

# JEHOVAH-SABAOTH – LORD OF HOSTS

1 Samuel 1:1-11

## INTRODUCTION

- Very few people in our urbanised, artificially illuminated world take time to gaze at the night sky
- The devil knows what a profound effect the starry host of heaven has upon the heart of man, and is pleased to distract us from looking at them
- They shatter our proud self-importance, showing us to be small and weak (Psalm 8:3-4)
- They testify of God's great glory, who made them out of nothing, by word the word of his power (Psalm 19:1)
- The creation of the stars is stated in the most matter-of-fact way in Genesis 1:16 – "he made the stars also" (Genesis 1:16)
- What infinite wisdom to conceive the glorious splendour of the universe!
- What almighty power to create it!
- Surely one of the most foolish and ignorant questions that man has ever asked is, "Is God able?" (cf. Psalm 78:19)
- God "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us" (Ephesians 3:20)
- As we continue our studies on the names of God we come to the name Jehovah Sabaoth – the Lord of Hosts
- "LORD of hosts" and "LORD God of hosts" occur over 270 times in the Old Testament but curiously not once in the Pentateuch
- The first occurrence is in 1 Samuel 1:3, of which Matthew Henry writes: *"Probably Samuel the prophet was the first that used this title of God, for the comfort of Israel, when in his time their hosts were few and feeble and those of their enemies many and mighty; then it would be a support to them to think that the God they served was Lord of hosts, of all the*

*hosts both of heaven and earth; of them he has a sovereign command, and makes what use he pleases of them.” (Matthew Henry)*

- Jehovah Sabaoth is used throughout the historical books as well as the Psalms, but by far the most occurrences are in the prophets, particularly Isaiah (62 times) and Jeremiah (90 times)
- It is found twice in the New Testament (Romans 9:29; James 5:4)
- The word “hosts” is used to refer to various groups, and Jehovah is indeed Lord over them all:
  - ✓ Heavenly host of planets and stars (Genesis 2:1)
    - The heathen’s idolatrous worship of this host of heaven is called *sabatism*, derived from the Hebrew *saba* (host) (2 Kings 17:16)
    - Jehovah rebukes the folly of such idolatry, declaring, “I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded.” (Isaiah 45:12)
    - And, “For all the gods of the people are idols: but the LORD made the heavens.” (1 Chronicles 16:26)
  - ✓ The earthly hosts of Israel’s armies (Exodus 12:41)
  - ✓ Earthly host of the church as a spiritual army
  - ✓ Angelic hosts
- It is primarily the angelic hosts that this name of God refers to
- It is a militant name for God, as “hosts” signifies “armies”
- *“The Lord rules the angels, the stars, the elements, and all the hosts of heaven; and the heaven of heavens is under his sway... [the Lord] is on our side — our august ally; woe unto those who fight against him, for they shall flee like smoke before the wind when he gives the word to scatter them.” (C H Spurgeon)*
- The revelation of the name Jehovah Sabaoth teaches us profound truth both about our God and about ourselves

## **I. THE TRANSCENDENCE OF JEHOVAH SABAOTH**

### **A. God is far above all else**

1. He is exalted (Psalm 57:5; 97:9)
2. He dwelleth on high (Psalm 113:5)
3. His glory is above the heavens (Psalm 8:1)
4. There are other names of God that set forth the greatness and might of God
  - a. El Elyon – the Most High God
  - b. El Shaddai – The Almighty, All-Sufficient God
5. But this name especially describes God's transcendent power and authority, combining "Jehovah" – his self-existence, and "Sabaoth" – describing his rule over the highest and most powerful forces in the creation
6. This name has a close connection to God's holiness (Isaiah 6:3) – God is exalted, possessing all authority, and he does so according to his perfect holiness
7. He transcends the capacity of human language to describe his perfections
8. Yet he has revealed himself to man, and those who humbly seek him may know him (Matthew 11:27)

### **B. This Name gives us insight into Jehovah's relationship to his angelic host**

1. The origin of the angels
  - a. The angels were created by God during the creation week (Colossians 1:16; Exodus 20:11)
2. The power of the angels
  - a. The power of the angels is immense, far beyond human power

- b. One angel smote the Assyrian army, killing 185,000 in one night (2 Kings 19:35)
  - c. One angel killed 70,000 Israelites with pestilence (2 Samuel 24:15-17)
3. The number of the angels
- a. Revelation 5:11 numbers them at “ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands”, literally “myriads of myriads” – a countless multitude
  - b. Daniel 7:10 is similar: “thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him”
  - c. Hebrews 12:22 says they are “an innumerable company of angels”
  - d. Christ could have called twelve legions (72,000) angels to deliver him from the cross (Matthew 26:53)
4. The purpose of the angels
- a. The angels worship God (Nehemiah 9:6; Hebrews 1:6)
  - b. The angels obey God (Psalm 103:20)
  - c. The angels communicate the will of God (Luke 2:13-14)
  - d. The angels minister to the saints (Hebrews 1:14; Psalm 91:11-12)
  - e. Some think that Christ’s reference to “their angels” of the “little ones” in Matthew 18:10 supports the idea of believers having “guardian angels” assigned to them
  - f. At death, the believer’s soul is carried by angels to paradise (Luke 16:22)
5. On occasions, men have been permitted to see the hosts of angels (2 Kings 6:15-18)

6. The refrain of the seraphim – angelic beings that surround the throne of the LORD – is, “Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory” (Isaiah 6:3)

## **II. MAN’S DEPENDENCE ON JEHOVAH SABAOTH**

### **A. “Man's extremity is God's opportunity”**

1. God brings us to an end of ourselves in order that we might cry unto the Lord of Hosts and that he might show himself strong on our behalf
2. God’s strength is made perfect in weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9)
3. Often this name, Jehovah Sabaoth, is found where the saints are a desperate and hopeless situation, where the odds are impossible, and the only remedy is found in the Lord of Hosts

### **B. Joshua leading the children of Israel into Canaan (Joshua 5:13-15)**

1. As Joshua and the Israelites approached Jericho, they faced a daunting task before them
2. Jericho was a great and strong city and seemed impregnable
3. As he pondered their situation a man with a sword appeared before him, who identified himself as “captain of the host of the LORD”
4. In his time of need, Joshua’s faith was strengthened by this revelation of the Lord of Hosts, who was Christ himself, and who would command his hosts of angels to fight for Israel

### **C. Hannah’s prayer for a son (1 Samuel 1)**

1. Hannah’s barrenness was a grief to her, compounded by the provoking of Peninnah, her husband’s other wife
2. This continued for years, until she came to the house of God at Shiloh and prayed unto the Lord of Hosts (1 Samuel 1:9-11)
3. She had a need that was beyond human ability, but she brought that need to the Lord of Hosts, with whom nothing is impossible, and he answered her cry and gave her a son, Samuel

#### D. David against Goliath (1 Samuel 17)

1. When David was faced with Goliath, everything seemed to be against him
2. His eldest brother accused him of pride (1 Samuel 17:28)
3. The king said he was not able to fight the giant because of his youth (1 Samuel 17:33)
4. Goliath mocked and disdained him and cursed him by his gods (1 Samuel 17:42-43)
5. David's response was one of complete trust and confidence in Jehovah Sabaoth: "Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied" (1 Samuel 17:45)

### III. OUR ASSURANCE IN JEHOVAH SABAOTH

#### A. The Lord of Hosts promises to be with his people

1. Psalm 46 opens with a description of trouble, earthquakes, raging seas, the very earth being removed (Psalm 46:1-3)
2. And further in v.6, "the heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved (Psalm 46:6)
3. But in spite of all this, the child of God finds refuge, strength and help in God (v.1), and is able to "be still", while all around is turmoil and trouble (v.10)
4. Why? Because God is present, very present
5. Our God is both *transcendent* and *immanent*
6. This means he is high and far beyond us, yet he is at the same time *with us*
7. Twice in Psalm 46 we are assured "The LORD of hosts is with us" (vv.7,11)

8. This is a profound truth: the LORD of hosts – the exalted King with all power and authority over all things – he is *with us*!
- B. The Lord of Hosts will ultimately and finally accomplish his plan of redemption and establish his everlasting kingdom
1. God promised through the prophet Isaiah the coming King, the Messiah, who would have an endless reign of peace, judgment and justice (Isaiah 9:6-7)
  2. And to confirm the certainty that he will indeed come and reign, God gives this pledge: “The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this”
  3. There can be nothing more certain than if the Lord of Hosts has promised a thing – it *will* and *must* come to pass!

C. The Lord Jesus Christ is Jehovah Sabaoth

1. The Lord of Hosts who was worshipped by the seraphim in Isaiah 6 is shown to be Jesus Christ in John 12:41, “These things said Esaias, when he saw his [Jesus’] glory, and spake of him”
2. Psalm 24 which describes the Second Coming of Christ as the King of glory, shows his identity: “Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory” (Psalm 24:10)
3. When Christ returns from heaven to slay his enemies, the armies of heaven will follow him upon white horses, as he commands them as Lord of Hosts (Revelation 19:14)

## CONCLUSION

1. What a glorious, magnificent, exalted Name is this – Jehovah Sabaoth, the Lord of Hosts!
2. Yet how seldom do we hear it used today among the people of God
3. If the saints throughout history used this name, if the angels of heaven use this name, we would do well to incorporate the name “Lord of Hosts” for ourselves in our prayers to God, our praises to God and our preaching of God

4. In the Scriptures, and throughout church history we read accounts of angelic intervention in the lives of the saints, protecting and preserving them from their enemies
5. The holy angels continue to minister to the heirs of salvation today
6. The old saying is altogether true: "I am invincible until God calls me home"
  - ✓ God may call us home through old age
  - ✓ God may call us home through sickness or disease
  - ✓ God may call us home through an "accident"
  - ✓ God may call us home by martyrdom
7. But until then, no weapon formed against us shall prosper, as the Lord of Hosts is with us
8. God, through the prophet Haggai invoked this name, Lord of Hosts, to rebuke the children of Israel for prioritising their own welfare, while neglecting the things of God, particularly God's house (Haggai 1:5,7,9)
9. As he counselled them, so he counsels us, "Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways!"
10. What is the insurmountable problem, the hopeless situation, impossible odds that you are confronted with?
11. Rather than see such trials as unwelcome intruders, we ought to see them as God-sent opportunities for the Lord of Hosts to intervene and deliver us
12. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts" (Zechariah 4:6)
13. "O LORD of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee" (Psalm 84:12)