

The Names of God

Yahweh Shalom: This means “the LORD is peace” and is mentioned by Gideon in Judges 6:24. The significance of this name is that God gives us peace so that we need not fear.

Reflection Questions:

What is your understanding of the word or idea of “peace”?

We live in times where peace can be quite elusive. At first reading this name of God, do you think you’re able to let God be your peace? What is easy about this? What is hard about this?

Read Judges 6-7. Even though this is a war-filled story, Gideon identifies the LORD as his peace. What do you think Gideon’s part was in allowing God to be his peace?

What do you need to do to let God be your peace?

Qedosh Yisrael: This means “the Holy one of Israel”. It can be found in Isaiah 1:4. This name means that God is morally perfect, in fact the One who sets the standard for morality, which makes Him the model to strive after.

Reflection Questions:

At first glance, what is significant to you about God being morally perfect?

Read Judges 21:25. Does this adequately describe our society today? Are people “holy”? Do you think God’s holiness sets us up for failure? Why or why not?

Read Isaiah 6. How does Isaiah respond in the presence of God’s holiness?

Read Luke 5:1-11. How does Peter respond to Jesus’s miracle? Why do you think he links holiness to Jesus’s power?

How did God respond to Isaiah? How did Jesus respond to Peter? In light of these stories, do you think God’s holiness sets us up for failure?

Yahweh Sabaoth: This name identifies God as the “Lord of Hosts”. The book of 1 Samuel starts with Elkanah going to Shiloh (where the Tabernacle was) to sacrifice to the Lord of Hosts (1:3). Further down in the chapter, his wife Hannah entreats the “Lord of Hosts” for a son (1:11). The Hebrew word, Sabaoth, often has a military connotation such as:

- An earthly force of fighting men or an army (1 Samuel 17:45; Isaiah 13:4).
- Sometimes to the hosts of heaven (Psalm 148:2; 1 Kings 22:19), picturing God as Lord of the multitudes of angels, which are numbered as “a thousand thousands” and “ten thousand times ten thousand” (Daniel 7:10).
- Also used to describe the innumerable stars in the night sky (Psalm 33:6; 103:20-21).

Reflection Questions

Read Psalm 46. How is God’s sovereign power described in this poem?

What is humankind encouraged to do in light of God being “*Yahweh Sabaoth*”?

What about this is overwhelming to you? What about it gives you comfort or hope?

El Olam: The Everlasting God. The reference for this is Isaiah 40:28-31 and Psalm 90:1-3. God is eternal which means he has neither beginning nor end. El Olam combines two powerful concepts that reveal the eternal nature of God. "El" serves as the foundational Hebrew word for God, denoting strength, power, and divine authority. "Olam," meanwhile, carries the weight of eternity, expressing concepts of everlastingness, perpetuity, and timelessness.

Reflection Questions

Read Genesis 21:22-34. Why would this story record that Abraham called on the name of 'El Olam'? What does an Everlasting God have to do with a water rights treaty?

If God is 'El Olam,' how does this impact your ability to trust Him in this world where we see such disagreement over truth?

How might God's eternity impact your prayer life?

How might God's eternity assist us in evangelizing or discipling?

Read Psalm 90 in its entirety. How do you see Moses interacting with the Everlasting God? What do you want to carry with you from this prayer of trust?

Yahweh Tsidkenu: Two references to back this up are in Jeremiah 23:6 & 33:16. 'Yahweh Tsidkenu' is a Hebrew phrase that translates to "The Lord Our Righteousness." It is a name for God found in the book of Jeremiah, symbolizing God's role as the source of righteousness for His people.

Reflection Questions

What does it mean that He is our righteousness?

What about our own righteousness? Isn't trying to do your best enough?

Read 1 Corinthians 1:18-31 & 2 Corinthians 5:11-21. Paul identifies Jesus as becoming our righteousness. What other characteristics of Jesus does Paul identify in these passages?

How can the idea of God being or becoming our righteousness play out in your everyday life?

Yahweh Shammah: this literally means “The Lord is there” and is mentioned in Ezekiel 48:35. He brings into existence whatever exists. This reflects God’s role as the Creator and Sustainer and affirms that He is present among his people as opposed to being a distant god that you have to search for. ‘Yahweh Shammah’ is neither far away from us or unreachable.

Reflection Questions

Have you ever seen God as some cosmic cop who was waiting for you to step out of line? How does the knowledge that the LORD is always there make you feel? Is this something you’re worried about or encouraged by?

Have you ever felt alone in a situation, like no one truly saw what you were going through? Read 1 Kings 19. How does ‘Yahweh Shammah’ meet Elijah’s needs (physical, mental, spiritual, relational, etc.) in this story?

Read Revelation 21:22-22:5. Ezekiel 48 and the end of Revelation both describe God’s eternal presence. What image from this passage of Revelation sticks out to you as being significant to God’s being ‘Yahweh Shammah’?

Attiq Yomin: ‘Ancient of Days’. He is known by his timelessness and unchanging authority which makes him trustworthy. The prophet Daniel identifies God by this name contrasting his everlasting powers with the fragile existence of the empires of the world. It is from these descriptions of the Almighty that the Christian art got its general way to represent the first person of the Holy Trinity. ‘Attiq Yomin’ is Aramaic for "Ancient of days."

Reflection Questions

Read Daniel 7. Now look back at it and try to ignore all the fantastic imagery and focus on the character of the Ancient of Days. What does He do in Daniel’s vision?

In what way does Jesus, who identifies himself as the Son of Man (Daniel 7:13) more than by any other name in the gospels, act as this judge? How is the cross an act of judgement? How is the empty tomb an act of judgement?

Does God’s role as ultimate judge, not just for individuals, but over the nations as well, make you feel encouraged?

Review Questions

What is one (at least) way that your understanding of God has been deepened through looking at some of His names?

Does the way you “feel about who God is” make any difference to who God actually reveals himself to be?

Are there any bits of ‘embedded theology’ (beliefs about God that you grew up with or have held for a long time) that you need to rethink in light of this study?

How will knowing a little more about God’s nature and character help you to talk about Him more knowledgeably?