

Coram Deo

Lesson 4—God is... My God is...

TRUTH

Everything we need to know about God—everything He *wants* us to know—can be found primarily within the pages of Scripture. From Genesis to Revelation, the Bible is filled with names for God and references to Divine attributes that help us understand Him better.

While we can't explore the entire text of the Bible within the course of a single lesson, the following passages will help us create an extensive—but surely not exhaustive—list of the names and attributes of God. Reflect on these excerpts as you consider what it means to know Him.

First, we'll look at statements from two theological documents, one written for modern audiences and one from Church history. These creeds and catechisms can be extremely helpful in clarifying important truths about God and His attributes:

Q.2 What is God?

God is the creator and sustainer of everyone and everything. He is eternal, infinite, and unchangeable in his power and perfection, goodness and glory, wisdom, justice, and truth. Nothing happens except through him and by his will. (The New City Catechism, Crossway, 2012)

Of God, and of the Holy Trinity

There is but one only living and true God, who is infinite in being and perfection, a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions, immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, most wise, most holy, most free, most absolute, working all things according to the counsel of his own immutable and most righteous will, for his own glory; most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; the rewarder of them that diligently seek him; and withal most just and terrible in his judgments; hating all sin, and who will by no means clear the guilty. (Westminster Confession Ch. 2.1)

For a deeper look at the names of God in Scripture, we will turn our attention to an overview of several Hebrew and Greek terms, compiled by the late Bible scholar J. Hampton Keathley III:

(1) **Elohim**: The plural form of *EL*, meaning “strong one.” It is used of false gods, but when used of the true God, it is a plural of majesty and intimates the trinity. It is especially used of God's sovereignty, creative work, mighty work for Israel and in relation to His sovereignty (Isaiah 54:5; Jeremiah 32:27; Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 45:18; Deuteronomy 5:23; 8:15; Psalm 68:7).

Compounds of *Ei*:

- **Ei Shaddai:** “God Almighty.” The derivation is uncertain. Some think it stresses God’s loving supply and comfort; others His power as the Almighty one standing on a mountain and who corrects and chastens (Genesis 17:1; 28:3; 35:11; Exodus 6:1; Psalm 91:1, 2).
- **Ei Elyon:** “The Most High God.” Stresses God’s strength, sovereignty, and supremacy (Genesis 14:19; Psalm 9:2; Daniel 7:18, 22, 25).
- **Ei Olam:** “The Everlasting God.” Emphasizes God’s unchangeableness and is connected with His inexhaustibility (Genesis 16:13).

(2) Yahweh (YHWH): comes from a verb which means “to exist, be.” This, plus its usage, shows that this name stresses God as the independent and self-existent God of revelation and redemption (Genesis 4:3; Exodus 6:3 (cf. 3:14); 3:12).

Compounds of **Yahweh**: Strictly speaking, these compounds are designations or titles which reveal additional facts about God’s character.

- **Yahweh Jireh (Yireh):** “The Lord will provide.” Stresses God’s provision for His people (Genesis 22:14).
- **Yahweh Nissi:** “The Lord is my Banner.” Stresses that God is our rallying point and our means of victory, the one who fights for His people (Exodus 17:15).
- **Yahweh Shalom:** “The Lord is Peace.” Points to the Lord as the means of our peace and rest (Judges 6:24).
- **Yahweh Sabaoth:** “The Lord of Hosts.” A military figure portraying the Lord as the commander of the armies of heaven (1 Samuel 1:3; 17:45).
- **Yahweh Maccaddeshcem:** “The Lord, your Sanctifier.” Portrays the Lord as our means of sanctification or as the one who sets believers apart for His purposes (Exodus 31:13).
- **Yahweh Ro’i:** “The Lord, my Shepherd.” Portrays the Lord as the Shepherd who cares for His people as a shepherd cares for the sheep of his pasture (Psalm 23:1).
- **Yahweh Tsidkenu:** “The Lord, our Righteousness.” Portrays the Lord as the means of our righteousness (Jeremiah 23:6).
- **Yahweh Shammah:** “The Lord is there.” Portrays the Lord’s personal presence in the millennial kingdom (Ezekiel 48:35).
- **Yahweh Elohim Israel:** “The Lord, the God of Israel.” Identifies Yahweh as the God of Israel in contrast to the false gods of the nations (Judges 5:3; Isaiah 17:6).

(3) Adonai: Like Elohim, this too is a plural of majesty. The singular form means “master, owner.” Stresses man’s relationship to God as his master, authority, and provider (Genesis 18:2; 40:1; 1 Samuel 1:15; Exodus 21:1-6; Joshua 5:14).

(4) Theos: Greek word translated “God.” Primary name for God used in the New Testament. Its use teaches:

- He is the only true God (Matthew 23:9; Romans 3:30)
- He is unique (1 Timothy 1:17; John 17:3; Revelation 15:4; 16:7)
- He is transcendent (Acts 17:24; Hebrews 3:4; Revelation 10:6);
- He is the Savior (John 3:16; 1 Timothy 1:1; 2:3; 4:10). This name is used of Christ as God in John 1:1,18; 20:28; 1 John 5:20; Titus 2:13; Romans 9:5; Hebrews 1:8; and 2 Peter 1:1.

(5) **Kurios:** Greek word translated “Lord.” Stresses authority and supremacy. While it can mean sir (John 4:11), the owner (Luke 19:33), master (Colossians 3:22), or even refer to idols (1 Corinthians 8:5) or husbands (1 Peter 3:6), it is used mostly as the equivalent of **Yahweh** of the Old Testament. It, too, is used of Jesus Christ, meaning (1) Rabbi or Sir (Matthew 8:6); (2) God or Deity (John 20:28; Acts 2:36; Romans 10:9; Philippians 2:11).

(6) **Despotes:** Greek word translated “Master.” Carries the idea of ownership while *kurios* stressed supreme authority (Luke 2:29; Acts 4:24; Revelation 6:10; 2 Peter 2:1; Jude 4).

(7) **Father:** A distinctive New Testament revelation is that through faith in Christ, God becomes our personal Father. Father is used of God in the Old Testament only 15 times while it is used of God 245 times in the New Testament. As a name of God, it stresses God’s loving care, provision, discipline, and the way we are to address God in prayer (Matthew 7:11; James 1:17; Hebrews 12:5-11; John 15:16; 16:23; Ephesians 2:18; 3:15; 1 Thessalonians 3:11). (Keathley, “Names of God part 3: Overview of the Names of God in Scripture,” Bible.org)

In many of the Psalms, David employs some of the above terms to speak about God in a declarative manner. Examples of this include “He is the Rock,” “You are very great,” “O Most High,” or “Savior.”

In other Psalms, however, David uses the possessive pronoun and personalizes his relationship with God by declaring, “My God is...”

This personalization of the names and attributes of God is key when we reflect on Him. It moves the conversation from abstract statements of fact to something much more relational. Read the following verses and then write down the personalized descriptions or names given by David:

Psalm 3:3 _____

Psalm 5:1-2 _____

Psalm 18:1-2, 26 _____

Psalm 23:1 _____

Psalm 27:1

Psalm 28:7

Psalm 118:14

EQUIP

1. Review the names and attributes of God listed in the TRUTH section. Then select the ten names or attributes you find most encouraging. Write them in the chart below and explain their significance. Be prepared to share your answers!

My God is...	What does this name mean to you, and why did you choose it?
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	

-
2. Respond to the following quote: “Knowledge of God is the foundation stone of all of Christian life and service, and all faithful love of God” (Ferguson, *A Heart for God*, 73).

ACCOUNTABILITY

Before your group study, review the questions in the EQUIP section. Are there specific truths or principles that God impresses upon you? It might be a knowledge issue (head), a belief issue (heart), or an application issue (hand). Write your reflections below:



Head/knowledge:



Heart/belief:



Hand/application:

MISSION

1. How can the various names or attributes of God be used to point others to Christ?

2. Who are the three people (non-believers) you are praying for?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

3. List the steps you have taken—or will take—to connect with them:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

SUPPLICATION

As you conclude study time, share your prayer requests with one another. Space is provided below to write them down. Use spaces 1-2 to write down requests you'd like to share with the group and use space 3 to record requests from others. Use these notes as you pray for each other during the week.

1. What are your prayer requests regarding this week's lesson?

2. What are your prayer requests regarding your life this week?

3. Prayer requests from others in the group this week: