love*" he speaks of the sacrificing, redeeming love

of God. He speaks of those things He has done for us that make us fit to be in His holy presence. Clearly, when we understand the holiness of God, then we can truly understand all the other attributes of Him. Why did He create us? Why does He lead us as our Sovereign? Why does He provide for us? Why should we live as He is our Master? Why does He nourish us and give us all that we need? Why does He heal us, and why does He give us victory? It is because He is *Jehovah* and wants us to have a personal relationship with Him. But because He is Holy and only comes in contact with those things, places, and people that are holy – everything He does for us is to make us fit, or holy to come to Him. It is against His holiness that all of us have sinned (*Romans 3:23*). The key verse is Leviticus, which teaches us how we may approach a holy God and walk in a manner approved of Him is “*For I Jehovah your God am holy*”. The God we serve is “*of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on wickedness*” (*Hab 1:13*), holy and reverend is His name (*Psalms 111:9; Luke 1:49*).

So it is through His holiness that we see the attributes of Love and Redemption. Please read *Psalms 27* and notice the following; David recognizes *Jehovah* as his light, salvation, and strength. In times of trouble he has no need to be afraid because He knows the LORD is his help, and salvation. David outlines for us his heart’s desire is to behold the beauty of the LORD. He dedicates his life to the LORD and is constantly “*seeking His face*” and earnestly desires to have the LORD “*teach me Your way*”. And where does David seek these things? It is in His temple, the place of His holy presence, that David knows he can find the beauty of *Jehovah* (*27:4*). We too must seek God’s holiness on His grounds, and on His terms. We cannot obtain holiness without him. And when we seek His holiness we will find His love, His strength, His light, His salvation, and His beauty, for the beauty of God is seen in His holiness.

The LORD is holy, He is separate. “*Jehovah, He is God; there is none else beside Him (Deut 4:35)*. “*I am the first and the last, and beside me there is not God (Isaiah 44:6)*. “*There is none holy as Jehovah for there is none beside you*” (*1 Sam 2:2*). And the only way we can have that relationship with Him that He desires – is to be holy as He is holy.

It is right here, that many give up. We read such things as “*You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment.*” (*Matthew 5:21-22*) Or, “*You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.*” (*Matthew 5:38-39*) And the list goes on. “*Don't worry*”, “*don't judge*”, “*don't store up treasures for yourselves on earth*”...We looked on the list in despair. When we give up, we fail to see His glory, His holiness, and His beauty. “*Let the beauty of Jehovah our God be upon us*” (*Psalms 90:17*). It is the desire to know him and to trust in His promises that makes us “*partakers of the divine nature*” (*2 Peter 1:4*), and causes us to “*put on the new man which was created according to God, in righteousness and true holiness*” (*Eph 4:24*).

A holy God demands a holy people. The people He has chosen (the church) must also be separate from evil and be separated to the purposes for which He chose them. This first demand is that we serve no other gods but *Jehovah* for people become like the gods they serve. We are to be apart, separated from other people in order to avoid corruption. Being set apart makes us the best possible instrument for God's purpose. But even in the best of circumstances and surroundings, we fail. We realize that apart from God there is no hope of redemption and holiness. And therein lays the hope of holiness. Rather than give up and say "*I can never be holy*", we need to trust and hope in God. He is holy and as part of His holiness he has prepared a plan wherein we can be holy. When you decide to be a member of His church, to be called a "*child of God*", and have met the conditions of that salvation: **(1)** You have heard the gospel of Jesus Christ, **(2)** You have believed with all your heart that He is the Son of God, and you trust Him to be your Lord (Adonai), **(3)** You repent of your sins and have decided to turn your life around, to put off the old man and put on the new man, knowing that you can no longer live a worldly, selfish life, **(4)** You have confessed with your heart and your mouth, openly and publically that you believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that confession governs your entire life; what you say, what you do, what you think, and how you feel, and **(5)** You have put on Christ in baptism, coming in contact with His saving blood. When you have done all this, you have made the decision to be holy. Will you be perfectly holy? Will you always be a model of patience and kindness, and forbearance, and love, and courage, and righteousness, and self-control, and perseverance? No you will not! Does this mean you bounce in and out of holiness? No! The LORD wants you to be like the woman who anointed Him and *Mark 14:8* – "*Leave her alone, she has done what she could*". The Lord wants you and me to do what we can. Just like Paul told Timothy to "*flee these things (greediness and all kinds of evil) and to PURSUE righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, and gentleness (1 Timothy 6:11)* And Peter exhorts us to be DILIGENT in our efforts to add to our *Faith, Virtue, and knowledge, and self-control, and perseverance, and godliness, and brotherly -kindness and love. (2 Peter 1:5-7)*. These are characteristics of holiness that we are to pursue with diligence. Do we ever really get there – perfectly? No. But we never stop trying. And when we fail, we humbly approach our Holy Father and ask Him to forgive us and to help us toward more holiness.

You see to be sanctified or separated means more than just having a relationship with *Jehovah*, it also means that we participate with His nature, His character, and His works. The word holy, while primarily means "set apart" has come to represent moral and spiritual qualities. To be holy is not merely a list of things to be avoided or things that are negative. Being holy is also positive and active. The people of God must be holy in practice as well as separated in position. One is meaningless without the other. Holiness is an act on *Jehovah's* part to set us apart, He has sanctified us. But we must practice holiness and work out that act for ourselves. Notice back in *Leviticus* where He says "I am *Jehovah* which sanctifies you." In the preceding verse, however, He says "*Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be holy*" (*Lev 20:7*).

God has made us creatures of free will. He commands us to be holy but He will not force us to do so. He placed within us, on the basis of redemption, the power to be holy, and provides us an incentive to holiness, but man must of his own free will exercise that provision and power. Therefore holiness is a process and not an act accomplished once for all.

The New Testament is full of references to holiness. In all cases – this holiness is based on the redemptive work of Jesus and His everlasting love for us.

- Eph 1:4 – we have been chosen before the foundation of the world to be holy
- 2 Tim 1:9 – who saved us and called us with a holy calling
- Heb 10:10 – we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ.
- Heb 13:12 – that He might sanctify the people with His own blood
- John 17:17 – Sanctify them through your truth, your word is truth

Lessons:

1. The holiness of God demands our separation from sin – Just like Israel was not to copy what was done in Egypt or copy what was done in Canaan. They were to do what Jehovah-M'Kaddesh said (Lev 18:2-5). We are not to copy the standards of the world. We are to reflect the character of the God we serve. Why was Israel to leave a portion of the grain during harvest for the poor? Because that act of care and concern reflects the God they serve. We are to care, because God cares through us (read Leviticus 19 and see if you agree). When God reveals that He is Jehovah-M'Kaddesh, the God who sanctifies, He declares that the people He has redeemed will separate themselves from sin because they bear His nature. To live according to the standards of the world would profane His holy name.
2. Holiness means our separation of His service – As we said earlier, we must be separated “*from*” so that we can be separated “*to*”. As Paul has said to the Romans – we are dead to sin, but alive to God (Romans 6:12-13). We are saved from our sins so that we can serve the living God. Christianity is not a spectator sport. We cannot call ourselves Christians and not be dedicated to the service of God with our time, and our talents.
3. God's forgiveness is not a spiritual band-aid. You cannot be holy and claim God's forgiveness without any clear intention of turning away from sin.
4. Holiness is not measured by what other people are doing (or not doing).

How do we grow in a Holy lifestyle? (Read 1 Peter 1)

1. Prepare you mind for activity - we must gird up our minds –dwell on spiritual things. (Read Phil 4:8).
2. Put aside those things that quench your appetite for God's word – Peter says to put aside all malice and guile and hypocrisy and envy and slander – long for the pure milk of the word (1 Peter 2:1-2)
3. Develop an appetite for the Word of God – Long for the pure milk of the word, that you may grow in respect to salvation. You cannot live holy and live apart from the word of God.

QUESTIONS:

1. Does the command to be holy scare you a little? Why? How do we overcome this fear?
2. How does the LORD sanctify us?
3. Look at songs “Take Time to be Holy” and “More Holiness Give Me” – what help do these songs give you?

The Names of God - Lesson #11

Trusting In JEHOVAH-SHALOM: יהוה שלום "The Lord Our Peace"

Judges 6:24 – “So Gideon built an altar to the LORD, and called it The-LORD-Is Peace.”

Two-hundred years had past since God revealed Himself as *Jehovah-M’Kaddesh* who had sanctified His people to His cause (we will study this name in a later lesson). The land had been conquered and divided among the tribes, but Israel had not achieved national unity. There was no central government. “*Every man did that which was right in his own eyes.*” For after Joshua died Israel began to forget Jehovah their God and turn to the gods of the people around them.

A new generation arose which forgot *Jehovah-jireh* – who had provided redemption from bondage in Egypt through the lamb and by great and mighty wonders had led them out. They were no longer mindful of *Jehovah-rophe* who had healed them from their sicknesses and sorrows. They suffered defeats because they turned their backs on Him who was *Jehovah-nissi*, their Banner of victory in trial and struggle. Israel abandoned their LORD and corrupted themselves with idolatries and abominations. Thus they lost their purity, peace, prosperity, and liberty.

Time and time again Israel moves in to this downward spiral when they forget that they were set apart to Jehovah’s service and purpose. Because they failed to completely drive out the inhabitants of the land, they would be constantly surrounded by temptations to leave Jehovah and trust in something they could see, and touch. In spite of all the wondrous things He had done for them – they always seemed to forget.

The cause seems to be bound in *Judges 2:10* – “*and there arose another generation after them who did not know the LORD or work that He had done for Israel.*” Parents stopped telling their children about the LORD! The bed time stories, the prayers, and daily devotions were lost to the children. That is why we have entered this series of lessons – so that we may come to know and trust in Jehovah and that we might teach them to our children to know Him and all the wondrous works He has done!

Israel seemed content to live, to multiply, and to inherit the land. This is the same error that many make today. It is not difficult to understand how the Israelites, with no sense of spiritual purpose, could be attracted to the grossly materialistic gods of the heathen around them. We too, when we adopt the worlds philosophy of eating, drinking, and merriment are attracted to the heathen gods that surround us today. With no sense of mission there was no common

purpose uniting the people. Without being spiritual minded – they were easy prey to the devil and the fleshly appetites of the body that the heathen gods seemed to satisfy.

Each time they forsook *Jehovah*, He brought punishment and misery to chasten the people to wake up to their spiritual calling. Repentance brought deliverance through judges. Israel had to learn that without obedience, they had no right to the land or the fruit that it bore. Because of their idolatry, Jehovah would send the nations around them to punish them. The enemy they should have completely subdued now subdued them. They swept over the land reaping what Israel had sown, and drove them into the caves and rocks to hide. It was a period of alternating prosperity and adversity, of sinning and repenting, of slavery and deliverance.

Gideon was a young man in a time of severe oppression by the Midianites. The oppression was for seven years, and Israel had to live in the mountains. Midian and her allies, including the Amalekites, would come with great hordes of men and cattle and would eat up the land, destroying what they could not devour and leave nothing for Israel. Gideon was threshing a little wheat that he somehow saved in the secrecy of the winepress. It was here that an angel of Jehovah appeared to him with a promise of deliverance in response to Israel's cry.

Gideon is told that "*the LORD is with you*". But Gideon replies "*if the LORD is with us, why has all this happened to us?*" It seems that even Gideon failed to see the link between Israel's idolatry and her punishment. After some doubt, hesitation, and reassurance he accepted the promise and the challenge. In faith he built an altar which he called *Jehovah-shalom*, in confident anticipation of victory and peace.

The word "**SHALOM**" is most significant. Its various meanings harmonize with the doctrine of atonement as the basis of peace with God. Sometimes it is translated as "**whole**" as in Deuteronomy 27:6 – "*You shall build an altar to the LORD your God of whole stones.*" It is translated as "**finished**" or "brought to an end" in Daniel 5:26 – "*God has numbered the days of your kingdom and brought it to an end.*" Solomon "**finished**" the temple (1 Kings 9:25). In Genesis 15:16 "*shalom*" is translated as "**full**" or "**complete**" – "*the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.*" Other uses of this wonderful word "*shalom*" are in the sense of to "**make good**" referring to making good or paying back a loss. Thus it is translated as "**restitution**" or "**repay**" (Exodus 21:34; 22:5-6). In a physical sense it is translated as "**welfare**" and "**well**" as in Genesis 43:27 when Joseph inquires concerning the welfare of his brothers and his father (see also 2 Samuel 20:9). It is quite frequently used as "**render**" and "**pay**" or "**perform**" in the sense of fulfilling or completing obligations. Psalms 50:14 – "*Pay your vows to the Most High*" (see also Deut 23:21). In opposition to this we see that the "*wicked borrows and does not pay back again*". It is translated "**requite**" and "**recompense**" in a few cases as in Deuteronomy 32:35 as Jehovah says He is the one who deals justly and makes right. About twenty times it is translated as "**perfect**" as when Solomon completed the house of the LORD "*Let your heart*

therefore be perfect with Jehovah our God." (1 Kings 8:61; cf 1 Chron 29:19). Solomon is saying that they should be in wholeness or in harmony with God. And this is the basic idea underlying all the various translations of this one Hebrew word – a harmony of relationship or reconciliation based upon the completion of a transaction, the payment of a debt, the giving of satisfaction. Therefore this word is most often and most appropriately translated "**peace**" some 170 times. This word expresses the deepest desire of the human heart. It represented the greatest measure of contentment and satisfaction in life (1 Kings 4:25; Jeremiah 23:6). One of the greatest names of the Messiah was to be the "*Prince of Peace*" (Isaiah 9:6), and Jerusalem, where the Messiah would "*finish*", "*make good*", "*pay*", "*complete*", "*perfect*" and restore "*peace*" with Jehovah, means the "*City of peace*" or "*possession of peace.*"

Finally, it is also the word used in "**peace offering**". The peace offering was one of the blood sacrifices of which the shed blood was the atonement, the price that must be paid in order to have reconciliation and peace with Jehovah (Leviticus 3; 7:11-21).

All these different meanings contained in this word indicate that every blessing, temporal, and spiritual, is included in restoring man to that peace with God which was lost by the fall.

Jehovah is the source of all peace. He is grieved at the sin and corruption of the world that He created and had pronounced as "*very good*". Our hope and assurance of having the peace that "*surpasses all understanding*", is based on the fact that He is the source and giver of peace. And this peace is ours if we will listen to his voice (Isaiah 48:18; Lev 26:3,6). "*The Lord will bless his people with peace*" (Psalms 29:11); "*The LORD bless you and keep you, the LORD make His face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.*" (Numbers 6:24-26).

It is *Jehovah-shalom* that appears to Gideon through His angel (although it appears from verses 22-23 that Jehovah was directly in contact with Gideon). Over and over we read in Judges where the land has "rest" for a while. Israel never obtained the complete rest they desired for they failed to obey the LORD. It is because of this disobedience that we read of the chaotic restlessness in the book of Judges.

When the angel of Jehovah comes to Gideon saying "*Jehovah is with you*" (6:12), Gideon replies "*If Jehovah is with us, when has all this happened to us?*" Israel knew no peace because it no longer knew God's presence. The LORD is always with those, who are with Him. "*Jehovah is with you, while you are with Him. If you seek Him, He will be found by you, but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you.*" (2 Chron 15:2). There is never any peace to the wicked (Isa 59:7-8; 57:20-21). Please remember, in biblical terms the "*wicked*" are not pedophiles, and murderers – but those who do not listen and obey God's voice. Gideon is told to be at peace and he immediately builds an Altar there to the LORD and calls it Jehovah-

shalom – the LORD is Peace. He then follows the angel’s instructions and he offers a sacrifice on the altar – peace, or reconciliation with God can only occur when the price for sin has been paid (peace).

It is in the New Testament that *Jehovah-shalom* is fully realized. The attribute of peace is frequently applied to God as the “God of peace” (Romans 15:33; 2 Corinthians 13:11; Hebrews 13:20, etc). It is also applied to the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus embodies peace and speaks of “*My peace*” (John 14:27), and He speaks of Himself as the Giver of peace (John 16:33) because He came to bear my sin, my grief, and my sorrow (Isaiah 53:4), and all who come to Him will find “rest” (Matthew 11:28-29). He is the Prince of Peace promised in the Old Testament (Isaiah 9:6), and Zachariah announced that He has come “*to guide our feet into the way of peace.*” (Luke 1:78-79). When He was born a host Angels said “peace of earth” (Luke 2:14).

Jesus came and preached peace (Ephesians 2:17). He healed and comforted by saying “*Go in peace*”. And He accomplished that peace for us for now we can “*be justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ*” (Romans 15:1). Through His death, and blood He paid the price so that we can be reconciled to God and have peace (Romans 5:1; 2 Corinthians 5:19’ Colossians 1:20).

Here is the key to peace and it goes back to our purpose for this study. Our measure of peace is based on our measure of trust and obedience to Jehovah. Read Philippians 4:6-9 – “⁴Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. ⁵Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; ⁶do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

⁸Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. ⁹What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.”

Are you prone to worry and restlessness – trust in God and have peace. Colossians 3:15 tells us to let the peace of God rule in our hearts. And let us not be like the children of Israel who were materialistic and fell in to the temptations of the nations around them, but let us be spiritually minded and have peace (Romans 8:6).

The old saying “***Know Jesus – Know Peace / No Jesus – No Peace***” is still true and will always be true.

QUESTIONS:

1. What is “righteousness” and how can that lead to peace? (Isaiah 32:17)
2. In light of all the various meanings of “shalom” that we discussed in this lesson, what does it mean that Jesus “peace be to you” when He was raised from the dead, and Peter’s first sermon to the Gentiles that he “preached the peace of Jesus Christ” (Acts 10:36)?
3. What is it about man that makes us crave peace? What is mankind’s relationship to God?

The Names of God, Lesson #12

Trusting in *JEHOVAH-ROHI*: יהוה רעה - The LORD is My Shepherd.

23rd Psalm

The name *Jehovah-rohi* means Jehovah my shepherd. It is that most precious designation of Jehovah which begins the Twenty-third Psalm. This is perhaps one of the best known passages of scripture in the bible. It is a passage that brings great comfort in troubled times. In times of sorrow, discouragement, and apprehension, perhaps more comfort is gained from this passage than any other. It reveals to us much about God's character, and many on his attributes. It also reveals to us what our relationship and our attitude should be toward Him. It speaks of many things; How much do you trust in God? Are you content? Do you really take comfort in knowing that God is your Shepherd? Are you always afraid, worried, or fretful? Do you rely on Him.

We are going to explore the riches found in this name and in this passage. I hope to discover the deep, abiding comfort and joy you can have or should have if you are a Christian, one of the Lord's sheep.

WHO IS DAVID TALKING ABOUT? Parents can comfort their children in a storm or Counselors can comfort you during the "storms of life" but you need a God who stills the storm. Friends can hold your hands when you are sick – But you need a God who defeated the grave. Philosophers can debate the meaning of life, but you need a Lord who can declare the meaning of life.

YOU NEED JEHOVAH – YOU NEED A SHEPHERD. Our view of Christ is often too small, and too cramped to really appreciate Him, much less give him the authority, control and outright ownership of our lives.

THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD. He did not say; “The Lord is **THE** Shepherd” He did not say; “The Lord is **A** Shepherd.” He said that the Lord was “his”, “**MY**”. The relationship with the Lord is a personal one. It means I belong to him - He bought me. 1 *Cor 7:23* - *You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men.*

This simple statement; that God thinks I am special, worthy to be one of His. This thought alone should stir my spirit. It is no accident that the image of sheep is found throughout the bible. Sheep depend on their master. Without them they would die. With a good shepherd they not only live, but flourish!! And Jesus is our Good Shepherd. He loves us, He cares for us. And He died for Us as the Good Shepherd would. *John 10:14-15* – “*I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own. ¹⁵As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.*”

The tragic truth is that many people claim that Jesus is their Shepherd, but they have never come under His direction. Sheep must follow the shepherd to live. It seems that many feel that as long as they claim they love Jesus, the Good Shepherd, that they will enjoy the benefits of His care and management without giving up their own fickle and foolish way of life.

You have to follow the shepherd. This is a most serious and sobering thought and it ought to make us evaluate our lives, our hearts, our motives, and our relationship with *Jehovah-rohi*. Do I really belong to Him? Do I respond to His authority and acknowledge His ownership? Do I sense deep contentment because I am under His direction? Do I know rest and have peace, and a sense of belonging to Him? The word “shepherd” carries with it thoughts of tenderness, security, and provision, yet it means nothing if I can’t say “*The Lord is MY Shepherd*”

“I SHALL NOT WANT” – *not lacking, content.* This is the sentiment of the sheep utterly satisfied with its owner, perfectly content with its lot in life. In *Phil 4:19* we learn that the LORD will- “*Supply our needs*”. In the 23rd Psalm, David is not saying that the LORD’s sheep will never have any need. David means that “*I shall not lack the expert care of my master.*” The shepherd provides and gives his sheep exactly what they need, they often have to go places (like the *valley of death*) or do things they do not want to do (move from

one pasture to the next) but they trust in their master. They know if they follow him, and trust him, and obey him, that they will not be in want of anything. If we follow Jesus, we not only have life, but abundant life (*John 10:10*). Also in *Deut 2:7 – these 40 years the Lord your God has been with you and you have lacked nothing*.

When we say we are completely satisfied we are saying that “*What I have in God is greater than what I don’t have in life!* If you have The Shepherd – you have grace for every sin, direction for every turn, a candle for every corner, and an anchor for every storm. **YOU HAVE EVERYTHING YOU NEED.**

HE MAKETH ME TO LIE DOWN IN GREEN PASTURES. This picture is one of rest and contentment. Few Things are more relaxing than to be in a quiet, still, lush, green, meadow. See *Matt 11:28 - Come unto me and I will give you rest*. It is impossible to get sheep to lie down and rest unless four requirements are met; they must be free from fear, tension, aggravation, and hunger. It is interesting to know that it is only the shepherd that can provide the proper environment for this rest. The sheep cannot find safe pasture on their own, nor can they spray insecticide, deal with friction, or find food. **THEY NEED HELP.** They need a shepherd to “*lead them*” and help them “*lie down in green pastures*”. Without a shepherd they cannot rest. Any flock that is restless, discontented, agitated, and disturbed never does well. And the same is true with us – if we surround ourselves with turmoil – we cannot rest and we will not be productive for our Shepherd.

Nothing puts sheep more at ease than to see their shepherd standing nearby. If they are afraid - they look to their shepherd and they relax. If they are fighting among themselves - The shepherd’s presence quickly ends the struggle. When they focus on their master, they forget their foolish fight (*Heb 12:1-2 – looking to Jesus*). When we get impatient with each other, when we feel slighted, when we think we can do it better – keep your eyes on Jesus. After the shepherd takes these steps the sheep relax, they lay down and they rest.

Note the two pronouns preceding the two verbs. **HE makes me.... HE leads me....** Who is the active one? Who is in charge? – **THE SHEPHERD.** The shepherd selects the trail, and prepares the pastures. The sheep’s job, our job, is to watch the Shepherd. With our eyes on the Shepherd, we’ll be able to get some rest. **Isa 26:3 – You will keep him in**

perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You. For you to be healthy, you must rest – slow down and God will heal you. Find some quiet time (especially when you don't think you have time) and He will give you rest. He will bring rest to your mind, to your body, and most of all to your soul. He will lead you to green pastures. And this is all accomplished because of the presence of the shepherd.

“HE LEADETH ME BESIDE THE STILL WATERS”. Again, please note that He LEADS me. He isn't pushing, He isn't yelling. The Shepherd is ahead of me, bidding me to “COME”. He is in front, clearing a path, cutting the brush, showing the way. As we look at this we will find that the sheep can only find this water because the shepherd knows where the best drinking places are. Jesus has provided this water; *John 4: 13-14 - Shall never thirst again.* To Drink - simply means to take-in, to accept, or to believe. Amid all this chaos in our society, *Jehovah-rohi* quietly invites us to come to Him, to trust Him and we will be satisfied. Nothing else will quench our thirst.

“HE RESTORETH MY SOUL”. Why would David say this “*He restores my soul*”? Jesus did not promise us a life free from trouble and trial. Take a look at *Psa 42:6, 11 - Why are thou cast down oh my soul,...Hope in God.* David was rebuking himself for being cast down, and he encouraged himself to have hope and trust in God to be RESTORED BY GOD. When David said “*Cast down*” he was speaking of a particular condition that sheep often get themselves in, where they need to be restored – put back on their feet. To be “*cast*” is a situation where a sheep has turned over on its back and cannot get back up again. If the shepherd does not arrive soon the sheep will die. Here is how it happens; A heavy fat sheep will lie down comfortably in some little hollow or depression in the ground. It will roll on its side to stretch its legs, but then gravity shifts and it turns on its back. Or the wool on the animal becomes so long and heavy and filled with debris that this additional weight is enough to “*cast*” the animal when they lie down to rest. In either case the shepherd must keep a watchful eye on his flock to rescue any “*cast*” sheep. In the same way the Lord will come quickly and restore us if we find ourselves “*cast*” down. *Psalm 56:13 - Wilt not thou deliver me feet from falling.* Christians on occasion find themselves “*cast*” down – with trials, burdens, and temptations. God will restore us; He will put us back on our feet.

How can we avoid being “cast”? First, you must allow the Lord to Sheer You – this is the discipline of the Lord (*Heb 12:6*). Allow the Lord to strip you of all the weight, the entanglements of this world. *1 Peter 5:6 – Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord and He will lift you up.* Have the faith in God that He knows what He is doing. Focus on His Word - *Psa 19:7 – The law of the Lord is perfect – restoring the soul.* And He will restore hope – He will restore your soul.

“HE LEADETH ME IN THE PATHS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS FOR HIS NAMES SAKE” They have no sense of direction – they need someone to lead them to “*paths of righteousness*”. Sheep are notorious creatures of habit – they cannot care for themselves. If left to themselves, they will follow the same trails until they become ruts. They will graze on the same hill until they turn it into a desert waste. They will pollute their own ground and water until it is corrupt. To keep his herd safe and well fed; the Good Shepherd must keep his sheep moving from one pasture to another. He must not let them graze in one area too long. The sheep, however, do not want to go, it is uncomfortable, scary, and hard. But for their own good, for the good of the land, the shepherd leads them on. This also requires the shepherd to have an intimate knowledge of his pastures, to know the best paths to take. We are just like sheep; we cannot find our own way, we must follow Christ if we are to survive. Jesus has gently led us and calmly says in *John 14:6 - I am the way, the truth, and the life...* To follow Christ in righteousness means we will follow him the right way. We will walk in His footsteps, and follow the path that he leads us on. Righteousness means - right-way-ness. Doing things the right way, the way God wants us to walk, talk, act and re-act.

“YEA, THOUGH I WALK THROUGH THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH” In the summer months good shepherds move their herds to higher ground, on the hill tops, on the mountain sides. By moving the sheep, the shepherd could give his regular pastures a rest, and his herd could feed on lush, rich, snow drenched pastures on the high-lands. But to get there, he had to take them through the valleys. But the shepherd knew this land; he would not take his herd where he had not already been. The sheep took great comfort knowing that their master and protector was leading the way. We need to trust in *Jehovah-rohi*.

I will not fear for Thou art with me – in every situation, in every trial, in every disappointment, in every dilemma. These valleys however are full of dangers; Predators can hide and wait to attack the herd. Storms, rock slides, and other disasters were all around. Yet despite all these hazards the shepherd knows that this is still best for his herd.

Notice the Psalm says “*I walk through*” it does not say I die there, that everything stops in these valleys of my life. It says I but pass through these low spots, through these dangers, and come out on higher ground with God. There should be nothing to fear if we have followed the Shepherd. God is with us through all our distress, and pain, and sorrow. It is in these valleys that we learn to rely on the Good Shepherd all the more, because He knows the way out. *John 16:33 – in this world you shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.* He knows how to deliver us from this frightening environment. In Him we can find the easiest way to higher ground because He has been there before. We find a source of courage and strength in God.

I WILL FEAR NO EVIL BECAUSE YOU ARE WITH ME. How could David say this (given his life of trouble)? Because David knew where to look; “*You are with me so I will not be afraid.*”

“**YOU ARE WITH ME**”. *Deut 4:7 – what nation has a god as near to them as the Lord our God is near to us.* So no matter what the valley – no matter what the trial – you are not facing it alone. You may be facing death – you are not alone. You may be facing sickness – you are not alone. You may be facing loneliness – you are not alone. You may be facing unemployment – you are not alone. You may be facing family struggles – you are not alone. Do you get the picture – **YOU ARE NOT ALONE!**

“**THY ROD AND THY STAFF THEY COMFORT ME**”. *Psa 138:7 - though I walk in the midst of trouble you will receive me.* The Rod and Staff were the tools of the Shepherd. The Rod was used for protection and it stood as a symbol of authority, strength, and power and defense. The STAFF was used to help the sheep when they got in trouble by pulling them out of the thorns, and he used it to discipline the sheep as well to get them to go in the direction He wanted; *Psa 119:105 – Thy word is a lamp to my feet.* Do you want guidance – look to God’s word to light your path. Do you want comfort and strength – look

to God; 2 Cor 1:3-4 – *The God of all comfort..* God will rescue us from the pit falls we get into.

THOU PREPAREST A TABLE BEFORE ME IN THE PRESENCE OF MINE ENEMIES. The high mountain ranges are known as the table-lands. The good shepherd like David would always go ahead of his sheep to prepare this “*Table*”; the mountain ranges for his herd. Many weeds in this part of the world are very poisonous, and could kill a young lamb. If a young lamb were to eat some of these beautiful flowers it would mean certain death. So the shepherd would spend countless hours and back breaking work “*preparing this table*” by de-weeding it for his sheep. Another chore that must be performed to prepare the “*Table*” for the herd is to clear out the watering holes from debris, repair dams, and clean the water. This involves a terrible sacrifice and is hard work but must be done.

We are told that Jesus was tempted (*Heb 4:15*) in all points just as we are and so He understands what we go through. He has compassion and cares for us. Do we fully understand and appreciate the “*table*” that Jesus has prepared for us? The temptations he endured, the immense sacrifice, Gethsemane, Pilate, the soldiers, the torture, and the crucifixion? The Lord Prepares His table for us - do we appreciate that love and devotion, care, and compassion that he showed? He prepared a path for us to go to heaven. He laid down His life, poured out His blood and showed us supreme selflessness. He showed us Love!! He showed us GOD!!!! He showed us *Jehovah-rohi*. That is the table that our Good Shepherd has prepared.

THOU ANOINTEST MY HEAD WITH OIL, MY CUP OVERFLOWS. Oil was used for three purposes: To Repel insects, To Prevent Conflicts, and to Heal Wounds. Summer time is fly time in Palestine – the flies could be thick and cause incredible discomfort. So the Shepherd would anoint the sheep’s head with oil to act as an insect repellent. Sheep also tend to butt heads for prominence and sometimes hurt one another. The shepherd would frequently anoint the heads of sheep with a liberal amount of oil so that the sheep would glance off each other and not cause serious injury. But sheep would still get hurt by trying to graze where there are thorns – and oil would be used as a medicine to help the wounds heal.

But you have to let Him heal you, and in order for Him to do that we must first go to Him and He will take care of us. Why? Because He is the Good Shepherd and He loves His sheep (*1 Peter 5:7 – He cares for you*). Don't go anywhere else – only the Good Shepherd can really help you. You Must Assume the Right Position (Bow). The sheep would have to lower their head so the shepherd could anoint their head. *1 Peter 5:6 – be humble under God's powerful hand so He will lift you up when the right time comes*. You Must Trust In Him. The sheep doesn't understand why the oil repels, or why it heals. All he knows is that something happens in the presence of the shepherd. *Psa 25:1a – Lord, I give myself to you; my God, I trust you*

MY CUP OVERFLOWS - The result is simply that God will give us more blessings than we can handle. Literally – He pours and pours until they literally flow over the edge and down on the table

SURELY GOODNESS AND MERCY WILL FOLLOW ME ALL THE DAYS OF MY LIFE. This must be one of the sweetest verses ever penned. Under the loving guidance of a Good Shepherd, the sheep knows they have a wonderful position in life. No matter what comes, he can be perfectly sure that the Master's goodness and mercy will be in the picture. He knows, even when he doesn't understand – that he is in the hands of his master's expert, loving hands. How many of you really believe that no matter what happens to you – Blessings and Mercy will follow you? I think we second guess ourselves – thinking that we never measure up. David said “*surely*” – not maybe, not possibly, or I have a hunch. David believed in a Sure God – who makes Sure Promises and Provides a Sure Foundation. Remember all that He has already done for you (*1 John 3:16 – He died for you*). Do you think he is going to let a sickness stand in his way? David pictures our Lord following us. David shows us that Jehovah is Active in our well being. How well do we reflect this goodness and mercy in our lives? Do I leave a blessing behind me? *Isa 52:7 – How beautiful are the feet of them that bring good tidings and publish peace*. Do I leave behind peace or turmoil? Do I leave behind forgiveness or bitterness? Do I leave behind contentment or conflict? Do I leave behind joy or frustration? Do I leave behind love or contempt? Because the sheep have followed their master, even when they were not sure where they were going, they will continue to share in all the good things and the mercy that this Shepherd provides. Wherever I go, whatever I do, God's mercy and God's goodness will follow me. He is with us always.

“I WILL DWELL IN THE HOUSE OF THE LORD FOREVER” This psalm began with a bold statement *“The Lord is MY shepherd.”* It ends with a statement just as bold *“I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”* Stated simply *“Nothing will ever make me leave!!!* The meaning of the word “dwell” is that of *“presence”*. We will dwell in His presence forever. We will be comforted by always having him nearby. We will be in heaven. *John 10:28 Nothing in this world can separate us from the love of God.*

This is your Jehovah-rohi – the LORD is my Shepherd.

The Names of God, Lesson #13

EL ROI: אֱלֹהֵי רֹאֵי JEHOVAH-SHAMMAH: יְהוָה שָׁמָּה ; Immanuel
The God Who Sees / The LORD is There / God With Us

We want to look at three names in this lesson. These three names need to be studied together. Within these three names we find the attributes of our God that strike at the heart of loneliness and hopelessness. What do you do when you feel alone? Abandoned? Forgotten by everyone – maybe you have even felt that God has left you.

Where is God? You ask. Where is the sovereign God who promises that all things work together for good (Romans 8). Does He know what is going on? Does He see?

EL ROI: Yes, He is El Roi, the God who sees. The omnipresent God is there, and His eyes are not shut. He isn't asleep, unaware of all the circumstances. He sees.

Read Genesis 16. The first, and only, time we meet *El Roi* is in a desperate situation. We find Him telling Hagar to go back and deal with a bad situation. Hagar fled from Sarai into the wilderness. She is mistreated, she is abused, she is scared. Yet the LORD comes to her and comforts her and promises to take care of her. *Gen 16:13-13* So she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, "You are a God of seeing,"⁸ for she said, "Truly here I have seen him who looks after me."

Do you want a God like that – a God who sees you in your trouble and God who will look after you? **He is your EL ROI.** *Psalms 139:7-12 – Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? ⁸ If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there! ⁹ If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, ¹⁰ even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me. ¹¹ If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light about me be night," ¹² even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is bright as the day, for darkness is as light with you.*

In Hagar's case the LORD shows that He cares for her. What we learn from Hagar's experience is that when the LORD sees – He cares! (Gen 29:32; Ex 3:7). The God who comforted Hagar in the desert is the very same one who delivered Israel from Egypt. When God sees, He cares, He delivers, and He acts on your behalf.

Knowing God as *El Roi* is extremely important. To realize that God sees you regardless of the trial or trouble you are going through – emphasizes God's nearness in your life.

Even though we only find the name *El Roi* in this one passage, we find many references to the sight of God throughout the bible. El Roi saw you when you were in your mother's womb (Psalm 139:16). Nothing is hidden from God – He sees everything (Heb 4:13). The Psalmist tells us that the LORD looks out on all the inhabitants of the earth (Psalms 33:13-14); and that the “eye of the LORD is on those who fear Him, on those who hope for His loving kindness, to deliver their soul from death ... (*Psalm 33:18-19*). Indeed, His eyes are toward the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry (Psalm 34:15)

We see *El Roi* in the New Testament as well. Nathanael discovered Him when he asked Jesus how He knew him. And Jesus replies? “*Before Phillip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you*” (*John 1:48*). Jesus tells us that God knows when a sparrow falls to the ground and that you are more valuable than sparrows (Matt 10:29; Luke 12:6-7).

El Roi is near to you – and He is not far from you. He will “strongly support those whose heart is completely His (2 Chron 16:9).

Jehovah-shammah is found in the last verse of Ezekiel (48:35). Israel was at its lowest point in history, both spiritually and nationally. Its strength and glory were gone, the temple had been destroyed. It appears Israel had been delivered from bondage in Egypt only to go into bondage in Babylon.

Ezekiel prophesies that the God will deal harshly with the people. Throughout this time we find the declaration that God has acted for the sake of His name (Ezek 20:9;44). God is holy and therefore cannot permit unholiness among His people.

The uniqueness and glory of Israel's religion as contrasted with the religions of the surrounding nations had always been the presence of the holy God dwelling in their midst. You may recall that Moses was assured by Jehovah that “Certainly I will be with you” (Ex 3:12), giving him the confidence to go to Pharaoh. Read Exodus 33:13-16 concerning the presence of the LORD. The distinctive characteristic of the people of God is that He is personally present with them.

But now Ezekiel, who prophesied 25 years earlier that Jerusalem would be destroyed and the temple torn down, now brings this prophecy of hope and consolation which predicts the restoration of the land. And the pledge of all this is the name *Jehovah-shammah*, the LORD is there.

The name *Jehovah-shammah* is a reminder in our darkest hour that God is with us. When you are feeling abandoned and hopeless, address Him as *Jehovah-shammah*.

And now fast forward to the New Testament to see Jehovah-shammah. The New Testament begins with the wonderful story of the birth of Christ. “Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name **Immanuel**, which is translated God with us” (Matt 1:23).

Incredible, isn't it? Near the end of the Old Testament we have a prophesy of God's abiding presence. At the beginning of the New Testament we have the wonderful promise that in Jesus we can know God's abiding presence. This Immanuel is Jehovah-shammah!

Let me end by reminding of us our purpose of this study – to draw closer to God and to know Him more. It is His presence that we seek, that we long for. Know God and Know His Presence;

*Of all God's marvels transcendent,
This wonder of wonders I see,
That the God of such infinite greatness
Should care for the sparrows – and me.*

Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them (Rev 21:1-3)

QUESTIONS:

1. How does this name, El Roi, encourage you?
2. How do you think knowing El Roi helped Hagar?
3. Read Proverbs 15:3 – what does this mean to you?