

Jehovah - Lord God – YAHWEH (part 4)

The name of (God) Jehovah first occurs in **Genesis 2:4** and occurs 6823 times in the Old Testament. It is most often written in the modern bible translations as LORD or LORD God (in capitals). The true pronunciation and spelling of this word has been lost to us through time. Ancient manuscripts often use the letters YHWH to represent this holy name of the Covenant God of the Israelites.

So sacred was this name that the Hebrews believed that sinful man was not worthy to even utter the name of God, for fear of taking His name in vain and therefore break the 4th commandment. This was soon to include the forbidding of writing the name as it would be said, and so we are left with what is known as the Tetragrammaton – YHWH. This has come to be written as Jehovah – though an in depth study will show this pronunciation to be most unlikely. Indeed it is possible that this unknown name is the one that John alludes to in his vision of Christ. (**see Rev 19:12**)

But no matter what this name of God actually is, it is the attribute of this name that is of utmost importance to us for the sake of this study. LORD God! As mentioned before, the first time Yahweh is used is in **Genesis 2:4**. Here, the writer of Genesis (Moses) is recapping the creation story, filling in the gaps and as such is stating that Jehovah is the same God previously called Elohim. Indeed, often the two names are used together in Scripture, as in Yahweh Elohim. But the addition of YHWH also implies a slightly different relationship has developed with man.

Elohim (as Creator) has built the universe, and created man. Jehovah is Lord. What I mean by this is that this new name speaks of the God, creator of the universe, reveals Himself in relationship and as a promise keeper to mankind. It was the covenant name of God and it came to mean ‘God who enters into a promised (covenant) relationship with his creation’. As Lord, it also implies that those who He has this relationship with, will bow their will to the God who is their God, not only because He created all things, but in His pursuit of man, He desires relationship. Additionally, His covenant brings with it blessings, deserving of honour.

This relational aspect of the name Jehovah also sheds interesting light on the Scriptures now that we know the difference between these two most common names for God. From **Genesis 2 to 4**, the term Jehovah (LORD) is used almost exclusively (or Jehovah Elohim – LORD God). The only time this isn’t the case is at the beginning of Chapter 3 – The Fall. Here, the serpent only uses Elohim, or God.

Clearly, this indicates that God is acknowledged as creator by the fallen angel, but not as Lord. There is no relationship here, no bending of his will to the one that made him. The woman too, as she begins to listen to the serpent uses the term Elohim, as her disobedience subtly leads her away from God as LORD.

What this illustrates is that God is always God, but He is not necessarily Lord. For God to be Lord, He must enter into a relationship with man, one He initiates offering friendship, forgiveness for sin, protection and eternal life in exchange for the obedience of man in all that He asks. To be Lord in our life, God must be our first priority. For the Christian, making Jesus Lord is to follow His example, and do what He would do. Jesus Himself referred to this when He said, “Why do you call me Lord, Lord, and do not do what I say?” (**see Luke 6:46**) Clearly, Jesus is perplexed at the lip-service of those that call him Lord, but do not hold to His teaching. He continues, explaining that if we do not follow His teaching, we are like someone who builds a house without a foundation. When the torrent comes, the house is totally destroyed. But the true disciple that not only calls Him Lord, but does what He says builds a firm foundation and will escape destruction.

To clarify the difference between God as God and God as Lord, let’s look at our workplaces/schools. Our boss/teacher has the right to tell us what to do – this right comes from their position over us, just as God the creator has the right to set the rules by which He expects us to live. However this “positional” relationship leads to an obedience that usually is dutiful, but not wilful. That is, that we do exactly what is asked of us, often begrudgingly, and often with the intent of getting away with doing the least amount expected of us to fulfil our obligation. Just like the Pharisees in Jesus’ day, who He called “whitewashed tombs...righteous on the outside, but on the inside full of hypocrisy and wickedness.” (**see Matt 23:27-28**)

However, if our boss/teacher is good to us, has built a relationship with us and supports us in our work effort, we are more likely to not only do that which is expected, but the job will be done to the best of our ability. We will be more productive (doing more than our share) and we will achieve with the ‘team objective’ in mind. We will want to do our best for our boss/teacher. Seeing what they have done, we will make them ‘lord’ and act not out of duty, but out of respect, appreciation and love, laying aside our will for the common good.

So it should be with God. When we acknowledge all that He has done (through creation, provision and in Christ), this should motivate us to a relationship with Him, which in turn will lead to making Him Lord. Our service will then be out of a heart that willingly puts aside our own (fleshly) desires and yields to that of the

'Lord of Lords'. We will not only *call* him Lord, but we will naturally do all that Jesus asks of us, because our focus isn't on a set of rules, but on a relationship.

What I guess we are trying to explain here is that all creation believes in God, Elohim. James writes, "You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that – and shudder." (**James 2:19**) As we have seen in Genesis, the devil himself acknowledged this. But clearly, this is not enough to have eternal life. Jesus must become Lord. God must become Jehovah. And this must be outworked through the yielding of the believer's will to the Holy Spirit, which will in turn be evidenced in our actions and our service to God. It will show in the way we treat our fellow man (and woman) and our passion to see his kingdom grow.

"Godship" is a fact of His position. He *is* Elohim, creator, we know this in our heads. "Lordship" is an act of our will. He becomes this in our hearts, because of His love extended toward us. Peter tells us, "...in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord." (**1Pet 3:15a**) And John writes "We love because He first loved us. (**1John 4:19**)

Napoleon made a remarkable statement when pondering Christ's Lordship in the hearts of His followers, which illustrates what we have been talking about. He said, "Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne and I have founded empires. But on what did we rest the creations of our genius? Upon force! Jesus Christ founded His Empire upon love; and at this hour millions of men would die for Him."

I think Napoleon would rather men died for him out of love for their lord, rather than duty to his authority. I think so too it is with God. He is God, but He wants to be our Lord. He wants His children to come to Him, to love Him, to trust in Him and seek Him out of a desire to be in Him. To place Him in His rightful place, LORD. And to this end, He gives mankind the freewill to choose Him to be just that.

Study 6 – questions

1. Look at the names of God used in **Genesis 1 & 2**. Notice the change in the term used here for God. Compare this to the serpent's term, what do you think this tells us? What is the lesson here for us?

2. Jehovah is the name of the covenant (promise keeping) God. What promises do you think God makes to those that love Him? Seek Scripture for your answer.

3. Read Luke **6:46-49**. How do you interpret Jesus' words and the lesson for us?

4. Read again **Matthew 23:25-28**. What does this say to us about our heart attitude when following Christ's commands? How does duty compare to willing, love-directed LORDship?

5. Read **1Peter 3:9-13**. What effect does doing God's will have for the believer?

6. How can we live a life that not only acknowledges God, but leads to making him Lord? What hinders you ability to do just that? Are there areas in your life that LORDship is hard to grant to Jesus?

7. Why do you think God wants us to choose to make Him Lord? What would it say about God, if He made us obey Him?

8. Read **1Samuel 15:22-23**. What do you think the difference between ritual sacrifice and obedience is? How does this relate to God as Lord (Jehovah)? Find other Scriptures that speak of obedience better than sacrifice.

9. What do you think it was that Napoleon admired about Christ's followers compared to those of his own? What advantage do you think he saw in people that would die for love rather than out of duty?

10. What if Jesus was LORD over all areas of our lives?
What would our families look like?
Our marriages look like?
Our workplaces look like?
Our church services look like?
Our service to our fellow Christians look like?
Our reaching out to our communities look like?
How might our priorities change?

Jesus replied:
"Love the Lord your
God with all your heart
and with all your soul
and with all your
mind.' This is the first
and greatest
commandment.

Matthew 22:37, 38