

LIVING WATERS NEWSLETTER

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JANUARY 2015

WHO IS GOD?

“And Moses and Aaron came and said to Pharaoh ‘Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, let My people go’...But Pharaoh said, ‘Who is the LORD that I should obey His voice?’ (Exodus 5:1, 2).

In writing the book of Romans, Paul shows that all the “unrighteous and ungodly” should have known God because “that which is known about God is evident within them, for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse” (Rom. 1:19, 20). If this is true of the unrighteous then how much more evident is it that they who allegedly claim righteousness should know who God is? To know God is to know who He is. Eternal life is contingent upon knowing God: “And this is eternal life that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent” (John 17:3). The “only true God” in this verse is Almighty God, the Father, the only one called or possessed the title “Almighty God.” The book of Revelation refers to God as “the Almighty God” nine times (1:8; 4:8; 11:17; 15:3; 16:7, 14; 19:6, 15; 21:22). It is God Himself that declares Himself to be the “Almighty”: “Jehovah appeared to Abram and said to him, ‘I am God Almighty’” (Genesis 17:1), God said to Jacob. “I am God Almighty” (Gen.35:11), and “God spoke to Moses and said, ‘I am Jehovah, and I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as God Almighty, but by My name, Jehovah I did not make Myself known to them’” (Exodus 6:3). (Most versions translate the word “Jehovah” or “Yahweh” as “LORD” throughout the Old Testament. The word ‘Lord’ is always in capital letters. *Zondervan’s Exhaustive Concordance* states that the word “Jehovah” [LORD] is used 6399 times in the Old Testament). The word is not used at all in the New Testament as the name of God. He is always referred to as “The Lord God” or “the Almighty.” The word “Lord” according to *Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* means “a title of honor, respect and reverence.” It is used of God, the Ruler of the universe, of Christ, the Messiah, and of servants saluting their master.

When God called Moses to go into Egypt and bring the nation of Israel out of slavery, Moses asked God that if they ask me, “‘What is His name? What shall I say to them?’ God said to Moses, ‘I AM WHO I AM, thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’ This is My name forever, and this is My memorial-name to all generations’” (Exodus. 3:13-15). Thus, the name of God identifies Him. It should be noted that many commentators and translators apply the name of God to Jesus. This is based on John 8:58: “Jesus said to them, ‘before Abraham was born, I am.’” I am is the Greek term *ego eimi* and is used several times in the New Testament in reverence to Jesus. Why did the translators capitalize I AM (*ego eimi*) here in John 8:58 and did not capitalize the same phrase in other places it is used? They always in these passages add “*he*” referring to his being the Messiah or Christ. John 4:25, 26: “The woman said to him, ‘I know that Messiah comes, which is called Christ, when he comes he will tell us all things.’ Jesus said to her, ‘I that speak to

you am (*ego eimi*) *he*.’” John 8:24: “For if you believe not that I am (*ego eimi*) *he*, you will die in your sins.” John 8:28: “When you have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am (*ego eimi*) *he*.” John 9:9 concerning the blind man Jesus healed: “Some said this is he, others said he is like him, but he said I am (*ego eimi*) *he*.” What Jesus said was: “Before Abraham was born, I am *he*” that is the Messiah. Just as Jesus was “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Rev. 13:8) he was the Messiah from the foundation of the world, and thus “before Abraham was born.” Contrary to much thinking Jesus was not the I AM (Jehovah) of the Old Testament.

We said “the name of God identifies Him.” To note some of the names of God in the Old Testaments helps us to see who He is. His name is not always evident in the English translations of the Scripture, although they give us the meaning of His name from the Hebrew, the Hebrew word is not always given. We will note some Hebrew words that proclaims His name and reveals God.

Genesis 22:14: “Abraham called the name of that place ‘The Lord will provide.’” *Jehovah-Jireh*. God had provided a ram for the sacrifice instead of his son, Isaac. He has provided us with a substitute offering for sin (Isaiah 53:6; I Cor. 15:3). “He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God...for by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified...their sins and lawless deeds I will remember no more...now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer any offering for sin” (Hebrews 10:12, 17, 18). Nothing we do can add any merit to what the sacrifice of Christ accomplished. “He made him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (II Cor. 5:21). He provides us with the Holy Spirit (Gal. 3:5). “If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit that dwells in you” (Rom. 8: 11), “He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and unrighteous” (Matt. 5:45), and “every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow” (James 1:17). He is *Jehovah-Jireh*. He provides.

Exodus 15:26: “I, the Lord, am your healer.” *Jehovah-Rophe*. God promised if Israel would obey His commandments he would bring none of the diseases of Egypt upon them. He would be the “healer” of all their diseases. God is the healer of nations. In the much miss-interpreted passage of II Chronicles 7:14 God promised to be the healer of Israel; If “My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and forgive their sins and heal their land.” Revelation 22:2 states that the leaves on the tree of life are for “the healing of the nations.” God is the healer of churches. To accept the fact that many churches are in need of healing we need look no further than I

Corinthians 11 (or better still the whole book) and five of the seven churches in Asia (Rev. 2, 3). The book of Hebrews warns the Hebrews to “not grow weary and lose heart” (Heb. 12:3). The word “weary” is the same word as “sick” in James 5:14, 15). He is the healer of the individual: He heals spiritually through fellow Christians (Gal. 6:1). He heals emotional (soulish) through the Spirit (Heb. 4:12). He heals physically through the Elders of the church and prayer (James 5:15, 16). He is *Jehovah-Rophe*. He heals.

Exodus 17:15: “Moses built an altar and named it “The Lord is My Banner.” *Jehovah-Nissi*. In the battle against Amalak, Moses held the rod of God above his head and Israel prevailed. Aaron and Hur supported him and Israel won the battle. The altar named *Jehovan-Nissi* was in commemoration of their victory that day. The banner is a sign of victory. The Psalmist said “We will sing for joy over your victory, and in the name of our God we will set up our banners” (Psalm 20:5). The Apostle Paul writes: “Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (I Cor. 15:57). Matthew’s gospel quotes Isaiah 42 that states Christ would “Lead justice to victory” (Matt. 12:20). We do not have to read the last book of the Bible in order to know that God gives us the victory. He is *Jehovah-Nissi*. He is our Banner.

Judges 6:24: “Then Gideon built an altar to the Lord and named it The Lord is Peace.” *Jehovah-Shalom*. God sent an angel to commission Gideon to free Israel from the Midianites. When Gideon saw that it was the angel of the Lord, he said, ‘Alas, O Lord God! For I have seen the angel of the Lord face to face. The Lord said to him, ‘Peace to you, do not fear you shall not die.’” One of man’s greatest fears is the fear of death. This fear holds man in slavery (Heb. 2:15) because the wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23). However, Christ, who knew no sin, became sin and “the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all” (Isa. 53:6). Our wages of sin having been paid, we can now be justified and free from the fear of death. Romans 5:1: “Having been justified by faith, we have peace through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Jesus said to the fearful and troubled Disciples, “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you, do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful” (John 14:27, 28). *Jehovah-Shalom*. He is our peace.

Jeremiah 33:16: In a prophecy concerning “the righteous Branch of David” Jeremiah states: “The name of God will be called: “The Lord is our Righteousness.” *Jehovah-Tsidkenu*. The Greek word for “righteousness” is sometimes translated “just” and “justified”. The word describes both God and the Christian. In W. E. Vine’s *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* he describes both the righteousness of God and the righteousness of the Christian in these words: “The righteousness of God means essentially the same as His faithfulness, or truthfulness, that which is consistent with His faithfulness, or truthfulness, that which is consistent with His own nature and promises...it is the gracious gift of God to men whereby all who believe in Christ are brought into right relationship with God.” The righteousness of God means He is right in all He does. His righteousness is revealed in the gospel (Rom. 1:16-21) and demonstrated in Christ (Rom. 3:21-26). Upon the basis of man’s faith and obedience he is declared righteous or justified (made right) with God. *Jehovah-Tsidkenu*. He is our righteousness.

Ezekiel 48:35: “The name of the city shall be *Jehovah-Shammah* the Lord is there.” Chapters 40-48 of Ezekiel, he is given a vision of the building of a city (not unlike John’s description of the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21, 22). This vision assures the people of Israel, now in captivity, they will return to their land and God will dwell among them. It has always been God’s purpose to have a people on earth in whom He could dwell, beginning with Adam and culminating with the church. Three things in Scripture are pictured as God’s dwelling: a body (I Cor. 12:12-14); a temple (Eph. 2:17-22); and a city (Rev. 21:1-3; 9, 10). Because Jesus ascended into heaven and “sat down on the right hand of God” we tend to think of God dwelling only in heaven. However, in the original language the word “heaven” is many times in the plural, that is, “heavens.” We pray the Lord’s Prayer “Our Father which art in heaven.” In this passage “heaven” is plural and should be translated “heavens” which means God is not confined to one place. He is everywhere. Yet He is specifically dwelling in His people. He is *Jehovah-Shammah*. He dwells here.

Another name for God is translated in plain English. Exodus 34:14: “You shall not worship any other god for the Lord, whose name is *Jealous*, Jehovah is a jealous God.” Ten times in the Old Testament it is said that “God is a jealous God” (not counting references to provoking Him to jealousy). God will allow nothing to take His place, be put before Him or take away the glory due Him. He is jealous for His Word. In the giving of the Ten Commandments He reminds them twice that He is a jealous God (Exodus 20:5; Deut. 5:9). He is jealous for His name: “I shall be jealous for My name” (Ezek. 39:25). He is jealous for His dwelling (Zion): “Thus says the Lord of hosts, ‘I am exceedingly jealous for Zion, yes, with a great wrath I am jealous for her’” (Zechariah 8:2). “Zion” is scriptural term referring to His people. We conclude, then, He is jealous for His church. That which causes God to be jealous can be summed up in one word: *Idolatry* (Deut. 4:23, 24; 6:14, 15; Josh. 24:19).

Who is God? Our eternal life depends upon our knowing just who God is. John 17:3: “This is eternal life, that they may know You (Father) the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.” Only the Father is “the only true God” and Jesus Christ is His son. The Apostle Paul states that “there is only one God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus” (I Tim. 2:5). We see Jesus’ answer to the question: Who is God? when answering the Scribe’s question “What commandment is foremost of all? Jesus answered, ‘The foremost is, ‘Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord...’” (Mark 12:28, 29). In Ephesians 1:17, the apostle Paul writes of “the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory.” It was clear to Paul that the God of Jesus is the Father of glory. Beginning his letter to the Ephesians, Paul blesses “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” In closing, he blesses them with “peace...and love with faith, from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ” (Eph. 1:3; 6:23). God is further described by Paul as “the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever, Amen” (I Tim. 1:17); and “He (God) who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords; who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light; whom no man has seen or can see. To Him be honor and eternal dominion forever!” (I Timothy 6:15, 16). Jesus has revealed this One to us as “Our Father.”