

Truth for Today

The Bible teaching radio programme

For reply: Email: truthfortoday@aol.com

Broadcast Date: 12 February 2012

No. T0715

Speaker: Mr. Paul Thomson

The Believer's Resources: The Name of God

Good morning and welcome to *Truth for Today*. The title of our study is 'The Name of God'. This is the third talk in the series entitled 'The Believer's Resources'. This subject was suggested to help Christians understand and appreciate what is so remarkable and powerful about the Name, or Names of God. I have also included the names of the Lord Jesus later in the talk, because He is the Son of God, but truly God.

In the Bible, names are very significant. Names were often given because of their meaning. One of the clearest examples is Joseph, to whom, Pharaoh gave the name Zaphnath-paaneah (Genesis 41:45), meaning "saviour of the world". Joseph, of course, later became the Saviour of Egypt. When we choose names for children it is for different reasons. Sometimes it's just because you like the name; nothing else. You may decide on a Biblical name. Maybe it was your mum or dad's name. Or you may take the name of a famous person or celebrity you adore. Very few of us decide because of the meaning.

Names are important to identify each other. Often in years gone by, a son had exactly the same name as his father. For example the father was James and the son was James, so to identify whom you were talking about it had to be 'James senior' and 'James junior'. Sometimes local people were better known by their 'nick name' because of this.

Once we identify who a person is by their name, we have a picture in our mind of what they look like, where they live, how many children they have, if they are rich or poor. If we know them well we can think about their character. Is he or she a good person? All this knowledge that we have about a person creates a picture that we connect to their name. It's how we use this information that is the key. Often we immediately judge a person which is wrong. We may look up and respect the person. The way we use that person's name is also important. We may use it in a derogatory way, in gossip or even name dropping to help a cause. We can use that name also in a loving, caring or comforting way.

The reason for giving you these examples is to illustrate the importance of a name and the different ways we consider that person often by how well we know them.

God has many names. If we look through our Bibles from Genesis to Revelation we read of the same God, but with many different names. I have come to the conclusion that the character of God is so vast that it cannot be encapsulated in one name. I would like to go through various names of God in the Bible and see what they mean, see God's character displayed in them and learn what they mean to us today.

The nine names we are going to look at and their meanings are:

1. **Elohim:** strength and creative power;
2. **Jehovah:** Self Existing;
3. **El Shaddai:** Almighty God;
4. **Adonai:** Master;
5. **Jehovah (Sabaoth):** warfare and service;
6. **Immanuel:** God with us;
7. **Jesus:** Saviour;
8. **Christ:** The Anointed One;
9. **Abba:** Father.

1. Elohim: strength and creative power

Genesis 1:1 says; "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth". God, in this verse, is the English form of the Hebrew "Elohim". This means "strength and creative power" which we see clearly in the Creation. In Genesis 1:26 we can see the Godhead: "Let us make man in our image", the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, an example of the full Godhead or Trinity working together. The believer today can enjoy considering God as the great Creator, the One who put the heavens and the earth into place by the word of His mouth. In Psalm 124:8 we read: "Our help is in the name of the LORD who made heaven and earth". It is a great comfort to know that we know the Creator. One of my favourite

holidays is skiing. I have found myself many times winding through the trees looking around at the mountains and the wonderful scenery singing to myself:

*"O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder,
Consider all the works Thy hand hath made".*

Stuart K Hine (1899-1989)

It is good for us to acknowledge and worship God when we recognise the wonders of Creation.

2. Jehovah: Self Existing

Genesis 2:4 speaks about the "LORD God who made the earth and the heavens". The primary meaning of the name LORD, "Jehovah or Yahweh", is "the self-existent One". He that is, who He is, therefore the eternal "I AM". But Havah, from which Jehovah, or Yahweh, is formed, signifies also "to become", that is, 'to become known'. So Jehovah means, "the self existing One who reveals Himself". So we can see that as Jehovah it was His desire to have a special relationship with man. He it was who sought (Genesis 3:9) out Adam and Eve when they sinned in the garden (Genesis 2:17-3:24), He it was who clothed them with coats of skin (Genesis 3:21). The revelation of the name Jehovah we find in Exodus 3:13-17. There He promises to redeem His people and bring them out of the affliction of Egypt. In the New Testament He is revealed to us in the person of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

3. El Shaddai: Almighty God

In Genesis 17:1, we have the revelation of God as El Shaddai, Almighty God. The meaning of El signifies the "strong one". Shaddai is formed from the Hebrew word "shad", the breast. In Scripture, it is used primarily for a woman's breast which would bring nourishment, strength and satisfaction. El Shaddai is the name of God which sets Him forth as the Strength-giver and Satisfier of His people. Eli Shaddai not only enriches but makes fruitful as we see in Abraham who was told he would be the father of many nations (Genesis 17:5). In the book of Job the name Almighty occurs 31 times in a different character, the One who chastens His people. In the days of Abraham and Job, God spoke to them directly. They likewise walked and talked with God. The people relied on the words and actions of these men to do what was right in God's eyes. The people had no direct relationship with the Almighty One. Today it is different; individually we have been brought near by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:13). The distance has been removed. However we can look upon God as the Almighty One "in whom we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28), the One who sustains the universe and the upholder of all things. He is the One who holds us in His hand (Colossians 1:17). Our very breath is given by Him. With reverence we would do well to meditate on and take comfort in the fact that God is in control in every way.

4. Adonai: Master

In Genesis 15:2 we read how Abraham addresses the Lord GOD. Here the word in Hebrew is "Adonai", which means 'Master'. We can see that Abraham was acknowledging that he was the servant and God the master. A servant needs direction in service but must also be obedient to his master. We too must acknowledge this servant - master relationship with reverence in our lives as we live in this world.

5. Jehovah (Sabaoth): warfare and service

When we read verses like Proverbs 18:10 and 1 Samuel 17:45 we can see God as the One who gives us strength, security, safety and power. When David went out to meet Goliath he went in the name of the "LORD of Hosts". This is another of God's names; Jehovah (Sabaoth) in reference to warfare and service. So David could depend on God to be with Him while he went forward to meet the enemy. We too can depend on Him in a similar way as we serve Him in this world while facing the wiles of the devil. Of course we have the scripture in the New Testament that we must put on the whole armour of God to protect us (Ephesians 6:10-17), but the armour must go on with prayer (Ephesians 6:18) and total dependence on Him. We must depend entirely on Him because without Him we can do nothing. We also see in Psalm 24:10 that He is the LORD of hosts and the King of glory.

I have already commented on the fact that God spoke through various means to individuals and prophets and it was their work to convey God's thoughts to the people. In Hebrews 1:2-3 we read that; "[God] hath in these last days spoken to us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory, the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high". Today we are very privileged that God the Son came Himself into this world to reveal the heart of God to us. I read a little pamphlet written by a dear lady about her life. She spent her life entirely in the Lord's service. Whilst serving in India she tells the story of a young Indian nurse who came to work with her. Her name was Lakshmi which means "goddess of wealth". She was from the lowest outcast community. She came to know the Lord Jesus as her Saviour and she took on the name of Kirubai

meaning "grace". Her morning prayer was "O God Almighty, how wonderful that You love us and You like us to call You Father, and You sent Your Son to die for us, and today, do please help us so that the people coming here learn to know about You too". What a wonderful sincere prayer of appreciation, thanksgiving and worship.

6. Immanuel: God with us.

In Mathew 1:23 the name Immanuel is mentioned which means, "God with us". The only way that God could reveal His wonderful heart of love toward us was coming into this world and living amongst men, in the likeness of man, but truly God. How wonderful that God loved us so much that He was prepared to send His only Son to be the Saviour!

7. Jesus: Saviour

To the believer today there is no name like the name of Jesus. We read in Matthew 1:20-21 that the angel of the Lord appeared unto Joseph, to tell him his wife Mary was to have a son. He was instructed that he was to call Him Jesus, which means "Saviour" (Matthew 1:21); because He was to save His people from their sins. Jesus was the name by which He was known as He walked through this world. Luke 2:52 tells us; "the young man Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man". In His early years, He lived in Nazareth with His parents working as a carpenter. During the years of His public ministry, when He went about preaching and doing miracles He was known to the people as Jesus. His character was one of love, kindness, goodness, patience and holiness. His witness was of His Father and to declare to this world the Father who had sent Him into this world (John 1:18). His work was to do His Father's will (John 4:34) and go to the cross of Calvary to die and take the punishment of our sins. He was proclaimed there as Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews (John 19:20). We, as Christians, should love and appreciate the name of Jesus because of what He did for us at the cross. There are many lovely hymns that would express our thoughts about His name much better than I can:

*"Jesus", O how sweet the name,
"Jesus" every day the same,
"Jesus" let all saints proclaim,
His worthy name forever'.*

(William C Martin 1864-1914)

And,

*'His name is wonderful, His name is wonderful,
His name is wonderful, Jesus my Lord,
He is the mighty King, Master of everything,
His name is wonderful, Jesus my Lord'.*

(Audrey Mieir 1916-1996)

When we think of the name of Jesus we consider His life and His death. Oh, how we should value His name. Do we shiver when someone uses His wonderful name as a swear word? Are we quick to speak of Him? I would like to challenge you this day as to how much the name of Jesus means to you?

8. Christ: The Anointed One

When we go on a little further into the New Testament we see Jesus referred to as Jesus 'Christ'. Christ means 'the anointed one', in Hebrew it is interpreted 'Messiah'.

Jesus being His human name, Christ is His official name or title. In Matthew 3:16, He was anointed with the Holy Spirit so then He was officially "the Christ". We know that although Jesus died, He rose again and went back to heaven. We read in many scriptures of Jesus Christ. This would speak of the Man Himself, the anointed one who will return again and will soon be crowned King of kings and Lord of lords (See Revelation 19:16). Sometimes He is referred to as Christ Jesus which would tell us that He is in Heaven. Christ Jesus is the head of the Church, that is, of each one of us who are true Christians. The name Christian means 'one who belongs to Christ' (see Acts 11:26). Dear fellow Christian, are we worthy to take on that name? Yes, we are worthy! We belong to Him because He has purchased us at a tremendous cost. But do we live up to that name? Today it is so easy to say 'I'm a Christian'. Would we say this so easily if we were faced with the choices that many dear martyrs were faced with in Britain a few hundred years ago? Be happy to take on His great name, but let's strive to be like Him.

9. Abba: Father

Lastly I would like to bring to your attention God revealed as "Abba" which means Father. The Lord Jesus came into this world to reveal the Father to us. In John 15:16, the Lord Jesus tells us that if we ask the Father anything in the

name of Jesus He will give it to us. So you can see that over the ages that the difference between the names 'Almighty God' and 'Father' are great. Today we can still consider God as the 'Almighty' because of His greatness.

But we are privileged because we know Him as our Father, which brings God before us in a different way - a loving, close, intimate relationship between a Father and His children. How wonderful that we are in the position of children of God because of the work of redemption on the cross (1 John 3:1-2). We can approach the Father in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus wants us to know His Father. He wants us to understand His Father's loving heart. He could say, "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9). He tells us of His Father's house which will be our home above (John 14:1-3).

As we close our talk today, I hope that in looking at the different names and their meanings we have listed, you will be encouraged to consider God's character and how we can use His name for comfort, strength, sustenance, nearness, thanksgiving and praise.

May God bless you today, Amen.

Please Note:

We encourage you to use this transcript for your personal or group Bible studies. This material should not, however, be used in any publications without the express permission from Truth for Today, whose contact details can be found on page 1. Large Print copies of this document are also available upon request.