The Names of God
Lesson 2: El
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1. What's in a Name?

Our name is our very first identity. It is how we are known and how we know others. We typically learn a person's name before we learn anything about them. Names are important.

Discussion 10

What is the favorite name I am called? Who calls me that name? Why is it my favorite? Why do they call me by that name?

2. Why study God's Names?

Remember Jesus' prayer just before He went to Calvary,

John 17:3 (NIV)

> 3 Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

God's name represents His character, His attributes, His nature.

2.1. To Honor His Name

As a follower of Jesus, we bear His name. Our behavior reflects His name.

Exodus 20:7

> 7 "You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.

2.2. To Praise His Name

Psalm 8:1 (NIV)

> 1 Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory in the heavens.

Psalm 9:2 (NIV)

> 2 I will be glad and rejoice in you; I will sing the praises of your name, O Most High.

Psalm 48:10 (NIV)

> 10 Like your name, O God, your praise reaches to the ends of the earth; your right hand is filled with righteousness.

Psalm 75:1 (NIV)

> 1 We praise you, God, we praise you, for your Name is near; people tell of your wonderful deeds.

Psalm 76:1 (NIV)

> 1 God is renowned in Judah; in Israel his name is great.

2.3. His Name Protects

Proverbs 18:10 (NIV)

> 10 The name of the Lord is a fortified tower; the righteous run to it and are safe.

Isaiah 50:10 (NIV)

10 Who among you fears the Lord and obeys the word of his servant? Let the one who walks in the dark, who has no light, trust in the name of the Lord and rely on their God.

Psalm 20:7 (NIV)

7 Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God.

Psalm 23:30 (NIV)

3 he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake.

3. What does my name mean?

Alan: Rock or handsome.

The name Alan is of Celtic origin, derived from the Old Breton name "Alaunus," which is believed to mean "handsome" or "cheerful." The name is also associated with the Latin word "alani," referring to the Alans, an ancient nomadic group of Iranian descent. The Alans were known for their equestrian skills and played a significant role in the early medieval history of Europe. The name Alan has been widely used across various cultures and languages, often maintaining its core meaning related to beauty or charm.

Cedric: Bounty, kindly, or loved one.

The name Cedric has its origins in the Old English name "Cerdic," which is believed to derive from a Celtic root, possibly meaning "bounty" or "generous." The name gained prominence in England and has been associated with various historical and literary figures. It is often considered a blend of Anglo-Saxon and Celtic elements, reflecting the cultural interactions in early medieval Britain.

Charles: Free man.

The name Charles has a long and distinguished history, deriving from the Germanic name Karl, which means "man" or "free man." The name has roots in several languages, including Old High German, where it is spelled as "Karl," and in Latin as "Carolus." The name gained prominence in the early medieval period, particularly through its association with Charlemagne, or Charles the Great, who was King of the Franks and Lombards and later crowned Emperor of the Romans in the year 800. Charlemagne significantly shaped European history, and his legacy helped elevate the name to widespread usage.

Christopher: Bearer of Christ.

The name Christopher has its origins in the Greek name "Christophoros," which translates to "bearer of Christ." It is derived from the components "Christos," meaning "Christ," and "phoros," meaning "to bear" or "to carry." This name gained popularity in the early Christian era, symbolizing the act of carrying the faith of Christ, and it reflects the importance of Christianity in Western culture.

Daniel: God is my judge.

The name Daniel has a rich history and a significant presence across various cultures. It is of Hebrew origin, derived from the Hebrew name "Daniyyel," which means "God is my judge." This meaning reflects a deep theological significance and has contributed to the name's enduring popularity in Jewish, Christian, and Islamic traditions.

David: Beloved or friend.

The name David is of Hebrew origin, derived from the Hebrew word "דָּוִד" (Dāwīḏ), which translates to "beloved." This name has been a prominent and enduring choice across various cultures and languages, reflecting its deep roots in religious and historical contexts. In the Hebrew Bible, David is notably recognized as the second king of Israel and a central figure in Jewish tradition. His narrative encompasses themes of leadership, faith, and the complexities of human character, contributing to the name's enduring popularity.

James: Supplanter or one who follows.

The name James is of Hebrew origin, derived from the name Jacob, which means "supplanter" or "one who takes the place of another." In the biblical context, Jacob was a significant figure in the Old Testament, known for his twelve sons, who became the progenitors of the twelve tribes of Israel. The name James has evolved through various linguistic transformations, including the Latin "Iacobus," the Old French "Jacques," and ultimately the English "James."

Joshua: God is salvation.

The name Joshua is of Hebrew origin, derived from the Hebrew name יְהוֹשֻׁעַ (Yehoshua), which translates to "Yahweh is salvation" or "the Lord is my salvation." The name is composed of two parts: "Yeho," which is a shortened form of the Tetragrammaton, the biblical name for God, and "shua," meaning "salvation." As a prominent biblical name, Joshua is well-known in Judeo-Christian contexts.

Koby: Supplanter; may also mean "he who replaces."

The name Koby is a modern variation of the name Jacob, which has its roots in Hebrew. The Hebrew origin of Jacob is the word "Ya'aqov," which is interpreted to mean "supplanter" or "holder of the heel." This meaning is derived from the biblical narrative in which Jacob was born holding onto his twin brother Esau's heel. The name Jacob has been widely used throughout various cultures and languages, leading to numerous adaptations and variations, including Koby.

Leroy: The king.

The name Leroy is of French origin, derived from the Old French phrase "le roi," which translates to "the king." This name was historically used as a title of nobility and has connotations of leadership and authority. The use of Leroy as a personal name became more prevalent in English-speaking countries in the 19th century, where it was often selected for its regal implications.

Matthew: Gift of God.

The name Matthew is of Hebrew origin, derived from the Hebrew name Matityahu, which means "gift of God." The name has been widely used in various forms across different cultures and languages, demonstrating its enduring popularity. In the Greek New Testament, the name appears as Matthaios, which was later transliterated into Latin as Mattheus. The name has maintained a steady presence throughout centuries and is often associated with the Christian tradition due to its connection to one of the twelve apostles of Jesus, Saint Matthew, who is also the author of the Gospel of Matthew.

Michael: Who is like God?

The name Michael has its origins in the Hebrew name Mikha'el, which means "Who is like God?" This rhetorical question implies a sense of humility and reverence, suggesting that no one can compare to the divine. The name has been a popular choice across various cultures and languages, often adapted to fit the phonetic and grammatical structures of different regions. In Greek, it appears as Mikhaēl, while in Latin, it is rendered as Michael. The name is frequently associated with the archangel Michael, who is a prominent figure in Judeo-Christian traditions, regarded as a protector of Israel and a leader of the heavenly armies.

Noah: Rest, comfort.

The name Noah has its roots in ancient Hebrew, derived from the Hebrew name Noach (נח), which means "rest" or "comfort." The etymology of the name is often linked to the biblical figure Noah, who is a prominent character in the Book of Genesis. In the biblical narrative, Noah is known for building an ark to save his family and pairs of every animal species from the Great Flood, which is a significant story in Jewish, Christian, and Islamic traditions. The name has remained popular across various cultures and languages, often retaining its original form or adapting slightly to fit phonetic and linguistic norms.

Paul: Small or humble.

The name Paul has its origins in the Latin name "Paulus," which means "small" or "humble." This name derived from the Roman family name, which was popular in ancient Rome. The adoption of the name in various cultures can be traced back to early Christian influences, particularly due to the prominence of Saint Paul, one of the apostles of Jesus Christ, who played a significant role in the spread of Christianity in the first century. His writings and teachings have had a lasting impact on Christian theology, contributing to the popularity of the name in Christian communities.

Richard: Brave ruler; strong leader.

The name Richard is of Old Germanic origin, derived from the elements "ric," meaning "ruler" or "king," and "hard," meaning "brave" or "strong." As such, the name can be understood to mean "brave ruler" or "strong leader." The name became popular in England after the Norman Conquest in the 11th century, thanks to its introduction by the Normans, who had adopted it from Old French forms. It has been a common name in various forms across many cultures, including its variations such as Ricardo in Spanish and Italian, and the more modern versions like Rick and Richie in English.

Robert: Bright fame.

The name Robert is of Germanic origin, derived from the Old High German name "Hrodebert," which combines the elements "hrod," meaning "fame," and "beraht," meaning "bright." Thus, the name can be interpreted to mean "bright fame" or "famous one." It became popular among the Normans after the Norman Conquest of England in 1066 and subsequently spread throughout Europe, particularly in England, France, and Scotland.

Shawn: God is gracious.

The name "Shawn" is a masculine given name that has its roots in the Irish name "Seán," which is a variant of "John." The name "John" itself comes from the Hebrew name "Yohanan," meaning "God is gracious." Over time, "Seán" evolved in various forms, with "Shawn" being one of the Anglicized versions that emerged, particularly in English-speaking regions. The name gained popularity in the 20th century, especially in the United States, where it was adapted into its current form.

Steven: Crown or wreath, symbolizing victory and honor.

The name Steven is derived from the Greek name "Stephanos," which translates to "crown" or "garland." This etymological origin suggests connotations of honor, victory, and reward, as crowns were historically awarded to victors in athletic competitions and significant events. The name has been widely adopted in various forms and spellings across different cultures, including Stephen, Stefan, and Esteban, each carrying similar meanings and associations.

Terry: Earth or land.

> The name "Terry" is of English origin and serves as both a given name and a surname. It is derived from the Norman French name "Thierry," which itself comes from the Germanic components "theud," meaning "people," and "ric," meaning "ruler" or "king." This etymology suggests that the name carries connotations of leadership and authority. As a given name, Terry has been widely used in English-speaking countries, particularly in the 20th century, and has become a common unisex name, although it was originally more frequently associated with males.

Timothy: Honoring God or one who honors God.

> The name Timothy is of Greek origin, derived from the name Τιμόθεος (Timotheos), which is composed of the elements "timos," meaning "honor," and "theos," meaning "God." Thus, the name Timothy can be interpreted to mean "honoring God" or "in God's honor." The name has been used in various forms across different cultures and languages, including Timoteo in Italian and Spanish, and Timofey in Russian.

Discussion 10

Can I relate to the meaning of my name? Does the meaning of my name matter to me? Does it matter to those closest to me?

4. Names can have Great Meaning

While this study is on the names of God, it is important to look at history and how God named people.

Hosea 1:1-11 (NIV)

> 1 The word of the Lord that came to Hosea son of Beeri during the reigns of
> Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and during the reign of Jeroboam son of
> Jehoash king of Israel:
>
> 2 When the Lord began to speak through Hosea, the Lord said to him, “Go, marry a
> promiscuous woman and have children with her, for like an adulterous wife this land is guilty of
> unfaithfulness to the Lord.” 3 So he married Gomer daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and
> bore him a son.
>
> 4 Then the Lord said to Hosea, “Call him Jezreel, because I will soon punish the house of Jehu for
> the massacre at Jezreel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of Israel. 5 In that day I will break
> Israel’s bow in the Valley of Jezreel.”
>
> 6 Gomer conceived again and gave birth to a daughter. Then the Lord said to Hosea, “Call her Lo-
> Ruhamah (which means “not loved”), for I will no longer show love to Israel, that I should at all
> forgive them. 7 Yet I will show love to Judah; and I will save them—not by bow, sword or battle,
> or by horses and horsemen, but I, the Lord their God, will save them.”
>
> 8 After she had weaned Lo-Ruhamah, Gomer had another son. 9 Then the Lord said, “Call him Lo-
> Ammi (which means “not my people”), for you are not my people, and I am not your God.
>
> 10 “Yet the Israelites will be like the sand on the seashore, which cannot be measured or
> counted. In the place where it was said to them, ‘You are not my people,’ they will be called
> ‘children of the living God.’ 11 The people of Judah and the people of Israel will come
> together; they will appoint one leader and will come up out of the land, for great will be the day
> of Jezreel.

Jezreel (Son): This name means "God sows" or "God scatters." It warned that God would punish the royal family for past bloodshed and end the kingdom of Israel.

Lo-Ruhamah (Daughter): This name means "no mercy" or "not loved." It showed that God would stop showing pity and forgiveness to Israel.

Lo-Ammi (Son): This name means "not my people." It meant God was breaking His formal covenant relationship because the people turned away from Him. Later, these names were symbolically reversed to mean "shown mercy" and "my people".

5. The First Name Used for God's in the Bible

The first name of God in the bible is Elohim. It is Elohim who created the heavens and the earth in Genesis 1:1.

Genesis 1:1-2 (NOG)

> 1 In the beginning ***Elohim*** created heaven and earth. 2 The earth was formless and empty, and darkness covered the deep water. The ***Ruach Elohim*** was hovering over the water.

El is the root of the word, and used in the generic 'god', unless capitalized as the proper name, El or God. Elohim is that this is the pluralized form of the word. The direct translation according to the above then would be 'Gods', yet perhaps a more accurate form would be 'Trinity'. From the first verses recorded by Moses, God presents himself as 'plural'.

Elohim is the name in the creation story, but the use is not limited to creation; the name is used the first 66 times in the Bible. It is found over 2,000 times total.

Elohim continues to be used throughout the Old Testament and El is used as part of compounds and phrases of his name in still more verses. El is used in phrases of description, such as El Olam which means the eternal or everlasting God and El Elyon, meaning God most high or the Most High God.

5.1. **El Chay** | Living God | EL CHAY

Joshua 3:9-13 (NOG)

> 9 So Joshua said to the people of Israel, "Come here, and listen to the words of ***Yahweh*** your ***Elohim***." 10 Joshua continued, "This is how you will know that ***El Chay*** is among you and that he will certainly force the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites, and Jebusites out of your way. 11 Watch the ark of the promise of the ***Adonay*** of the whole earth as it goes ahead of you into the Jordan River. 12 Choose one man from each of the 12 tribes of Israel. 13 The priests who carry the ark of ***Yahweh***, the ***Adonay*** of the whole earth, will stand in the water of the Jordan. Then the water flowing from upstream will stop and stand up like a dam."

5.2. **El Elyon** | God Most High | EL el-YOHN

Genesis 14:19 (NOG)

> 19 He blessed Abram, and said, Blessed is Abram by ***El Elyon***, maker of heaven and earth.

5.3. **El Kanna** | Jealous God | EL kan-NAH

Exodus 34:14 (NOG)

> 14 (Never worship any other god, because ***Yahweh*** is ***El Kanna***. In fact, he is known for not tolerating rivals.)

5.4. **El Olam** | Everlasting God, Eternal God | EL o-LAM

Genesis 21:33 (NOG)

> **33** Abraham planted a tamarisk tree at Beersheba and worshiped ***Yahweh***, ***El Olam***, there.

5.5. **El Roi** | the God Who Watches Over Me | EL roe-EE

Genesis 16:13 (NOG)

> **13** Hagar named ***Yahweh***, who had been speaking to her, "You Are ***El Roi***." She said, "This is the place where I watched the one who watches over me."

5.6. **El Shadday** | God Almighty | EL shad-DAI

Genesis 17:1 (NOG)

> **1** When Abram was 99 years old, ***Yahweh*** appeared to him. He said to Abram, "I am ***El Shadday***. Live in my presence with integrity.

Discussion

What do the "El" names of God say to me?