

## **Christ Reformed Baptist Church (New Castle, IN)**

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### **THE DOCTRINE OF GOD - The Names of God**

Question #7 Baptist Catechism **Q:** What is God? **A:** “God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth.”

Consequently, He is incomprehensible; = man is incapable of thinking about all that God truly is.

#### **GOD KNOWS THIS AND THAT WHY HE REVEALS HIMSELF TO US:**

Any self-revelation of God is a gracious act whereby God condescends to man’s limited understanding.

#### **HOW DOES HE REVEAL HIMSELF?**

One of the key ways by which God has reveals Himself is His names in Scripture. His names are more than just labels of identification; they are **propositional** descriptions of some aspects of His infinite Persons.

Therefore, God’s names are not to be used haphazardly and should not be passed over lightly in the reading of Scripture.

#### **There are generally **three categories of God’s names:****

(1) *propositional*, expressing some fact pertaining to the divine being, such as “God Most High” (Gen. 14:18–22) and “everlasting God” (Gen. 21:33);

(2) *historical*, commemorating some encounter with God (such as *Jehovahjireh*, “the Lord will provide,” Gen. 22:14; see also Gen. 16:13; Ex. 17:15); and

(3) *personal*, declaring some individual experience (“the God of Abraham,” “the fear of Isaac,” etc.).

Here is a brief explanation of some common propositional names in the Old Testament:

**God.** This is the most general term for deity. The Hebrew word can be either singular (*El*) or plural (*Elohim*). Both forms stress God's greatness. He is all-powerful; He possesses all authority; He is able to do whatever He pleases.

Significantly, this is His first self-revelation: "In the beginning God . . ." (Gen. 1:1; see Ps. 19:1). He is the Creator.

This title also magnifies God's transcendence; He is exalted far above all creation, including man.

**Jehovah.** This is God's personal name, especially linked to His covenant grace and mercy.

Derived from the verb "I am"

EXODUS 3:14 "And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you."

the name declares God's self-sufficient independence, eternity, and sovereignty.

Yet, amazingly, Jehovah is the principal name of God used in contexts of salvation.

Although God is infinitely independent of anything outside of Himself, He is willing to have intimate fellowship with man, particularly through the covenant of grace / fully realized the new covenant.

Jehovah, therefore, is often referred to as God's "covenant name." In the King James Version it is always translated in capital letters as "LORD (6,510x)" or occasionally as "GOD (4x)"

***Adonai*** describes God as the supreme Owner and Master of everything. Everything belongs to Him, and He governs everything according to His own purposes for His own glory. This name declares His absolute sovereignty or kingship. Earthly kings come and go, but the heavenly King reigns supreme forever **Isa. 6:1** “In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.”

All men and every nation, whether or not they acknowledge Him, are subject to His authority and accountable to Him. He is the Sovereign over all the earth; all will bow before Him (**2 Kings 7:6**; **Ps. 110:5**; **Dan. 1:2**; **Amos 1:8**). In the KJV this title is translated as “Lord” to distinguish it from Jehovah, which is rendered as “LORD”

***God Almighty***. Although this title occurs most frequently in the patriarchal period, especially in Job, it is not limited to that period.

The Hebrew is ***El Shaddai***. Opinions differ regarding the translation, but most likely it means “the God who is sufficient.” He is fully able to keep every word of His promises, even when the fulfillment seems impossible.

In other words, nothing is too hard for ***El Shaddai***. So even though the prospect of a great nation descending from Abraham seemed unlikely, behind the promise was ***El Shaddai***, and thus the promise was certain **Gen. 17:1** “And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.”

**Gen.35:11–12** “And God said unto him, I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins;”

***Lord of Hosts***. This is “Jehovah of armies,” a military expression identifying God as the “Commander” who has all authority and infinite rank to order His troops to accomplish His will.

This title occurs most frequently during the period of the monarchy (Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, Psalms, and the Prophets).

Depending on the context, the army may refer to Israel, the angels, the heavenly bodies (stars and planets), or even all of creation.

The point is that God has the power, authority, and resources at His command to do and to achieve all of His plans and purposes.

No matter how great the promise or how serious the threat, the Lord of hosts will command and it will be done...for instance, the prophet Zechariah uses this expression more than fifty times in his prophecy to reinforce the certainty of the Lord's every word.