

The Holy Name of God (I)

Passages: As listed in the lesson.

Memory Verse

“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name.” (Matthew 6:9)

Knowledge of God’s Will [God’s Word]	Knowledge of God [God’s Divine Nature]	Good Works [Behavior]
1. God’s name is holy. 2. God’s name holds many meanings.	1. The Lord is our provider and our shepherd. 2. God is peace. 3. God is righteous.	1. Revere God’s holy name. 2. Call on God’s name with trust in times of need.

Overview

Events and Spiritual Teachings

- A. Understanding God’s Holy Name
- B. The Meanings of God’s Names

Life Application

- 1. Trust in the Name of God
- 2. Hallow God’s Name
- 3. The Meanings of God’s Name

Memory Verse

Conclusion: God’s name is powerful and holds many meanings that can bring strength in our lives today. But even though He is our sovereign Creator, God is never out of reach. He loves when we talk to Him, and He wants us to come to Him with our difficulties. He is ready to help us, if only we call on His name.

Spiritual Teachings

Introduction

Do you know what your name means? For many parents, choosing a child's name usually requires great thought and consideration. Some names hold great importance for the family. Some names define traits they wish their children to embody. Some names reveal their child's birthplace, or a place dear to their hearts. Whatever the case, parents often choose names that are meaningful to them. God, too, has a name that bears great meaning to us when we study it more closely. One of the characteristics that we can see in His name is His holiness.

Do you know what "holy" means? Try defining "holy" in your own words.

(Show a blank, white sheet of paper.) As you can see, this clean sheet of paper is spotless and clean. To be holy means to be without sin, filth, or blemish. However, as humans, we are constantly adding awful, black marks to this clean sheet of white paper. Every hurtful word that we say, offensive action that we take, or evil thought that we think is another black mark. God is holy, so as His children, it is our goal to keep this sheet of paper as clean and white as possible. We need to stay holy throughout our lifetime.

Now that we have a basic understanding of the word "holy," and understand how names hold different meanings, we can examine the holy name of God and the many meanings of His name.

A. Understanding God's Holy Name

When God came down to earth in the form of a man, He was known as Jesus. But what about God's name? Did He reveal His holy name to us? In Exodus 3:13–15, Moses faced the burning bush and asked what he should call God when the Israelites asked. God replied, "I AM WHO I AM." In the Hebrew text, this phrase is written as "YHWH," which is sometimes expressed as "Yahweh."

This name expresses how God is absolute, and how He existed before everything else. God is so powerful, almighty, and holy that any name given to Him would set boundaries to God's almighty nature. But there are no boundaries to His power. He encompasses and surpasses all things, so God's name is, "I AM WHO I AM."

In Genesis 14:18–20, when Melchizedek king of Salem blessed Abram, he referred to God as *El Elyon*, "God Most High." In a grammatical context, the word "most" is used to show that this is the highest level. Nothing and no one can be higher than our God, because He is God Most High. His power is so great, and His sovereign nature is so far beyond our own, that no name can contain or properly express Him.

When we consider God's absolute holiness, power, and might, we may feel unworthy of calling upon Him. But this is the opposite of how we should view God. On many occasions during the exodus, He reassured the Israelites by saying, "I am the LORD your God." God is always ready to help, encourage, and guide us, through good times and bad.

B. The Meanings of God's Names

As the standard for almightiness and holiness, God may seem unapproachable or unreachable. But God wants us to come before Him and embrace Him as our Father. God understands us more than we think, and He can relate to us in ways that no one else can. The Bible teaches us many meanings to God's name, and all of these meanings are relevant to our lives today.

1. **YHWH Yireh: The Lord Will Provide** (Gen 22:14)

When Abraham was about to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice to God, the Angel of the LORD stopped him and provided a ram for the burnt offering instead. So, Abraham called the name of the place *YHWH Yireh*, “The-LORD-Will-Provide.”

It is easy to forget the power behind God’s provision. God’s provision is a promise that He gives to those who follow Him (Mt 6:31–34), but it is also a promise that God alone can fulfill. He is the only one who has the power to provide for our every need. Abraham understood this almighty power in declaring this name of God.

However, even knowing this, we often forget to turn to God when in need and forget to thank God for all that He has given us. What are some things that God has provided for you? (*Allow students to answer. Examples: a healthy body, a loving family, food to eat, a solution to a particular problem, certain skills, etc.*) In our time of need, God knows what is best for us. Sometimes, we may not get what we ask for, but even if we do not necessarily receive what we want, we should still trust that God provides for our needs and always remember that “those who seek the LORD shall not lack any good thing” (Ps 34:10).

2. **YHWH Rohi: The Lord Is My Shepherd** (Ps 23:1)

In Psalm 23, David wrote: *YHWH Rohi*, “The LORD is my shepherd.” Before David became king, he was a shepherd. For David, God was his own shepherd, who took care of him and protected him from his enemies, the same way he once cared for his father’s sheep. Today, God continues to play the same role as our shepherd. He is our protector and our guide. He shields us from danger and leads us on the path we ought to take.

To have God as our protector is a very precious thing. David wrote, “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me” (Ps 23:4). David experienced so much danger and suffering throughout his lifetime, yet he knew that God was his shepherd; the Lord would protect him from harm. Knowing this, he could walk forward confidently without fear, even in the face of death.

As God’s sheep, we are all very precious to Him, and He does not want any of us to fall away (Mt 18:12–13). In His description of the true shepherd, Jesus stated that the sheep “follow him, for they know his voice” (Jn 10:4). If we are truly God’s sheep, we will know His voice and will follow His guidance. He is always calling for us, trying to guide us back into His protection so that we don’t fall away. When we start to go astray, as His obedient sheep, we will return when we hear our shepherd calling for us.

3. **YHWH Shalom: The Lord Is Peace** (Judg 6:24)

Gideon built an altar to the Lord and called it *YHWH Shalom*, “The-LORD-Is-Peace.” In today’s world, many people seek peace but cannot find it. Can peace be found in the riches of the world? In relationships? In fame or glamour? Can peace be found in success?

Have you ever felt anxious about something? Do you know the reason for your anxiety? For example, if we have been waiting for someone for a while, we might begin to feel anxious and start wondering if maybe they forgot or got lost. Maybe you have felt anxious when waiting for the results of a test, or perhaps you experienced anxiety about something more serious, such as

the illness of a family member.

These anxieties arise because there are so many things in this world that are out of our control. But the Bible teaches us that God has “not forsaken those who seek [Him]” (Ps 9:10), allowing us to sleep in peace because God alone ensures our safety (Ps 4:8). God offers us peace, because those who seek Him know that He can be trusted in all things. And when we truly understand this, we will no longer feel anxious about anything.

The Lord Jesus reassured us, “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (Jn 14:27). The peace that God gives to us is an inner spiritual tranquility. With it, no matter what troubles or problems we face, we will not fear or worry. But this peace can only arise out of complete confidence in the Lord’s power and a willingness to cast all of our cares upon Him (1 Pet 5:7). When we do so, we will “be anxious for nothing,” and instead, “the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Phil 4:6–7).

4. *YHWH Tsidkenu: The Lord Our Righteousness* (Jer 33:16)

The prophet Jeremiah made a proclamation of God’s eternal covenant with David. “In those days Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will dwell safely. And this is the name by which she will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS,” or in Hebrew, *YHWH Tsidkenu*. There is none more righteous than the Lord. This is a characteristic that we often forget, because we rely so much on His love, grace, and mercy. But the Lord’s righteousness is a part of His nature. As a result, we who were born in sin can never reach Him.

Humankind can never live up to the righteousness that one requires to dwell in eternity with our Lord God. God knows this, which is why He promised for us a “Branch of righteousness” who will “execute judgment and righteousness in the earth” (Jer 33:15). Jesus Christ would fulfill the righteousness that we could not, so that even though we fall short of His glory (Rom 3:23), we now have a chance to obtain the hope of eternal life.

But if the Lord is so righteous, why does the world seem so unfair when we look around us? Why does it seem that people who do bad things are not punished, while others who do good are often oppressed? This makes many question if God is truly just. However, the Bible assures us that all will be “judged according to their works” (Rev 20:12). Let’s read 2 Corinthians 5:9–10. “Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.” God has promised punishment and blessing according to our actions, speech, and thoughts. We have to be patient, wait on the Lord, and trust that He is a just and righteous God.

God’s names express His power and holiness, but they also hold deep meaning for us. When we understand God’s different names, we will receive strength and power in our daily lives.

Check for Understanding

1. What is God’s name? God revealed His name to be “I AM WHO I AM,” which in Hebrew is “*YHWH*.”

2. **Why is God not bound by one specific name?** God is so powerful, almighty, and holy that any name given to Him would set boundaries to God's almighty nature. But there are no boundaries to His power. He encompasses and surpasses all things.
3. **What are the meanings of God's name? Briefly explain each.**
 - a. The Lord Will Provide (*YHWH Yireh*): God's provision is a promise that He gives to those who follow Him, and one that He alone can fulfill.
 - b. The Lord Is My Shepherd (*YHWH Rohi*): He is our protector and guide. He shields us from danger and leads us on the path we ought to take.
 - c. The Lord Is Peace (*YHWH Shalom*): The peace God gives us is an inner spiritual tranquility. But this peace can only arise out of complete confidence in God's power.
 - d. The Lord Our Righteousness (*YHWH Tsidkenu*): There is none more righteous than the Lord. All will be judged according to their works (Rev 20:12).

Life Application

1. Trust in the Name of God

"Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God." (Ps 20:7 NIV)

Human beings are fallible and cannot be trusted without question. Our failure to act, capacity for deception, and inability to control the world around us causes disappointment on a regular basis. But we learned today that the Lord is our peace, because He is good and faithful. He can be trusted for all things, and "is good to those who wait for Him, to the soul who seeks Him" (Lam 3:25). He is our Creator who made the world from nothing. Don't you think, then, that He is capable of maneuvering the paths ahead of us, however rocky, dangerous, or winding they may be?

We may often choose to trust in our own capabilities, or in someone other than God. But when we do that, we have chosen not to yield to Him. We are refusing to surrender our control. But after studying the meanings behind the name of God, we now know that He is our shepherd and provider. We can find so much hope, guidance, direction, and stability in His name.

Imagine that you're standing on a large rock, a firm foundation that will never shake or move—doesn't this strong foundation make you feel stable? In order for us to stand on this firm foundation, we must make the choice to trust in His name and depend on Him. Instead of taking the keys for ourselves and driving along an unknown, winding path in the dark, we can give the keys to God. We can let Him take the wheel and lead us. Ask yourself: Will I trust God to guide my path?

2. Hallow God's Name

A frequent problem that we encounter today is the way God's name is commonly used in vain. It is a very natural thing for the world around us, but as God's children, we should know better. We understand that there is power, holiness, and sovereignty in His name. Here is a testimony of one anonymous brother who forgot to revere God's holy name.

Testimony: Keeping God's Name Holy

A young church brother who received the Holy Spirit during Bible camp went back to his old ways of swearing carelessly every now and then, even at the slightest thing. He didn't think it was such a big deal to swear, as almost all his friends in school were doing it. During a Friday night service, as everyone went up to pray and to receive the laying of hands, this brother decided to go up as well, but he discovered that he could no longer speak in tongues. Immediately, he felt fear in his heart

since he prayed very hard for the Holy Spirit and didn't want to lose it just like that. He cried out to God for forgiveness, and it struck him during prayer that God was unhappy with his careless tongue. He had not used it to revere God's name, but instead used it to swear. He couldn't speak in tongues for a whole week, and during that week, he repented, prayed, and pleaded to God. God forgave him and the spiritual tongue was granted back to him the following Sabbath during prayer in church. Since then, this young brother has been very careful with his words, and he now understands how unhappy God will be if he does not hallow God's name.

Discussion: What are some ways we can hallow God's name?

3. The Meanings of God's Name

(Teachers: The last Life Application has been placed on a separate page, should you wish to hand it out to the students as a class activity or as homework.)

Memory Verse

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name." (Matthew 6:9)

Context

Jesus had only begun to preach after being tested in the wilderness and calling His disciples. He used the Beatitudes to teach His followers about the expectations of a Christian, about exercising Christ-like conduct in our treatment of others, and about how we should pray.

Meaning

This verse tells us that God's name is holy, and it must be revered. We are to regard His name as holy and to use it in a holy manner. We must not swear by God's name, by heaven, or by the earth, because God is the Creator of all of these (Mt 5:34–35).

Conclusion

In our lesson today, we learned that God's name is powerful and holds many meanings that can bring strength in our lives today. But even though He is our sovereign Creator, God is never out of reach. He loves when we talk to Him. He wants us to kneel down to pray and tell Him even our most trivial problems. God wants His children to come to Him when they have difficulties; He does not want them to rely on their friends over Him. God is ready to help us, if only we call on His name.

Life Application: The Meanings of God's Names

Write the meaning of God's name that identifies with each situation.

- The Lord Will Provide (*YHWH Yireh*)
- The Lord Is My Shepherd (*YHWH Rohi*)
- The Lord Is Peace (*YHWH Shalom*)
- The Lord Our Righteousness (*YHWH Tsidkenu*)

My aunt contracted breast cancer, but despite her grim situation, she always had a smile on her face. She constantly thanked God that her cancer wasn't the type that gave her pain.

Answer: _____

Sarah is excited about going to prom, and she wants to go with a date. Sarah wants to be kissed during the dance, but Sarah reminds herself that Satan would want her to defile herself and God would never allow that. Sarah decides to go to prom with her girlfriends instead.

Answer: _____

Dad recently lost his job, and we thought we would have a really tough month. However, Dad was offered a temporary job, and Mom got a raise at work that month. It wasn't so bad after all. Thank God!

Answer: _____

When applying for university, Sean entrusted his options in God's hands, and God guided Sean to a good school that is close to church. Sean knew that God's plan for him was always best. He only needed to follow, and things would work out just fine.

Answer: _____

Danny is a victim of verbal abuse in school, and he dreads going to school. He always prays for his aggressor to stop harassing him. One day, true to his prayer, his aggressor moved to another town, and Danny thanked God that he never fought back and allowed God's justice to prevail.

Answer: _____

Every time Emma went to the mall, she would see a homeless man picking food from the back of a restaurant. Emma had compassion on him and prayed daily that he would have a better life. One day, Emma saw this homeless man working in the same restaurant, and he was happy to see her. Emma knew in her heart that God had been merciful to him.

Answer: _____

Lesson 7 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. How do we hallow God's name?
Regard His name as holy and use it in a holy manner. We must not swear by God's name, by heaven, or by the earth, because God is the Creator of all of these (Mt 5:34–35).
2. "And God said to Moses, 'I _____ WHO I AM.' [...] This is My _____ forever; and this is My _____ to all generations.'" (Exodus 3:14–15)
AM, name, memorial.
3. Why is God not bound by one specific name?
God's power is not bound by a specific name because God is all-powerful and above everything else. There is nothing and no one more powerful, almighty, or holy than our Creator, and as such, no name can properly express His boundless power and authority.
4. Pick two of God's names and write what you learned about them, in your own words.
 - a. *The Lord Will Provide (YHWH Yireh): God's provision is a promise that He gives to those who follow Him, and one that He alone can fulfill.*
 - b. *The Lord Is My Shepherd (YHWH Rohi): He is our protector and guide. He shields us from danger and leads us on the path we ought to take.*
 - c. *The Lord Is Peace (YHWH Shalom): The peace God gives us is an inner spiritual tranquility. But this peace can only arise out of complete confidence in God's power.*
 - d. *The Lord Our Righteousness (YHWH Tsidkenu): There is none more righteous than the Lord. All will be judged according to their works (Rev 20:12).*
5. How do we know that we can trust in the name of God?
Because God is good and faithful. He is our Creator who made the world from nothing, and as such, is more than capable of leading and guiding our path.
6. Which of God's names do you identify most closely with? Why?
Personal answers.