

WHO IS GOD?



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WHO IS GOD?

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SECTION ONE: WHO IS GOD?

Have you ever stopped to wonder who God is? We can find a pretty good definition of the word 'god' if we look in the dictionary. According to Webster, the word is defined as:

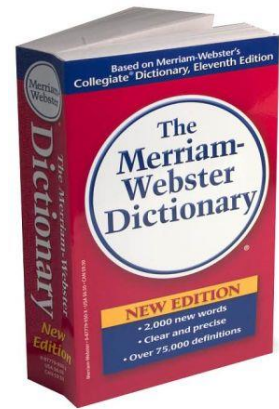
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noun

: the perfect and all-powerful spirit or being that is worshipped especially by Christians, Jews, and Muslims as the one who created and rules the universe

: a spirit or being that has great power, strength, knowledge, etc., and that can affect nature and the lives of people : one of various spirits or beings worshipped in some religions

: a person and especially a man who is greatly loved or admired



While these definitions can be used to define the word 'god', I am more interested in knowing who God is. In Genesis 1:1 we are introduced to this same word, god, but capitalized as God. *"In the beginning **God** created the heavens and the earth."* The word used here to define God is the Hebrew word 'ELOHIYM, not 'elowahh. Here is the difference. 'Elowahh refers to a deity, or a god. In essence this god is just one of many. But with the Scriptures reading 'ELOHIYM, it brings a distinguishing to the word used, for it translates as a specific god, the supreme God, the mighty God, the great God. The God in Genesis 1:1 is not one of many, He is the one and only true God, the God above all others.

When I begin to think on this topic of one god being greater than all others, my mind automatically turns to Exodus 3. It is within this chapter that we find Moses standing before the burning bush. Yet how did Moses get to this place? We probably all know the story of the little child in the basket floating down the Nile and washing up in the place where Pharaoh's daughter was taking her bath. Moses' sister, who happens to be in this private area, offers to fetch a Hebrew woman to wean the child, and forty years pass. Soon enough, Moses somehow figures out that the Hebrews are his people, and in seeing injustice done, he steps in and kills an Egyptian man. The next day Moses stumbles upon injustice once more, this time between two Hebrews, and again steps in.

Yet this time he is questioned by the Hebrews, *“Who made you ruler and judge over us? Are you thinking of killing me as you killed the Egyptian?...”(Ex 2:14a)*. Knowing now that he had been found out, and knowing also that Pharaoh wanted to kill him (Ex 2:15), Moses flees Egypt and comes into the region of Midian.

It is here in Midian that Moses’ life starts over, both physically and spiritually. In the process of forty years, Moses weds one of the daughters of Jethro, Tzipporah, and has a child, Gershom. During his time in Midian, the Pharaoh who wanted Moses dead has himself passed on. So Moses has become a shepherd. It was while out with the sheep, however, that he sees something that cannot leave his attention – a bush consumed with fire, yet not burning (Ex 3-4).



Moses approaches the bush, and from it hears his named being called, *“Moses! Moses!”* He answers with the response, *“Here I am.”* From within the bush the voice gives him direction, explaining the calling that he is to move

forward in. That calling is the deliverance of the Hebrew people. But it wasn’t enough for Moses to hear this voice. He wanted to know who this ‘god’ was. Who was beckoning him? Who was sending him? Who would be his power in this task? And why did he want to know? Well to answer this we must understand the culture from which Moses came.

For forty years Moses had been raised in a culture where there was a god for everything. For issues relating to the sun, one beckoned to Ra. For issues relating to fertility, one called out to Heket. If one needed help with their crops, a prayer was offered to Hathor. And if the weather just wasn’t going your way, you could petition to Seth. So with this knowledge that there was not just one god, Moses questioned the voice speaking from within the bush, *“Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to the them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ Then what shall I tell them?”* (Ex 3:13).

In all actuality, this was a valid question. And to this question God answered, *“I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: I AM has sent me to you.”* In the Hebrew it reads, *“God said further to Moshe, ‘Say this to the people of Isra’el: ‘Yud-Heh-Vav-Heh [ADONAI], the God of your fathers, the God of Avraham, the God of Yitz’chak and the God of Ya’akov, has sent me to you.’”*

This name, ADONAI, is so holy that it is not spoken as a name, but rather as letters in the Hebrew Bible, *Yud-Heh-Vav-Heh*. It is this name that we are commanded not to take in vain (Commandment 3). This name alone holds the power of God Himself. And this

יהוה

name, written as יהוה carries an unknown power that makes the devil wince and demons shrink back. As we look a little deeper at this, we can find that this name is known as the Tetragrammaton. In English, this name is written as YHWH, and is derived from the Hebrew triconsonantal root. It is mainly translated from the Hebrew in English texts as “I am what I am” or “I will be that which I am now”.

The point in all this etymology is not to bore you, but rather to help in the understanding of our text. In John 18, as Jesus was finishing His prayer in the garden, the Roman soldiers were on the move. Their mission was to find the Christ and arrest him. It is hard to say if they were unsure of what Jesus looked like, or if it was too dark and they couldn't make his face out in the light of the torches, but either way they were asked by Jesus who they were looking for. The small army replied, “Jesus of Nazareth.” As Jesus replied, “*I am he,*” the soldiers fell down (Jn 18:6). Notice the power of His name, such power that the crowd fell down. And this same name was the name that Moses was to take with him to Egypt, the Tetragrammaton name of YHWH.

Now if the *I AM WHO I AM*, or *I WILL BE ALL THAT YOU NEED ME TO BE*, is a right translation of the original word used, then would God not have had to prove that He was all that they needed Him to be? Taking a look just at what Moses and the Israelites needed Him to be, I come up with a few characteristics of God.

- 1) The Israelites needed God to be REDEMPTION. They needed to see that God would redeem them from their slavery. God proved this characteristic. He was their redemption, for in Exodus 12:31, Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and told them, along with all the Israelites, to leave. The promise that God had given to Abraham concerning slavery and redemption (Gen 15:12-16) was coming true.
- 2) They needed God to be LOVE. A loving parent not only hears his child, but listens to his child. In listening to the cries of the Israelites (Ex 3:7), God proved His care and compassion; His love for them.

- 3) They needed God to be YOKE-BREAKING. There were occasions where Moses was granted an offer from Pharaoh to go ahead and leave (Ex 8:28, 10:8-11, 10:24), but in each of these occasions not every person or every animal belonging to the Israelites was allowed to go.



- This means that some remainder of the curse of slavery was still holding Israel in bondage. But God had spoken in Exodus 6:6-7 that He was a God who would not only bring them out of Egypt, but bring them out from under the yoke of slavery.
- 4) They needed God to be PROVISION. After leaving Egypt, the people passed over the dry ground of the Red Sea, to the oasis of Elim, and then into the Desert of Sin, before making it to the base of Mount Sinai. Food and water were hard to find in the desert, yet still God proved Himself as Jehovah Jirah, their Provider, in giving them manna, quail, and water, and keeping their clothes from becoming rags.

- 5) They needed God to be DIRECTION. Proverbs 3:5-6 says to trust in the LORD with all our heart, lean not on our own understanding, acknowledge Him in all our ways, and He will make our paths straight. Basically, in trusting Him, He becomes our direction. As the Israelites trusted God to lead them with the fire and cloud, they were able to find their way into the Promise Land He was taking them to. In guiding them from point A to point B, He proved to be their direction.



- 6) They needed God to be a WARRIOR. There were battles that still had to be fought after they were released from Egypt's hand. It was after they crossed the Red Sea and had seen the waters wash over Egypt's army that Miriam states this characteristic of God best, singing, *"The LORD is a warrior; the LORD is his name (Ex 15:3)."* The term for war here is MILCHAMAH, meaning one who fights or engages in war. God proved that He would fight for His people, for even as Aaron and Hur held up Moses' hands, we read of a victory that came to Israel (Ex 17:8-16) over the Amalekites.
- 7) They needed God to be POWER AND MIGHT. In the most miraculous of ways, God proved His power and might to all those with Moses. For every

Egyptian god, God proved His authority by destroying what it supposedly reigned over.

- Over Hapi, the god of the Nile, God proved His power as the water was turned to blood.
- Over Heket, the goddess of fertility whose face is that of a frog, God proved His power by bringing a horde of frogs that Pharaoh's men could not stop.
- Over the god of the dust, Geb, God showed his power by producing an onslaught of lice from the dust when the ground was touched by the staff.
- Over the god of insects, Khepri, God showed His power by sending swarms of them to infest the homes of the Egyptians.
- Over the god of livestock, Hathor, God showed His power by bringing a plague of destruction over the horses, donkeys, camels, cattle, and flocks, bringing on them a devastating illness.
- Over the goddess of health and medicine, Isis, God showed His power by bringing on the people the plague of boils.
- Over the goddess of thunder and hail, Nut, God showed His power as hail struck the fields, the people, and the animals, taking the life of all living things left in its path.
- Over the god of the wind and storms, Seth, God proved His power in sending a wind that blew in with it a horde of locusts to invade Egypt. They covered the ground, ate the plants, and attacked any green thing that showed signs of life and was not already destroyed.
- Over the god of the sun, Ra, God showed His power by hiding the sun from Egypt, bringing a darkness so thick that it could be felt by the people.



And finally, God proved His power as the giver and taker of life, a power that only He holds. The warning had been given to Moses that at midnight the final plague would roam Egypt, and a great cry never before heard would invade the land. True to His word,

In Micah, the promise of peace , In Nahum, He is our strength and our shield
In Habakkuk and Zephaniah, He's pleading for revival,
In Haggai, He restores a lost heritage, In Zechariah, our fountain,
In Malachi, He is the son of righteousness rising with healing in His wings

He is, He is, HE IS!

In Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, He is God, Man, Messiah
In the book of Acts, He is fire from heaven , In Romans, He's the grace of God
In Corinthians, the power of love , In Galatians, He is freedom from the curse of sin

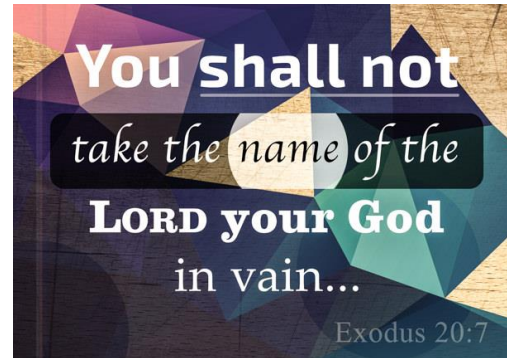
Ephesians, our glorious treasure, Philippians, the servants heart
In Colossians, He's the Godhead Trinity, Thessalonians, our coming King
In Timothy, Titus, Philemon He's our mediator and our faithful Pastor
In Hebrews, the everlasting covenant, In James, the one who heals the sick.
In First and Second Peter, he is our Shepherd,
In John and in Jude, He is the lover coming for His bride
In the Revelation, He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords

He is, He is, HE IS!

The prince of peace, The Son of man
The Lamb of God , The great I AM
He's the alpha and omega, Our God and our Savior
He is Jesus Christ the Lord, and when time is no more
He is, HE IS!

SECTION TWO: THE NAMES OF GOD

Now that we have looked at who God is based on His answer to Moses at the burning bush, I want us to focus our attention on Exodus 20:7, which reads, “*You are not to use lightly the name of ADONAI your God, because ADONAI will not leave unpunished someone who uses his name lightly.*” You have probably heard this better said, “Do not take the Lord’s name in vain.” The reason is because God’s name carries weight. It is in the reduction of His name that this commandment is broken and the punishment allowed to fall on the abuser.



As we discussed previously, this name is so holy that it is not spoken as a name, but rather as letters in the Hebrew Bible. However, you will find in Jewish circles also that when the name is written in English, the name is still not written out fully. Again, in fear that the name may be abused, be it in speaking or spelling, a caution is put into place. As such, many will write the name as *G-D*, or *L-RD*. To them this is reverence. In fact, many believe that the name should only be spoken or written by clergy, as they are entrusted to revere God as their occupation and not use it in vain. The term ‘in vain’ in Hebrew is the word *LASHAV*, meaning with emptiness, in vanity, consisting of nothing, or worthless.

Before we dive in too far, however, let us talk about names. A name defines a person. Years ago when I sat down with my wife to pick out names for our children, we didn’t just open a book and chose the first name we saw. We were purposed. We named our children based on the meaning behind the name and qualities we wanted to see in them. For example, my oldest son’s name is Nicholas, which mean *Victorious Warrior*. We purposefully chose his name based on the meaning and the understanding that God would use him as a warrior in His kingdom, whether that meant fighting spiritually on behalf of someone or redeeming those in bondage.

Likewise, my name is Daniel. The meaning of Daniel is *God is my judge*. Every time a person calls my name, they are declaring over me that God is my judge. Be it in a good or bad situation, God will judge me in the situation. But I have other names that I

go by also that define me just as well. To my wife I am *husband*, to my kids I am *dad/father*. To my parents I am *son*, and to my siblings I am *brother*. I am still the same person, still Daniel, but fulfilling a different characteristic of who I am. I cannot be father to my siblings, nor can I be son to my wife. So the name becomes important as it speaks who I am based on the circumstance I am in.

The same is true of God. God is a God who becomes what He needs to become based on the situation facing His people. While we know Him and call Him *God*, He actually has many names; names that we can address Him as based on our situation. A great example of this is found in Psalm 91:1-2. The verses read, *“He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, ‘He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.’”* However, if we were to read these verses in the Hebrew, we might not find the same terms as names of God. In fact, we would read, *“You who live in the shelter of ‘Elyon, who spend your nights in the shadow of Shaddai, who say to ADONAI, ‘My refuge! My fortress! My God, in whom I trust!’”*

The verses didn't change, whether read in the first or second version, but the names of God changed, perhaps bringing a more definite picture of who God is as defined by the writer. But let us look further still at these names used in the Hebrew. The first name is 'ELYON, defined as the LORD Most High. This name elevates God above any king, any god, and anything that could possibly think of having the top spot. Our next name is SHADDAI, translated as all sufficient, almighty, or powerful. Third we see the name ADONAI, also termed as Jehovah, which many read as God, or the existing One. Finally is the word God, which is translated from ELOHIYM, meaning divine one, true God, or godlike.

Reading these two verses in context, then, we read, *“He who dwells in the shelter of the LORD, the Most High God, far above all others who claim to be a god, will rest in the shadow of the almighty and sufficient God. I will say of Jehovah, ‘He is my refuge and my fortress, the true and divine One, in whom I trust.’”* Again the verses have not changed, but depth has been added as to who the psalmist is speaking of, and the declaration of who God is to the psalmist. He is not just a god, or even the God. He is now the Most High, all sufficient, existing and true God. That is a God we can dwell in the shelter of, knowing that we are protected.



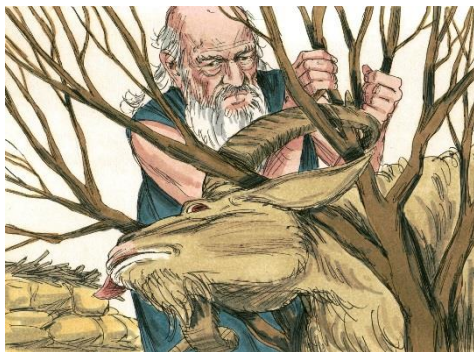
As we continue this study, I want us to take some time looking at just ten additional names of God outside the few we looked at above. My purpose in this is not that you will learn a few new Hebrew terms, but that in your circumstance, be it good or bad, you will call out to God with His name. Remember, if we want to know who God is, we must know His names, characteristics, and roles.

- 1) EL RACHUM - While this may not be one of the more popular names for God, I feel it is one of the names we must know. The name translates into the God of Compassion. Deuteronomy 4:31 reads, *“For Adonai your God is a merciful God. He will not abandon you or destroy you, or forget the covenant with your fathers that He swore to them.”* Because of God’s compassion on the Israelites, He chose to not destroy them and begin afresh with Moses as He had considered. God had made a covenant with Abraham, and in compassion forgave the people. He does the same with us, allowing his compassion to override the punishment that should be ours.



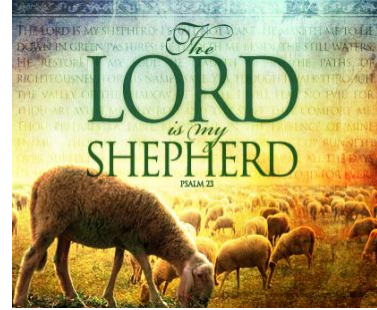
- 2) AVI - Going along with the softer side of God is the name Father, *Avi*. It is in Psalm 68:6-7 that we read of God being a father of orphans, and setting the lonely in homes. Romans 8:15 uses the word *Abba*, stating, *“For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall again into fear; rather, you received the Spirit of adoption, by whom we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’”* In both verses, God shows His fathering side by caring for those who are without homes, and bringing them under His protection.

- 3) JEHOVAH JIREH - This name translates as the God who will see to it and provide it. To understand this name in full, we need to go all the way back to Genesis 22:14 to see the first time it was used. It is here that we read of Abraham ascending Mount Moriah to sacrifice Isaac as instructed by God. When Isaac questioned where the lamb for the sacrifice was, Abraham responded that God would provide



(Gen 22:8). A few verses later, after Abraham had put his son on the altar in obedience to God, and was then stopped by God, Abraham looked up to see in the thicket a ram which was caught. That ram became the sacrifice and the place was called *Adonai Yir’eh*. God will provide for all our needs, on this we can be assured.

4) JEHOVAH ROHI - Another name for our God is Shepherd. David wrote in Psalm 23 that it was the LORD who was his shepherd. In Him there was no want. He led him to where he was able to feed and drink and rest without the fear of wolves. When he walked through the questionable valleys, his Shepherd was on the vanguard for his safety and brought him through to a place where fear no longer troubled him. This same provision made for David is stretched out to us as well, as we too are the Lord's sheep. Therefore, when we allow ourselves to see our God as Jehovah Rohi, then we allow ourselves to be led also to a place of food, water, and rest.



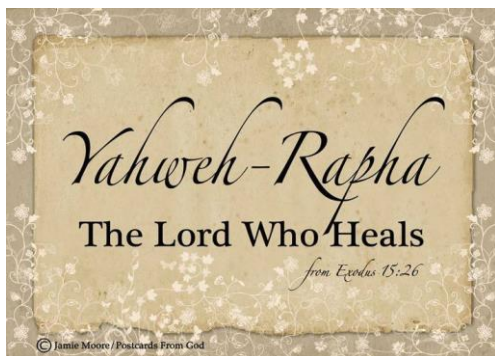
5) JEHOVAH SHALOM - Judges 6:24 reads, "So Gideon built an altar there to Adonai and called it 'Adonai-shalom.' To this day it is yet in Ophrah of the Abiezrites." Now there are over 6000 references in the Old Testament to the term Jehovah, and 167 for the term Shalom, but only this one occurrence where the two words are together. With this in mind, let us take a deeper look into the uniqueness of this term and how it applies to our lives today. Backed up against the wall, Gideon requested the angel provide a sign for him. With the angel's agreement, Gideon began to prepare a young goat and bread without yeast. With the meat, bread, and broth ready, he brought the meal out and offered it to the angel who was sitting under the oak. Gideon followed the instructions from that point forward concerning the meal as were given by the angel and placed the meal on a rock. Now when the angel had taken his staff and touched the meat and bread, fire burst forth from the rock and consumed the dinner. At that same moment, the angel disappeared. The Bible records that at that moment Gideon's eyes were opened and he declared, "I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face!" It is here where



Gideon built the altar to the LORD that he named it The LORD is Peace. Shalom in the Hebrew means peace, and wholeness. In our context of Gideon we see how God became the peace in front of Gideon's challenge, determined to help him see God's view of himself rather than his own. But we also see that without this wholeness in Gideon's life, Gideon may have continued to doubt each order in the battle plan God had marked out. For us, we need our eyes to focus on the peace God offers and the wholeness that God gives.

6) JEHOVAH TSIDKENU - The title of Tsidkenu translates as righteousness. Jeremiah 23:5-6, states, *“Behold, days are coming” – it is a declaration of Adonai – “when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and He will reign as king wisely, and execute justice and righteousness in the land. In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell in safety; and this is His Name by which He will be called: Adonai our righteousness.”* The righteous branch that Jeremiah spoke of in the line of David was Jesus Christ. Up until Jesus' death on the cross all sins were covered by sacrifices and scapegoats. But Jesus did an awesome thing in giving up His life in that He, knowing NO sin, became sin for us. We were unrighteous, and our deeds were soiled as dirty rags. Even in our sacrifices we were not able to be fully whole. Then Jesus, the spotless lamb, took our sin and erased it. It is when we confess our sin that we are made righteous again. So then, He is rightly named our Righteousness.

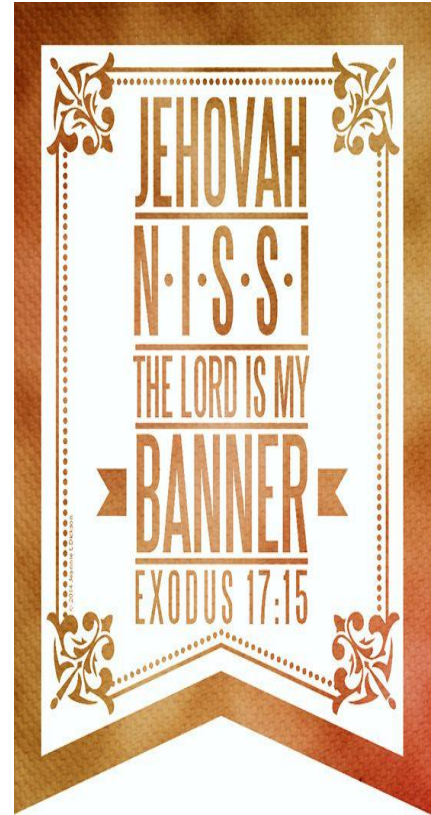
7) JEHOVAH RAPHA/ROPHE - When the Israelites came upon the waters of Marah in Exodus 15, the Bible records they had of mouth full of bitter water. Yet God used the waters of Marah to teach Israel a lesson; a lesson we also have the ability to learn. God brought them there to reveal Himself as Jehovah Rapha - the LORD that health thee (Ex 15:26). In this story, God revealed Himself as the healer on



three different levels. The first level is the healer of troubles. When the Israelites realized that the water was bitter and began to complain, God intervened and showed Moses a piece of wood to throw in the water which made it sweet. The wood that Moses threw in the water can represent God's Son in the midst of our troubles. God revealed Himself secondly as the healer of all our

sicknesses. Here God reminded Israel that He alone brought them out of Egypt, He was in command of the curses that fell on the Egyptians, and He alone was the God who healed diseases. Lastly, He revealed Himself as the healer of souls. As Romans 6:23 tells us, the wages of sin is death. As the water could not be swallowed, so our death sentence can be hard to swallow. It is the sin we embrace that sentences us to death. And without that wood in the water to make it sweet, the Israelites may have died due to thirst. But it was on a wooden cross that Christ died for us, and lifted this sentence of death that we were under. Now, life is there for those who choose to drink the sweetness of God's water.

8) JEHOVAH NISSI - In Exodus 17, the Bible records Moses leading the people of Israel against the Amalekites. Hur, Aaron, and Moses stood on the top of the hill, while Joshua and his chosen men defended themselves against an Amalek army. As long as Moses' hands were raised, Israel won the battle. When Moses' arms grew tired and weak, Hur and Aaron held them up. While this is a great illustration of accountability, it is also a great illustration of God as our banner. Neither Moses, Joshua, nor anyone in God's army raised a flag as we know it, but when the battle was over and the army of Israel was victorious, two actions were completed. The first was, God told Moses to write this down as a memory for Joshua, which is now a memory also for us. The second thing, however, was that Moses built an altar to God, naming it Jehovah-Nissi, God is my Banner (Ex 17:14-16).



The word Nissi is defined in the Strong's as: flag, sail, flagstaff, signal, and standard. In that moment, God proved Himself to Israel as their standard, their flag. As a tribute to Him, they built their altar and named it for who God was in that moment.

9) JEHOVAH M'KADDESH - Is it possible for us to be holy? Honestly, no. So if it is not, how then do we stand any chance of a holy lifestyle? The answer rests in Leviticus 20:7-8, which reads, *"So consecrate yourselves and be holy, for I am Adonai your God. You are to keep My statutes, and do them. I am Adonai who sanctifies you."* The name Jehovah M'Kaddesh refers to God as our Sanctifier. Apart from God we can do nothing, not even live right. But through God we are sanctified; we are made a new creature. If all we can do is ask God for forgiveness, then we have done as it says in the Leviticus passage, we have consecrated ourselves. It is He that makes us holy, He that cleanses us, and He that does the work to make us a new creation.

10) JEHOVAH SHAMMAH - This name I have saved for last. Whereas the previous names tell of God's character in accordance to something He has already been or done, this name refers to something that God has yet to do. Ezekiel chapter 48:35b, tells us; *"From that day on, the name of the city will be: Adonai Is There."* In reading

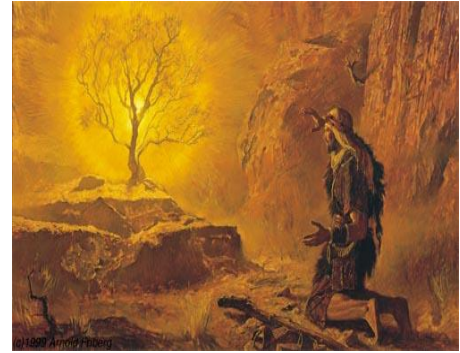
this verse in context we see Ezekiel prophesying about a time that is yet to come, and for a city named Jerusalem. He will always be there for His people, and for His city. Time and time again He has both proved this and continues to prove this. Despite the disbursement of His people, still He brought them back at the time also designated per Ezekiel's prophesies, in the year 1948. And in time, His people will have complete control of the city of Jerusalem. In time, God will prove He is There.

**JEHOVAH-
SHAMMAH**
GOD IS THERE

SECTION THREE: OUR RESPONSE TO GOD

Have you ever stopped to consider how you respond? When someone asks you a question, you give a response. When someone makes a statement, you give a response. When your children call your name during the night, you give a response. In many different ways and in different circumstances, we give a response. Our response can come in the form of a word, an action, a behavior, or a tone. It can be with full attention or partial attention, purposed or non-caring. It can speak volumes or can speak a lack of concern. But when God calls to us, we also give a response. The question then becomes what exactly is our response? I want us to take a few minutes to contemplate how we respond to God, and take a view at three specific individuals and a response they gave to God when beckoned. Let's look now at the responses of Abraham, Moses, and Isaiah.

Looking back at the beginning of Moses' encounter with the burning bush, we read that from the bush a voice calls out, "Moses! Moses!" Moses answers with "Here I am." In reading this response I am reminded of my days in primary school where the teacher would take roll call. When my name was called, I responded with, "here." But in truth, this is a poor translation of the word.



In Hebrew, Moses' response is the word HINENI (הִנֵּנִי). This word is said by rabbis to be the most important word in the entire Torah. *Hineni* is translated literally as *here I am, ready to listen, ready to respond, and ready to obey*. This word encompasses being at full attention in communication with another, listening and responding with a non-judgmental openness. This word includes being emotionally available and revealing one's whole self in that moment. When it is sincere, we know it. When it is not, we know it. The truth of this response is seen in our actions, our posture, and our attitude.

Hineni is used a total of 178 times within the Bible, most often used in response to God. Yet it is also used in conversation between one individual and another, or in a response we offer to ourselves. Breaking the word down is it actually a contraction of the word *Hiney* (here) and *Ani* (I), combined to form *Here I am*.

Although it is Moses' response, it is actually first spoken in Genesis 22:1 where we find Abraham about to be tested by God. God calls down to Abraham and automatically



Abraham responds with "*Hineni.*" Before knowing what was about to be asked of him he had already given God his full attention by stating he was here, ready to listen, respond, and obey. With Abraham's full attention given to Him, God then requests of Abraham that he take Isaac, his loved son, and sacrifice him as a burnt offering in the mountains of Moriah.

It is important to remember here the depth of what is about to be asked of Abraham. Already he has left the land and occupation of his father based of his convictions and relationship with God. Already he has heard God promise to him that he would be the father of many nations. And already he has attempted to do things his way with the understanding that God was taking too long. The relationship that God and Abraham now share is nothing menial. And after all the ups and downs of the past years, the promised son has been given to Abraham, proving God to be a God of His word. Yet now God is about to ask Abraham to sacrifice his son. Again, without knowing what is about to be asked of him, Abraham responds that he is ready to listen, obey, and respond.

In the days following, the father and son travel to the location named by God where the sacrifice will take place. Isaac has questioned where the lamb is, and answered that God will provide. But soon enough, Isaac learns that he himself is the sacrifice. Obedient to God, Abraham takes hold of the knife as if to slay his son when he hears God's voice again, "Abraham! Abraham!" The response from Abraham once more is "*Hineni!*" (Gen 22:11). Abraham is paused from sacrificing Isaac, ready to listen, obey, and respond further and with great focus to God's calling. It is only then that he is commended for his reverence to God, for he was fully present, open, alert, and responsive when called.

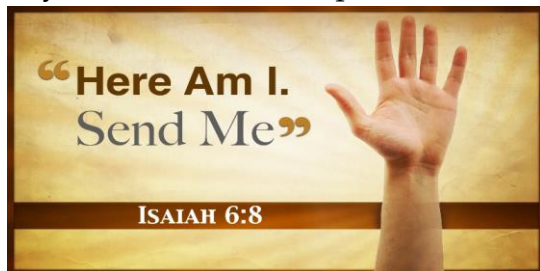
As noted, we read this same response given by Moses when he came to the burning bush. The voice of the true God, not a god, calls his name, "Moses! Moses!" He too answers with the response, "*Hineni - Here I am.*" From within the bush the voice calling now gives him direction. Before Moses even knew who it was calling him, or what the task would be, he



replied, “Here I am, ready to listen, ready to respond, and ready to obey.” His response became the first step in His calling to lead the Israelites from slavery in Egypt to the freedom granted in the Promise Land.

The last person I want us to look at who gave this same response is the prophet Isaiah. Isaiah chapter 6 begins by telling us that in the year that King Uzziah died, the LORD was seen seated high on His throne with the train of His robe filling the temple. Above the LORD were seraphs calling to one another the holiness of the LORD. Isaiah then records his response to what he sees and hears. To the seeing he comments, “*Woe to me! I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty.*” To this, one of the seraphs comes to him with a coal from the altar and touches it against Isaiah’s lips, removing his guilt and sin. This action allows Isaiah to remain, at which time he hears that question of who will go?

Isaiah’s response is “Hineni, Send me!” There is no way that Isaiah knew what lay ahead between chapters 6 and 66 when he gave this response. There was no way that



Isaiah could have forecasted after accepting the turning point of his life that day that his life would end in what theologians believe to be of Isaiah in Hebrews 11:37, that he would be sawed in two as a result for sharing the words of God. Yet, his response remained the same – *Hineni*.

So let’s just be honest to these next two questions. First, do we truthfully see God as the I AM; as the God who is everything we could ever need? He has proven Himself to be this, both to those of old and to us, but do we see Him as such? But secondly, when He calls to us, do we in turn respond with the answer, *hineni*? God wants us to see Him as our everything, but He also wants us to give Him everything in our response. In giving Him everything we surrender our control. If the Israelites had held on to their ways, would they ever have made it out of Egypt and into the Promise Land? Probably not. If we continue to hold on to control, will we ever make it to *our* Promise Land? Probably not. Maybe it is best that we respond that we are here, ready to listen, ready to respond, and ready to obey. Remember, God didn’t call these men because He wondered if they would answer. God called these men because He **knew** they would respond. The pattern of their response was set long before they were faced with the calling.