

The Names of God

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Names are significant. We operate with that presupposition even if we don't always consciously think about it. There is a relational gap that takes place between you and somebody else if you don't know that person's name. There is a distance there that is bridged when somebody finally introduces themselves and you have a name and a face to go together. You feel closer to that person knowing their name than you did before when you were comparative strangers. In a whole different realm, if someone were to mock your name and to make a joke out of your name in some way, maybe with an unpleasant rhyme or mocking it by comparing it to somebody who is not a good person, well, you would take offense at that. You wouldn't like that and you could multiply other ways in that. A name does more than simply distinguish us as an individual member of society. There is a certain level in which the person is attached to the name as well even in our society. It's not something that we think about a lot but it's certainly true if you think about it.

Well, in a much greater sense, in a much greater way, the Bible attaches significance to names in the biblical times and the name in biblical times was more intimately an expression of a man's character than it is in our day. Names are very significant. If you think about it, God changed men's names in the course of Scripture when he was altering the outworking of his dealings with them. He changed Abram's name to Abraham in Genesis 17 and the underlying Hebrew gives the sense that Abraham was now going to be the father of a multitude. In Genesis 32, I believe it is, he changes Jacob's name to Israel indicating that Jacob was now going to be the father of a nation. In Matthew 16 in the passage that Steve taught on so well for us, you remember that Jesus told Simon, he said, "Simon bar Jonah, you will be now known as Peter," and this name that means rock. He changed his name in response to the fact that there was now a new outworking of God's purpose in Peter's life. So we see this, that the names are significant.

When it comes to the person of God, Scripture elevates it to a completely different transcendent level and the name of God is something to be taken very seriously. Look at the book of Exodus and you'll want to keep your finger in the book of Exodus for easy reference here tonight. Basically, what we're going to do is we're kind of having a preliminary study to pave the way for Psalm 16 next week and the future of our study in the Psalms. I have enjoyed this study preparing for this so very much.

In Exodus 20, you find what are known as the Ten Commandments, an expression of God's moral law and the third commandment of those ten is found in Exodus 20:7 and God, in giving the law to and through Moses, said in Exodus 20:7, "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain." So from the very beginning of God's expressing the Mosaic covenant to his chosen nation, there is sanctity, this setting apart of his name and there is the command given that, "You will treat My name as holy. You will not take it in vain. You will not treat it in a flippant manner. You will not use it in a frivolous way." And there is a very stern expression of how seriously God takes this as he says there at the end of verse 7 that, "the LORD will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain."

Now, obviously, it would be impossible to calculate the guilt that rests upon our society in the flippant way that people say, "Oh my..." and the way that the Lord's name, our Lord Jesus Christ, the way his name is used as a flippant curse word, how great the guilt must be simply from the way that the lips of those around us so routinely and so easily and so flippantly abuse the name of God and treat it as if it was common dirt. This cannot, at all, be something that the Lord will leave unpunished. He has said, "I will not do that. I will not leave them unpunished." So we see from a negative sense that this is a very serious matter built into, wired into God's moral law which is applicable to all people at all times.

Now, on the positive side, keeping your finger in Exodus, although I'll probably just wear your finger out by telling you to do that. That's alright. Go to Matthew 6 on the positive side of this equation. The positive view of the way that we deal with God's name and this is a wonderful passage. I so much need to get into the Sermon on the Mount with you and I don't know how I am going to do that anytime soon but in chapter 6, verse 7, Jesus you will recall, is teaching his disciples about prayer and more broadly speaking to them about their practice of righteousness and what it means to be a righteous person living out a life of repentance. He says in verse 7, part of repentance, part of living out the life of repentance is to have a meaningful prayer life and to approach prayer in a serious God-exalting way that you don't do for show but that you do so that it's pleasing to your Father and in Matthew 6:5, I know I keep working my way back up, he says, "When you pray, you are not to be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. But you," now he's speaking to his disciples, those that have been called out, speaking to us as disciples here this evening. This is teaching us about prayer and teaching us about how we should think about the name of God as you'll see in a moment. He says, "when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you." So we're not to be those who make a parade of our prayers. You know, we should not be those who type out lengthy prayers on Facebook and post them supposedly in the idea of encouraging someone but actually just trying to call attention to the fact that we can put together flowery prayers. That is wrong and that is contrary to the spirit of what Jesus is teaching here. When you pray, you go in secret and God will reward you if you do but don't make a show of trying to show off your prayer life to men. That's not right.

Now, verse 7, "And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words. So do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him." Okay, we're just taking a running start into the point that I want to make about God's name here. Then, having cleared the palate, as it were, having said, "Don't pray like this and don't be like the Gentiles and don't be a spiritual show off, that's an offense to God," he says in verse 9, "You pray in this way." And notice what the opening request of the Lord's Prayer is, "Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name." He says, "This is what should be the primary and first concern of your prayer life is that the name of God would be hallowed." In other words, that God would sanctify his name. In other words, that God would so operate in the sphere of human history and in human interactions and in the church that he would so act in a way that men would see his name as great, his name which is an expression of his character. See his character as something that is lofty and exalted and respond in a worshipful attitude in response. Jesus says, "This is the most important aspect of prayer is that you would pray that way and that all of your desires would be summed up as you open your mouth, as you approach God in prayer. God, the first thing on my mind when I come here is that Your name, Your character, would be respected and revered among men and You would receive the honor that You deserve." In the original language, it's expressed in a form that is an urgent, particularly urgent request that is made.

So you have it on the positive and on the negative side. In the Ten Commandments, God says, "Do not take My name in vain." On the positive side in the Lord's Prayer as God Incarnate is teaching his disciples to pray, he says, "Make it your desire, make it a central focus in your prayer that the name of God would be honored and exalted and that you would be a rebel, as it were, against the flippant way that the world treats the name of God. You would rebel against the world and say, 'God, bring the full force of Your omnipotence to bear against the wickedness of this world's system and contrary to everything that they want, Father, contrary to that, You exalt and elevate Your name so that people would see You as holy and good and treat You with reverence.'"

So the name of God is important. The name and expression of the fullness of his character and we are to revere the name of God. We should never treat it flippantly. It should never be a curse word or just something flippant that comes off our lips. When the name of God, when the thought of God comes to our mind and in our discussions, there would be a holy hush, a holy reverence that would come upon and that the very way that we articulate our thoughts about him and speak his name is something that would have an obviously sanctified tone to it that is different from perhaps the way that we discuss common things of the earth. You can see as we're talking about this that it starts with a whole mindset, a whole way that you think about him.

Well, in the Scriptures, all we're doing right now is introducing things and just giving us the sense that names are important and that God's name is especially important. As you study through the Scriptures, you will find that God is called by many different names. These names express his nature. These names express his authority. These names are an expression of his faithfulness to his people. The names of God, as you study them, show

us and give us a self-disclosure from God about how he relates to his people even. Charles Spurgeon said and I quote, "It is well to study the name and character of God so that in our distresses we may know how and by what title to address our Father who is in heaven."

So to study the names of God then is to guard ourselves from sin in an Exodus 20 sense. It is to heighten and elevate our prayers in a Matthew 6 sense. It is to know him better. It is to clarify in our minds who he is and thus to give us a greater sense of how we might walk in a way that is pleasing to him and to render back to him the worship of which he is deserving. You know, if you think about it, all of you were named by your parents and those of you that have children, you named your children according to your own pleasure. Well, for God, no one named God. God's names are something that is a means by which he has disclosed himself to mankind, a sense in which he has disclosed himself and made himself known to his people. So even in just thinking about how God received his names, how we know his names, even in that we see that he is distinct and separate from us. We didn't name ourselves, someone else did. God, by contrast, discloses the names and according to what pleases him. There was no one before him or over him that could possibly assign a name to him. God discloses his name and it pleases him with what he has said.

So, with those things in mind, go back to Psalm 16, if you would, and if your finger is getting tired in Exodus, you can pull it out. It's okay. That wasn't a lasting command. I know I'm going back to Exodus eventually but I've got so many things on my mind and heart here I can't promise you when that might be. Psalm 16. The names of God will help us understand the Psalms in general and for those of you that maybe have just joined us recently, last summer, we did a series on the Psalms and we covered the first 15 Psalms in that series and after taking a break to study other things related to the Old Testament, now we are going back into the Psalms and we're going to study the Psalms in a sequential manner, going forward for the next several weeks, ultimately over a period of years. It's our intention to preach Psalms 1-150. If God would grant me the grace and the strength to be able to do that, I would feel like a very blessed man to preach through the entire Psalter like that. So we're just doing that in a patient, consistent way. Well, we're up to Psalm 16 now and rather than go through the entire Psalm here this evening, we'll save that for next time. Psalm 16 is a magnificent Psalm of just breathtaking scope but here in Psalm 16, we're going to use the first two verses to kind of ease our way back into them and get our thoughts oriented back to the way that David was thinking as he wrote his Psalm some 3,000 years ago.

Now, let's look at verses 1 and 2 again and read them and keep them fresh in our mind and you'll see how this study unfolded in my preparation. Verse 1, David says, "Preserve me, O God, for I take refuge in You. I said to the LORD, 'You are my Lord; I have no good besides You.'" Now, one of the initial principles of Bible study and Bible interpretation is that you just make observations about the text. You look and you see what's in the text that you're looking at and as I was beginning my preparation for Psalm 16 a number of weeks ago, I couldn't get past these first two verses and I just want to show you and just kind of walk you through what happened. It didn't take all of that long

but I want you to see what it is and how things just jump out on the page when you're just going through the text verse-by-verse and word-by-word. When I was looking at these verses for the first time, what struck me, having never taught through Psalm 16 before, I noticed the word "God" and then I see "LORD" in all capital letters and then I see "Lord" in capital "L" and then lowercase, o-r-d, and it strikes me that David is using three different names in the opening two verses of this Psalm to address God with. I thought, "Well, there must be some significance to that. God, LORD, all caps, and Lord."

Now, when you and I and here's the key, this is a really important transitional thought for tonight's message so stay with me very closely. When you and I read the Bible, our tendency is to flatten those names and to just take "God" and "LORD," all caps, and "Lord" and to just kind of skim over those and just take them as, you know, three different references to the same thing if we even notice it at all. We tend to flatten those names and even in our sanctified conversations, we would use "God" or "the Lord" in interchangeable ways and not really think too much about the distinctions that might be embedded in those terms. But if we do that, let me put it in a positive way: if we hit the brakes and slow down and observe the scenery that is passing by as we go through these two verses, we're going to find that there is something very significant that is going on here with the names of God. Listen, remember: David here is writing this Psalm under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and especially his choice of terms in which he addresses God could not possibly be random and a matter of indifference.

So, in helping you have a little bit of practice in Bible interpretation, you look at that and say, "I wonder if there's something significant about the fact that he uses three different names to refer to God, then there must be something significant in that." This wasn't random. So our question for this evening is: well, what is that teaching us? If the names of God are a revelatory mechanism, a means of self-disclosure, well, then what is it that it is saying?

Now, a little illustration here to help you see this and to appreciate how this might possibly be significant. Depending on who is speaking to me, I might be called by the name "Don." Some people might call me "Pastor." Six people, maybe seven now, would call me "Dad." These terms all refer to me and they refer to the same one person but they are calling upon different aspects of my being. They are expressing different aspects of relationship there. "Don" is a friendly term that anyone would call me by. "Pastor," by a smaller group of those that belong to our church perhaps. "Dad," those in my family, certain sweet names that my wife might call me limited to just her. You see, the names built into those names is an expression of relationship all to the same person, lived out, manifesting itself in different ways with different people. Well look, what's happening here in Psalm 16 is exactly that same dynamic taking place only on a much more elevated level as the King of Israel, the human King of the nation, Israel, God's man after his own heart writing under the inspiration, calling upon God in an opening prayer as he writes a Psalm that will be recorded for all of time. "Heaven and earth will pass away but my words will not pass away," the Lord Jesus said. So 3,000 years later, this word still stands. Well, what is it that we can learn from it? David using these three names to refer

to God? And we're going to look at these names in turn and see what they tell us about the nature of God and it's going to, I trust, be edifying and encouraging to you.

Alright, now, with that said, the first name that he uses here is "God," which and just taking this as our outline here, God, in other words, referring to God as "the God of power." The term "God" here that David uses referring to God as "the God of power," and I'll explain that now. This term "God" that we have here in English comes from the Hebrew word *Eloah*, is the Hebrew pronunciation. English speakers would call it *Elohim* perhaps. This form occurs 236 times in the Old Testament and it is the most general name for God in the ancient Semitic languages. It can be used to refer to false gods, of pagan nations or it can refer as it does here to the true God of Israel. Its predominate use in the Bible is to refer to the one true God. Okay and so it's just the broadest, general, most general reference to the supreme deity.

Now, this name as I'll show you in a few Scriptures here in a moment, this name *Eloah* or *Elohim*, we'll call it *Eloah* for the sake of simplicity of English, *Eloah* is a name that suggests God's power and authority. It is often used with adjectives to describe God's might and to distinguish him from false gods. So when you see the name "God" here in Psalm 16:1, David is calling upon the one true God and addressing him in his capacity as the God of might and power and that fits with the petition that he makes there in verse 1, doesn't it? He's asking for God's protection. He says, "Preserve me, O God." In other words, "God, use your might and power to protect me here in my life because I take refuge in You. I rest my confidence, I seek my shelter under the umbrella of Your might and power."

Now, for us to see this use of this name in Scripture and just to give you some very brief references, go back to the book of Genesis 17. I just want you to see three Scriptures that are just samples of how this name "God," Hebrew "*Eloah*," is used to be an expression of his power. Genesis 17:1, and what happens with this particular Hebrew term is it is often combined with other adjectives to express this idea of power and might and that's what we have here in Genesis 17:1. Genesis 17:1, you're all there, right? "Now when Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD," notice the all caps, "appeared to Abram and said to him, 'I am God,'" there it is, Hebrew "*Eloah*," "I am God Almighty," I am *Eloah Shaddai*, "Walk before Me, and be blameless. I will establish My covenant between Me and you, And I will multiply you exceedingly." Notice how that term "God" is used in connection with the adjective "Almighty" as an expression of the power of God.

Now, for those of you that haven't been with us in months gone by, we went through Genesis in a survey fashion and we saw how critical God's calling of Abraham was to the whole subsequent outworking of divine revelation in the divine plan and the outworking of human and eternal history. So it's very significant that God refers to himself at this transitional moment in the divine economy, he tells Abram, "I am God Almighty. I have the power to do what I am about to describe to you." The name of God expressing the might of God. The power of God. The omnipotence of God. His complete ability to do whatever he wills is expressed by this word "God." To be God means that there is no one else above you, above him, I should say.

Look over for another illustration in Psalm 77:14. In Psalm 77:14, the Psalmist writes this, I love this. I love this whole topic of the name of God. He writes in verse 13, he says, "Your way, O God, is holy; What god is great like our God?" Now, in verse 14, you get the very precise form that's under consideration here tonight. He says, "You are the God who works wonders; You have made known Your strength among the peoples." Notice how he associates this name of God with strength, with the ability to work miracles, with the God who is able to make himself known with power among his people. Verse 15, "You have by Your power redeemed Your people, The sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah." So here again, we're just illustrating the fact that when this name of God is used, you find it used in association with other terms in Scripture that are an expression of might and power and strength and the ability to do wonders.

So when David addresses him as "God" in Psalm 16:1, particularly when he's contrasting it with other terms that refer to deity, by contrast he clearly has in mind the might and power of God as he addresses him. He says, "Preserve me, O God. By which mean," he might have gone on and said, "By which I mean I call upon Your might and Your power. I call upon You to exercise Your strength on my behalf." All of that bound up in his reference to the name of "God."

One more, Jeremiah 32 and I would ask you to turn there with me. We take the time here at Truth Community to turn to our Bible references to read the Scriptures. It takes us longer to do that but it's very important for you, whether you're a Christian or whether you're not, it's important for your own eyes to set upon the actual words on the pages of Scripture. I'm not content simply to allude to it or to summarize it for you or to just quote it for you. I like for you to turn in your own Bible and see it with your own eyes. You need to see that I'm not making this stuff up. This is in your own Bible in your own lap and so this is one of the ways that we try to manifest a respect for the word of God and to show that we trust in the power of the word of God and not in the power of the one who speaks with a human voice.

Now, in Jeremiah 32:18, Jeremiah is speaking to God and notice in verse 17 actually, we can pick it up there. He's using a different manner of expression. You'll see that "GOD" in verse 17 is in all caps. We're not going to explain why that is right here, right now, but just to set the context for the reference that we're looking at in verse 18. He says, "'Ah Lord GOD!' Adonai Yahweh, 'Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and by Your outstretched arm! Nothing is too difficult for You, who shows lovingkindness to thousands, but repays the iniquity of fathers into the bosom of their children after them, O great and mighty God.'" Alright?

So all that we've done with these references from Genesis and Psalms and Jeremiah, incidentally, the law of the writings and the prophets, I didn't plan it that way but it just occurred to me that that's the way it worked out. These verses are just illustrating the point that you see when you study this name "God" that it is used in context which emphasize an speak of his strength to do wonders. It is a term of greatness to speak to him as "God."

Now, stay with me here. In theological terms, we might say that El expresses the transcendence of God. He is exalted and he is beyond human comprehension. He is exalted. He far transcends us. He is strong and mighty. That's what's expressed by this Hebrew term "El" translated in English as "God."

Now, the plural form of "El," "Elohim" in the Hebrew, occurs many, many more times. It occurs 2,706 times in the Hebrew Bible. Now, the plural in Hebrew has a lot of different significations that aren't used in English. Here the plural "Elohim" which is also translated "God" when it's referring to the true God, it does not suggest that there are other gods or that there are many gods but it's what the grammarians call a plural of majesty and what it is expressing the plural "El, Elohim," what it's expressing when it is used is that it gives you the sense of God's multiplied exaltedness. The plural is used to express a fullness to his majesty, a fullness to his power of the one true God. And when you study it all the way through, this term "God" whether it is translating the Hebrew term "El" or "Elohim," same root word, it gives us a sense that there should be fear and trembling in the presence of his majesty. God.

Now, let's step back and take a breath here if we can. That's a lot of content to think through. But you see what happens when you respect the word of God? You see what happens when you respect the Bible and you just take it at its word and you do a little bit of simple study and things just start to open up to you and the greatness of God is just unfolded before you in taking the most simple look and the most abbreviated look at the basic name of "God." And you are just brought to worship by what that name means. Now, by contrast, going back, do you see what a crime it is for people to just flippantly use that name who not only don't know God but live in sin and rebellion against him? For people to text out on their phone OMG because they think a cat video they just looked at was funny? "OMG, look at this!" Oh, that is greatly sinful. To trivialize the great and exalted name of God with such trivialities and without any thought whatsoever what's being said. You can see why that is such a crime. If you take offense when someone would mock or take a simple joke at your name, well, multiply that by infinity and holiness and realize what a crime is committed trillions of times a day by humanity in the way that they misuse and abuse the holy name of God. The guilt of humanity on this commandment alone cannot be calculated. It expands beyond the breadth of the universe.

God is a God of power. He is a God who must be hallowed in the words of Jesus. His name should bring us to a sense of fear and trembling and worship and reverence at its mere mention and the fact that we get familiar with his name is not a reflection or a diminishment of the truth of what Scripture says about it. Let's you and me be people who think deeply and who respond seriously and earnestly to the name of God, shall we? If we were known for nothing else other than the fact that we were a people who revered the name of God and respected his word, if that was our only testimony that came out of this church, that wouldn't be a bad start because the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

Now, so the name "God" is an indication that he is a God of power. Go back to Psalm 16 now. Forty minutes for the first point. Multiply that by three and we get to two hours in

no trouble at all. Psalm 16:1-2. We're now going to enter into a completely different realm even as we're talking about the same one true God. Verse 2, he said, "I said to the LORD," all caps, "You are my Lord." We're going to focus on that all caps "LORD" now with our second point here this evening. All caps "LORD," in all caps, indicating that he is the God of promise. The God of promise and how sweet and majestic is this? This is majestic in a whole other way. This expresses something about the one true God that we're going to see that just takes us into a completely different realm that evokes a response of worship but it's responding to a different aspect of God, a different aspect of his nature, of his self-disclosure, of his interactions with his people.

Notice the all caps "LORD" there. As many of you, if not most of you know, when you see that all caps "LORD" in your Bible, in your English Bible, you see that standing alone, it represents the Hebrew term "Yahweh" which in the Hebrew Bible is four consonants represented by in English by the letters Y-H-W-H. Yahweh is the term that is being translated by that all caps "LORD" there. Yahweh expresses something different about God. Yahweh is the specific name of the God of Israel. It is God's personal name. The name "God, El," that we just looked at might be used to refer to pagan deities. There were pagans in those days who used that word to refer to their god even though it was a false god. Well, the Bible takes that name and adds adjectives to it to distinguish it from the false gods but with Yahweh, you're looking at God's personal name. It is the most frequent designation for God in the Bible. One source says that it occurs 5,321 times in the Hebrew text and basically it's built off the verb "to be" in Hebrew and it has the sense that God's name is "I AM WHO I AM." Some Jews even refuse to pronounce it during synagogue readings and substituted a different name of God in an effort to avoid taking this name in vain.

And this name receives, we find its full significance explained to us in the time of Moses. Go back to the book of Exodus now, chapter 3. Now you understand why I was telling you to keep your finger there and for those of you that haven't been with us, we did a quick survey of the book of Exodus as well and we talked about some of these passages that we're going to look at here this evening. The term "Yahweh" occurred occasionally in the book of Genesis but here in Exodus, we find God instilling with it and in it meaning that goes beyond anything that had previously been known. Look at chapter 3, verse 13 as I'll have to pick up the pace a little bit here. You know that God was going to send Moses to his people to lead them and Moses wasn't too sure that this was a really good idea and so in verse 13, Moses said to God, Exodus 3:13, Moses said to God, "Behold, I am going to the sons of Israel, and I will say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you.' Now they may say to me, 'What is His,' what? "Name?" What is his name? "What shall I say to them?" You see, 3,500 years ago, there was obviously an important significance attached to the name. Moses said, "If I'm going to go and represent God to them, the first question out of their mouth is, 'What is His name so that we might know Him?' And God, if they ask me that question, what am I supposed to say to them?" Verse 14, "God said to Moses," Yahweh, "I AM WHO I AM"; and He said, 'Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, "I AM has sent me to you."' So you see in the context of God disclosing himself to the nation of Israel, disclosing himself to his people.

He discloses himself with the vehicle of a different name that he takes upon himself as an expression of who he is.

Now, with that in mind, go over to Exodus 6. This is so incredible. This just opens up so much of Scripture to us. Now, in chapter 6, verse 2 of Exodus, "God spoke further to Moses and said to him, 'I am the LORD.'" There it is, all caps, "I am Yahweh and I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as God Almighty." You see, there is a distinction here. "I disclosed Myself as El Shaddai, God Almighty but by My name, LORD, I did not make Myself known to them." So there is a further disclosure in the name "Yahweh" that isn't necessarily wrapped up in the name "El" or "God." In verse 4, he says, "I also established My covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land in which they sojourned." Verse 5, "I have heard the groaning of the sons of Israel, because the Egyptians are holding them in bondage, and I have remembered My covenant." Now watch this, this is really important, "Say, therefore, to the sons of Israel, 'I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from their bondage. I will also redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. Then I will take you for My people, and I will be your God; and you shall know that I am the Yahweh your God, who brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.'" We could keep going but for the sake of time, we will not.

Now, watch this, we're talking about the name of God. We're talking about the God that most of you in this room would say you have been brought into union with him through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and so we are talking about the name by which God has revealed himself and he who is your Lord, your Master, your Savior, the most central person in your existence that ever could be, we're getting to the very core of who he discloses himself to be. If you're a Christian, this is essential to know what God says about himself by nature of using this name. Well, in what we just read there in Exodus 6, he says, "I am Yahweh," and then he goes on and talks about deliverance and so the name "Yahweh" is expressing God's redemption and his loyal love to his people.

Look at Exodus 20:2 as we add a few more ingredients to the mix here. Exodus 20:2. Notice how he ties his name to redemption, to deliverance. Oh, this is awesome. Exodus 20:2, he says, "I am the Yahweh your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery." So the name "Yahweh," their God, their mighty one, Yahweh their mighty one is the one who redeemed them. Yahweh then is intimately bound up with the idea of God's redemption, God's deliverance, God's power to bring people out of slavery and into freedom. "Yahweh" expresses that and yet there is more.

Look at Exodus 33:18. We've probably looked at this in the past. I referred to it on multiple occasions in different locations. You've just got to see all of this, beloved. This is not difficult. It is not complicated but you need to see it and pull it all together. In chapter 33, verse 18, Moses said, "God, I pray You, show me Your glory!" Show me your glory. In verse 19, God says, "I'll do that," and here's what he said in response to that request. "Here's what I'll do to show you My glory, He says, 'I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you and will proclaim,'" what? "The name of Yahweh before

you; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and show compassion on whom I show compassion." "Yahweh" tied up now with the idea of his grace and his compassion.

Now, drop down to Exodus 34:5, Yahweh, "LORD," all caps, "descended in the cloud and stood there with him as he called upon," what? "The name of the LORD. Then," Yahweh, "the LORD passed by in front of him and proclaimed, 'The LORD,'" Yahweh, "'the LORD God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin.'" Moses says, "Show me Your glory." The Lord says, "I'll display My name to you," and when he displays his name, what is revealed? What unfolds about the nature of God in association with his name which is a disclosure of his own very character? Grace. Compassion. Slow to anger. Loyal love. Truth. Forgiveness. This name "Yahweh" is indicating, get this, it is indicating that God is a promise keeping, covenant keeping Redeemer for his people. That is what is revealed by the name "Yahweh."

So whereas the name "El" says that God is powerful, "Yahweh" shows him to be faithful and gracious and a God who keeps his promises to his people. "El" says as we saw earlier that God is transcendent, beyond our comprehension. "Yahweh" speaks to the fact that he is a God in relationship with his people. That he works in creation on behalf of his people. That he delivers them from bondage. He delivers them from slavery. He shows them loyal love and grace and faithfulness which they could never deserve. In theological terms, "Yahweh" speaks to the eminence of God, not imminence in the sense that something will happen quickly but eminence in the sense that God is near, that God is present with his people.

So the name "God" in English is expressing the fact that God is transcendent over all with power. "Yahweh" adds to, supplements that revelation and says, "While He is transcendent, He is with us. The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want. I fear no evil for You are with me. The LORD, Yahweh is with me, therefore I fear no evil. Why? Because as Yahweh he is a faithful covenant keeping, loving, gracious, forgiving, providing God who is present with his people in the midst of the unfolding of their lives and of world history." So as we put this together, the God of power is also the God of promise. To know this God is to know one who is transcendent and yet unspeakably near. Who is full of power and yet is full of grace. God, LORD, all caps, reveals that to us.

With that in mind, go back to Psalm 16. The depth of this, the richness of this just draws us. It draws us with a compelling magnetism to worship. It is like we are steel and there is just this strong magnet drawing us to him in the way that God has revealed himself to be. Psalm 16:1-2 again, "Preserve me, O God," preserve me, El, "for I take refuge in You. I said to the Yahweh, 'You are my Lord; I have no good besides You.'" You are my Lord, capital "L," small letters o-r-d. Different word in Hebrew and it's easy. I sympathize with you. It's easy for the English translation to make things confusing. The reasons for that are subject for another time but here in verse 2, we see a third name for God in the capital "L," small letters o-r-d, Lord. This is the Hebrew word "Adonai." Variations of this particular word occur 770 times in the Bible and the root of this word refers to humans

with authority. Humans with authority. There is an idea of authority that is built into this word.

In Genesis 18, Sarah calls her husband, Abraham, "My lord," recognizing his authority over her as her husband. A form of this word is also used to refer to the master of a slave in Exodus 21:5. That helps us understand the concept behind this word "Adonai" when an emphatic form of this term is applied to the living God. Adonai, my Lord. It is emphasizing, watch this, it is emphasizing in a special way his authority over the one who is speaking. When David refers to him as "Adonai" in Psalm 16:2, watch this, it's beautiful, he's saying, "God of power, Yahweh of promise, I recognize Your preeminence in my life." Lord, capital "L," three small letters o-r-d is an expression of the God of preeminence. God of power. God of promise. "Adonai," God of preeminence if you're taking notes.

So it's invoking the sense of obligations and duties. David is speaking to this God of power and this God of promise, watch this, from a position and a spirit of submission and trust. "You're my Lord. You're the One to whom I am accountable. I recognize Your authority over my life. I own You as my Master. I submit to that. I am not a rebel as I pray to You. I'm not insisting on my will as I come. I come in submission and in dependence to You, my Preeminent One, my Lord, God of power, God of promise. You are my King." And as you put all of those things together, beloved, you can see how profound David's prayer is.

Look back at Psalm 16:1 again, "Preserve me, O God," God of power, "for I take refuge in You." "Use Your power to put me in a place of security. I speak to my covenant keeping God. I speak to this One who has manifested Himself as ever faithful, ever full of loyal love, steadfast love for His people. I say to that God, 'You are my Lord. I am in submission to You. I recognize Your authority over my life and I gladly receive that authority and submit to it.'" He goes on there in verse 2, we'll repeat some of this next week just for the sake of the fullness of teaching the Psalm in one sitting, "I have no good besides You." "Nothing else in life compares to the treasure that You are to me. God of power. God of promise. God of preeminence over my life." David is addressing this transcendent God and reminds him that he is a promise keeping God and that David owns him as his personal Master.

We can read these two verses in five seconds and usually we probably do. You're just going through and blurting through it and, you know, trying to keep pace with your Bible reading plan. Fair enough. I do the same thing but when we slow down and enter into the spirit of what David is saying, we realize that he has just laid out in these two verses a whole perspective, a complete perspective on the way that we should approach God and honor and hallow his name. To respect him and to tremble before him as a God of power. To draw near to him as a God of promise who is faithful to his people. And to have the sense that this powerful, promise keeping God, I gladly enter into submission and remind myself and consciously subjugate my heart before this great, preeminent, promise keeping, powerful God. From that perspective to humbly ask, "O God, preserve me in my life." We'll see how that preservation plays itself all the way out even into life and death

and eternity. But as "El," God is able to give shelter. As "Yahweh," he has promised to provide. As "Adonai," David submits to him. And from that informed posture, he asked God to protect him. Beloved, do you see that David is praying in a serene and confident manner borne out of a true knowledge of God?

Now, to bring this into New Testament focus as we close here, what I'm about to say in two minutes should be another 60 minute message but in our Lord here now after the cross 3,000 years later, after the coming of Christ, after the crucifixion, resurrection and ascension and his session in heaven where he intercedes for his saints without ceasing, in Christ, in that Christ, God's name is brought near to us. Look at John 17:6 and I'm not at all doing justice to this. I just like for us as new covenant believers to go out on the name of Christ. In John 17:6, Jesus praying to his heavenly Father, this same El Yahweh, he says, "I have manifested Your name to the men whom You gave Me out of the world; they were Yours and You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word." Notice, beloved, Jesus is referring to the fact that in his Incarnation, as he walked among his disciples, he manifested the name. He manifested the character of God before them in his teaching, in his miracles, in his character. Everything about his Incarnation was a manifestation of God to them because he is this God of whom we have been speaking. But I want you to notice something today that in no less a way, through the written revelation that we have from God, this precious word which we kiss in love and submission, in no less of a way, he has manifested the name of God to us today as well by making the name of God known through the pages of Scripture.

Now look down at verse 25 here, Jesus praying, "O righteous Father, although the world has not known You, yet I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me." What had he done? As he closes this great high priestly prayer, he says, "I have made Your name known to them, and will make it known, so that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them." Jesus says, "I have completed My work here on earth. I have made Your name known." This great name of God which bursts the capacity of human comprehension to understand. The greatness of power. The greatness of promise. The greatness of the implications of his preeminence on his life. Christ says, "I have made that known."

And beloved, this is a whole separate 60 minute message gathered up into one or two sentences: with fear and trembling, with love and adoration, based on the authority of Scripture, we realize that our Lord Jesus has so completely saved us through his life and his shed blood on our behalf, so completely has he reconciled us to this El, to this Yahweh whom we call Adonai, so perfect was his work, so great is the love of God for his people in this New Testament, new covenant era, that we now call him by the name of Father. How can we measure the greatness of what Christ has done for us? This transcendent, eminent God is now belonging to us in a relationship where Christ commands us to address him as Father. How great is the salvation that God has granted to us as his people? How perfect a redemption that this exalted God we would be in a position to come to and address as Father, the one who loves us and protects us and guides us far better than any earthly father ever did or ever could. The names of God: God, LORD, Lord, Jesus, Father.

Friend, if you don't know this God, let these names of God draw you to him through faith in Christ. He calls you through this disclosure of his name to say, "I will be a saving God to anyone just like you if you would come to Me in faith." This God offers himself to you in the person of Jesus Christ.

For those of us that know him, the God of power, the God of promise, the God of our preeminence, our peace, our joy, our confidence, our serenity is found solely in our submission to him. And his faithfulness to be this God to us that he has disclosed himself to be all summed up in his great names: God, LORD, Lord, Father.

Let's bow in prayer.

Our God, You are indeed a great and mighty God, a faithful God. You are a most benevolent King and it is our privilege to call You as Father. We would struggle to do that, Father, if not for the fact that our Lord had told us to do so. He said, "Pray in this way, 'Our Father who is in heaven.'" We know as Father the One who has been revealed by these great names. We honor You and we worship You and we pray that Your name would be hallowed, that Your name would be revered because only that response from humanity is appropriate to the greatness of who You are, great in power and great in love. Our Father, we adore You. We worship You. We honor You. We lose ourselves in the greatness of the magnitude of Your majestic being and we thank You for Your loyal, faithful love. Let the depth of who You are take root in the depth of our hearts. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

Just a reminder for perhaps if you're visiting us. We meet every Sunday morning at 9 a.m. and we would invite you to be back with us on Sunday as we resume our study of the book of Ephesians, beginning in chapter 4, verse 2, is where we'll be picking it up. We'd love to have you back and joining with us in that Sunday worship, the Lord's Day where we remember his resurrection and teach out of his word and sing praises to his most glorious name. With that in mind, God bless you tonight. You are dismissed. Have a good trip home.

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