

# **EQTH105 Basic Bible Doctrine**

## **Unit 2d The Names of God**

Presented by the



**LANCASTER BIBLE COLLEGE**  
CAPITAL SEMINARY & GRADUATE SCHOOL

For Use by the

**Blue Letter Bible Institute**

**[Web: Study.Bible](http://Study.Bible)**

A Ministry of the

**Blue Letter Bible**

**[Web: BlueLetterBible.org](http://BlueLetterBible.org)**

In this last lesson in Unit 2, we are going to explore the meaning of the name of God. When we use the word name, it means the way that we address something or someone. My name is Chris. His name is Bill. Bill drives a Mustang. Those are all names. However, in Scripture, proper names have significance. Sometimes the same person will have two names. For example, when Rachel died, her son was called Ben-oni, the son of my sorrow. In Genesis, we read, “It came about as her soul was departing (for she died), that she named him Ben-oni; but his father called him Benjamin.” This is in Genesis 35:18. Jacob, the father, named him Benjamin, son of my right hand.

God’s name, as revealed in the Bible, is more than a combination of sounds. It stands for his character. God reveals something of himself by making known or proclaiming his name. The Bible says, “I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob as God Almighty, but by my name the LORD.” [Exo 6:3] We also read in Exodus, “And the Lord said, “I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the LORD, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.” [Exo 33:19]

So what do we do with the name of God? To call upon the name of God is to worship him. Genesis says, “From there he went on toward the hills east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. There he built an altar to the Lord and called on the name of the Lord.” [Gen 12:8] To worship God is to fear his name. “If you do not carefully follow all the words of this law which are written in this book and do not reveal this glorious and awesome name, the LORD your God.” [Deu 28:58] To worship God is to praise his name. “Therefore I will praise You, O LORD, among the nations; I will sing praises to Your name.” [2Sa 22:50] To worship God is to glorify his name. “All the nations you have made will come and worship before you, O Lord; they will bring glory to your name.” [Psa 86:9]

Now, in all of this, remember, it is a sin to misuse the name of the Lord. The Bible says, “You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.” The reason we don’t misuse the name of God is that his name is set apart. To reverence God is to sanctify or set apart his name. “This, then, is how you should pray: ‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.’” I bring this up because it seems today that we are really casual about using God’s name. I’m not talking about cursing, though it is that too. I’m talking about the empty use of his name when we say “Oh my God.” We even have initials for it: OMG.

So as we study the name of God, let’s dig a little deeper and look at one of his actual names, Jehovah. Now, the Hebrew words Elohim and Adonai are applied to something other than the true and living God. There is, however, one name that is unique to the God of the Bible. This name is Yahweh. An alternative transliteration is Jehovah. Yahweh refers to the self-existent, eternal God, the name God revealed to Moses when he said, “I AM WHO I AM,” and he said, “Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’” [Exo 3:14] Moses later wrote, “The Lord is a warrior; the Lord is his name.” [Exo 15:3] The name Yahweh or Jehovah is the name that God uses of himself.

The prophet Isaiah declared, “I am the LORD; that is my name! I will not give my glory to another or my praise to idols.” [Isa 42:8] Jeremiah wrote, “Therefore I will teach them-- this time I will teach them my power and might. Then they will know that my name is the LORD.” [Jer 16:21] Both of these verses are uses of the name Yahweh. In fact, in English translations of the Old Testament, whenever we find the word Lord spelled LORD with all capital letters, it is the translation of the name Yahweh. The name Jehovah or Yahweh is taken from the consonants of the divine name and the vowels for the Hebrew word for master, Adon. The four letters that spell the divine name YHWH or JHVH are called the Tetragrammaton.

The name Yahweh is sacred. Yahweh is the covenant keeping name of God. When the creative aspect of God is recorded, then the name Elohim is used, as in Genesis 1. However, when there is a relationship involved with humanity, the name Yahweh is used, as in Genesis 2. These differences are consistent throughout the entire Old Testament. Yahweh is used in combination with other names for God, as in Yahweh-Elohim. This is translated the Lord God. This title is used of God’s relationship to humanity as the creator and redeemer. Genesis 2:4 says, “This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created, when the LORD God made the earth and the heavens.” Later in the same chapter, we read, “So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept. Then he took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place.” [Gen 2:21]

Let’s talk through a few more variations on the name of God. When Adam and Eve sinned in the garden, Yahweh Elohim made them garments of skin. The Bible says, “The Lord God,” using those words, “made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them.” [Gen 3:21] This name is also used of God’s relationship to Israel. “The Lord, the God of heaven, who took me from my father’s house and from the land of my birth, and who spoke to me and who swore to me, saying, ‘To your descendants I will give this land,’ He will send His angel before you, and you will take a wife for my son from there.” [Gen 24:7] Moses also wrote, “God, furthermore, said to Moses, ‘Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, ‘The Lord (small letters), the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.’ This is My name forever, and this is My memorial-name to all generations.’” [Exo 3:15]

Another combination used in Scripture is Adonai-Yahweh. Moses said, “O Lord God, You have begun to show Your servant Your greatness and Your strong hand; for what god is there in heaven or on earth who can do such works and mighty acts as Yours?” [Deu 3:24] If you look up that verse in English, you will see it’s not all capitals, LORD. Joshua wrote, "Alas, O Lord God, why did You ever bring this people over the Jordan, only to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? If only we had been willing to dwell beyond the Jordan!" [Jos 7:7] Same thing, no caps.

He is also known as Yahweh Sabaoth, the Lord of hosts. “Now this man would go up from the city yearly to worship and to sacrifice to the Lord of hosts in Shiloh.” [1Sa 1:3] This combination occurs at times with reference to warfare. It occurs mostly when the nation of Israel is in some type of crisis. For example, we read, “The Lord of hosts is with us; The God of Jacob is our stronghold.” [Psa 46:7] It also speaks of God’s power and glory. “Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, He is the King of glory.” [Psa 24:10]

While we are talking about the names or terms for God, let's turn our attention to the Greek term for God. In the New Testament, the common word for God is the Greek word *theos*. *Theos* is the basis of the word theology, the study of God. *Theos* is used in a number of different ways in the New Testament. When the true God is spoken of, the word *theos* is used. For example, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God (*theos*), and the Word was God." [Jhn 1:1] The plural form of *theos* can refer to false gods. Indeed, even though there may be so-called gods, *theoses*, "in heaven or on earth, in fact, there are many gods and many lords." [1Co 8:5] The Greek word translated gods is the plural of *theos*. The word also can mean humans. Jesus used the word gods to refer to human rulers. Jesus answered, "Is it not written in your law, 'I said, you are gods'? If those to whom the word of God came were called 'gods'—and the Scripture cannot be annulled—can you say that the one whom the Father has sanctified and sent to the world is blaspheming because I said, 'I am God's Son'?" [John 10:34-36] *Theos* is the common word for God in the Greek New Testament. It normally refers to the true God. However, it can also refer to false gods and even humans. The context must be determined in order to understand how it is to be used.

So this lesson wraps up Unit 2, the identity of God. Next, we will tackle the nature of the Trinity. See you there.