

BIBLE CHALLENGE 2019

Week 9: February 24-March 2

What is God's Name?

Read: Genesis 1:1; 2:16; 14:18-20; 17:1; 21:33; 22:14; 33:20; 43:14; **Exodus 3:13-15**; 6:3,6; 17:15; 20:1,5; Numbers 24:16; Deuteronomy 6:13; 10:20; 32:4; Judges 6:24; 1 Samuel 1:3,11; 2:3; 17:47; Psalm 7:17; 23:1; 42:8; 43:4; 47:2; 78:56; 94:1; 95:6; Isaiah 10:21; 26:4; 63:16; Jeremiah 10:10; 33:16; 51:56; Ezekiel 48:35; Luke 1:32; Acts 22:14; Romans 9:29; 15:13; 2 Corinthians 6:18; Philippians 4:9; James 1:17; 5:4; Revelation 1:8; 16:14; 19:6. Read Malachi in its entirety.

So, what do you call God? Many of us just call him that: "God." Yet, God is what he is, not so much his name. We sometimes call him "Lord" or "LORD" (when Lord shows up in all capitals, that indicates the covenantal name of God is being used there (see more on that below) and sometimes we call him Father as is in the Lord's Prayer. But does God have a proper name, like Bill, Frank, or Joe? The answer might surprise you...because, yes, he does.

Yahweh/Jehovah

When God calls Moses to return to Egypt and to lead the people out, one of Moses' concerns is, "Who shall I say sent me?" The answer that is given is usually translated in our Bibles as "I AM WHO I AM." In this passage, God says, "This is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout the generation." Here, we have the closest thing to a personal name of God that the Bible offers (apart from that of Jesus, which we will talk about later in the year).

In Hebrew, this name is spelled using four consonants: YHWH. Remember, Hebrew writing only contains consonants, not vowels (apart from a few exceptions — a system of accent marks tells you what vowel sounds are present for pronunciation purposes). And here is where the name of God gets complicated. Somewhere by the 4th Century BC, the Jewish people became so fearful of breaking the 3rd Commandment that they refused to actually pronounce the name of God at all. This is a practice that continues to this day, where Yahweh is often pronounced as Adonai (Which means, "Lord") or as Hashem (which literally means: "The Name").

And so, to prevent people reading the Bible from accidentally saying God's covenantal name, they intentionally placed wrong accent marks under the vowels. In fact, there are ten different ways that the vowels are used, which has historically kept scholars on their toes.

Yet, that is not the only problem. For many years, the pronunciation of the letter "Y" was debated. Some argued that it should be pronounced more like a soft "J." That may sound a little funny to our English ears, but the "J" sound developed as an alternate pronunciation of the letter "I" in Latin...and in Latin, the Hebrew letter "Y" is transliterated as an "I." In addition, the letter "W" in modern Hebrew is pronounced as a "V" (though studies of ancient languages indicates that it originated as a softer, "W" sound). Double Yikes.

As a result of all of this, YHWH was originally pronounced as "Jehovah" (think JHVH). In the 20th Century, though, oodles of ancient manuscripts have been discovered, which have aided scholars in discerning the proper ancient pronunciation of this name of God...Yahweh being the accepted reading. And while Jewish people still avoid its use, Christians are encouraged by the language of scripture that it is by this name God says that he will be known to us...a personal and covenantal name of God.

In the end, this name of God is used more frequently than any other name or title of God given in the Bible — in fact it is used 6,828 times in the Old Testament. It is the name by which God forms covenants and it is the name by which we are to come into his presence. It is even the name in which we are to take oaths.

Elohim

The second most common name that God is referred to in the Bible is that of Elohim...used 2,602 times in the Old Testament. This is actually the plural form of the name "El" which most commonly is translated as "God." Elohim is a name typically associated with the power of God (the Jewish notion was that God was so powerful that a singular name could not do him justice) and Christians have historically understood this name as an indicator of the plurality of God's person (Father, Son, and Spirit). It is also the name that God uses when he utters his Law from upon Mount Sinai.

Adonay

In Hebrew, "Adon," means Lord. The "ay" ending to a noun puts the noun in the superlative. Thus, "Adonay" means "Lord of Lords" or the "Greatest of all Lords." This name of God is found 444 times in the Old Testament and it is typically used in times of exultation. In addition, for many years, it was the tradition of the Jewish people to insert the word "Adonay" in the place of "Yahweh" when reading or using the covenantal name.

Yahweh Tsebaoth

Have you ever been singing the hymn, "A Mighty Fortress is Our God," and wondered, when we got to verse 2, why it says "Lord Sabaoth His name"? Sometimes people mistakenly think that it is a reference to Jesus being the Lord of the Sabbath. No, it is a reference to this name of God found 242 times in the Old Testament (most frequently in Malachi!).

Remember, references to Yahweh in the Old Testament are written as "Lord" in most translations of the Bible — even in translations outside of English. And, Sabaoth is an early transliteration of what is likely better transliterated as "Tsebaoth" — which, in Hebrew, means "Armies." Another word for "armies," popular in the 1600's (when the King James Version was translated) is "hosts"... and thus, we are used to hearing God spoken of as being "Lord of Hosts." This is Yahweh Tsebaoth in Hebrew and is what Luther meant by Lord Sabaoth" in his great hymn. Thus, remember, when you are singing this hymn about God's mighty defense of his church, the reference is meant to remind us that God is the God of all Armies and he has an Army (a host) of Angels at his disposal (note...ever wonder what is meant by "the heavenly host"? Now you know).

El Shaddai

Here we move into less common names of God, which build on the word "El," meaning "God," and a character trait or attribute of God. Most of these names are only used a handful of times, but they convey a great deal about God's character. El Shaddai literally means "God of the Mountain" but is often translated as "God Almighty." In Christian circles, it became a household name of God in 1982 when Amy Grant covered the Michael Card song by the same name — a song that used several of the names of God in adoration and praise.

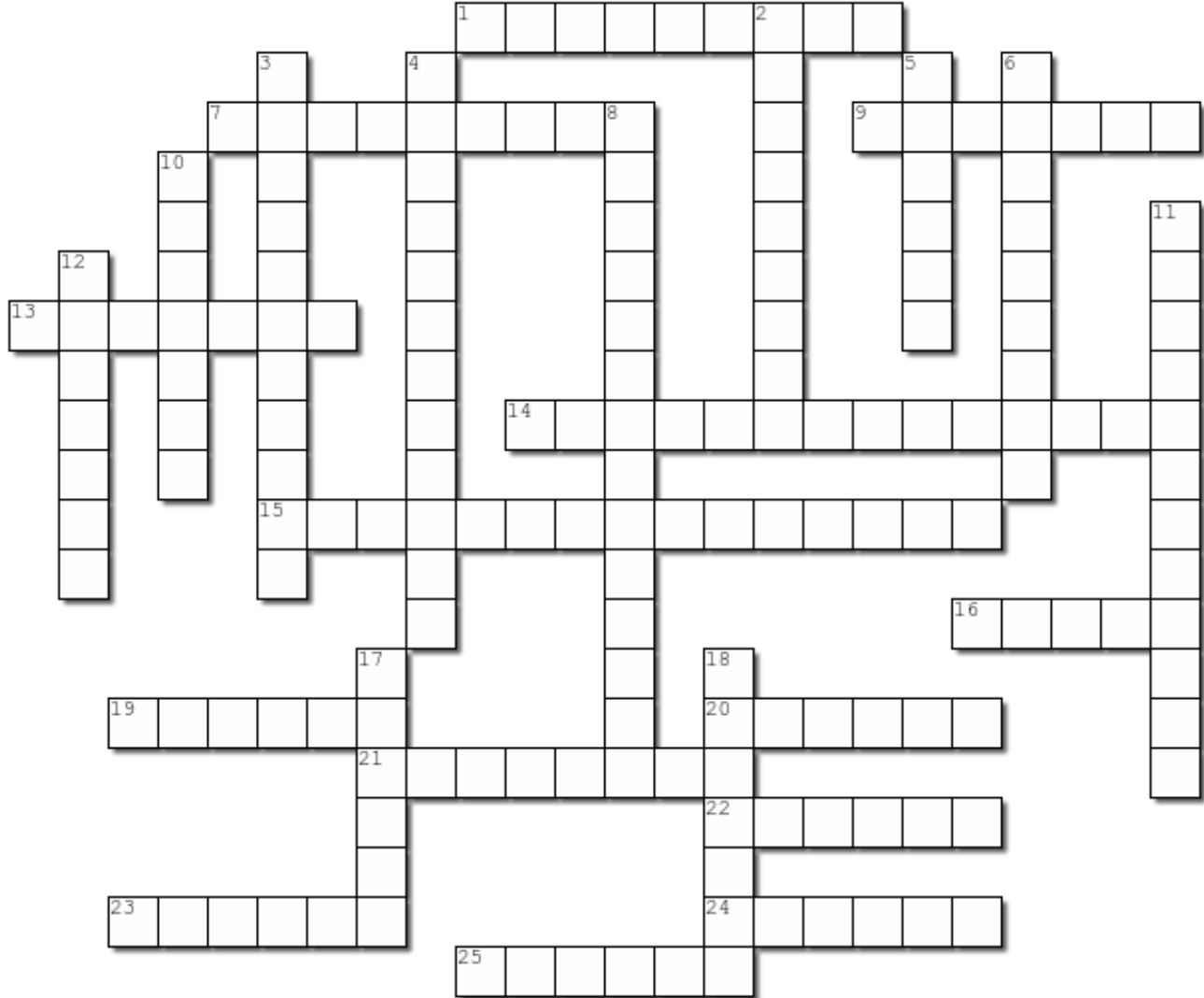
In Hebrew circles, the name El Shaddai has historically been a "household name" in the literal sense of the phrase. In Deuteronomy 6:9, God's people are commanded to write the words of God on the doorposts to their homes. To accomplish this, the Mezuzah was created (a small, clear cylinder affixed to the doorpost of the front door). On the outside of the Mezuzah are typically the letters: Sh-D-Y. These are the Hebrew letters that make up the word "Shaddai." Sometimes only the letter "Sh" is found on the Mezuzah, but it still points to this name.

Yahweh Yireh/Jehovah Jireh

Another name of God that was made popular by praise songs is that of Jehovah Jireh. This is typically translated as "God is My Provider," though probably a better translation is "Yahweh understands my need."

There are numerous other names that are attributed to God in the Scriptures that are designed to highlight one attribute of his character... names like: El Elyon (God Most High), El Rayiy (God of Seeing), El Olam (God of Eternity), El Elmunah (God of Faithfulness), El Gibor (God of Strength or God the Warrior), El Simchath Gili (God of My Jubilant and Exultant Joy), and my favorite, El Hayay (God of My Life). In most of these cases, the names only are ever used once or twice, but they are useful in conveying the character of our infinite and glorious God.

Week 9: God's Name



Created using the [Crossword Maker](#) on [TheTeachersCorner.net](#)

Across

1. Abraham planted a tree in this location and he called on the name of the LORD, the Everlasting God.
7. God is a God of _____ as well as a God of Love.
9. God Most High (2 words).
13. God of Seeing (2 words).
14. The Name of God which Martin Luther used in a Hymn (Hebrew spelling) — 2 words.
15. 'The Lord God is an _____.' (2 words)
16. From what ancient language did our English letter 'J' originate?
19. One of the Altars that Moses erected, he called 'The LORD is my _____'.
20. The plural name of God.
21. Jesus is referred to as the 'Son of El Elyon' which means he is the Son of _____. (2 words)
22. Gideon builds an altar he calls 'the LORD is peace' here in this location.
23. James refers to God as the 'Father of _____'.
24. Lord or 'Lord of Lords'
25. By this name we are to know the Lord.

Down

2. God of Faithfulness (2 words).
3. He is referred to as a Priest of 'God Most High.'
4. God is my provider (2 words)
5. God of Eternity (2 words).
6. God of the Mountain (2 words).
8. God of my jubilant and exultant joy (3 words).
10. God of My Life (2 words).
11. 'The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice, a God of _____ and without iniquity, just and upright is he.'
12. God the Warrior (2 words).
17. What the word 'hosts' means.
18. An older way that Yahweh was written.