

What's in a Name?

God's Amazing Grace Revealed in Some Amazing O. T. Names!



Four lessons from the book of Genesis
January & February, 2012

Course info

Under God some course goals

By the Spirit's grace both instructor and students will ...

- Find comfort and joy in a study of four divine names that the Lord God has revealed in the inspired record of Genesis
- Examine the Bible History setting when God revealed each precious name, and in this way provide an opportunity to review larger portions of Genesis
- Make "catechism connections" with each name of God as we review doctrinal truths relevant to each name
- Discover concrete applications for our lives as Christian witnesses to the world

When: The course on Genesis will be offered on four consecutive Wednesday evenings.

Course Outline: January 18 – God Most High (Genesis 14)
 January 25 – God Almighty (Genesis 17)
 February 1 – The Eternal God (Genesis 21)
 February 8 – The LORD Provides (Genesis 22)

Basics for believers who are studying in the Bible

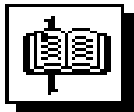
- The Holy Spirit works through the Means of Grace! Therefore, this is not simply an academic exercise. May the Holy Spirit grant his grace to lead us deeper and deeper into the saving truths of God's Word. It is my prayer that the Comforter strengthen and increase our faith during our work together. May we see Jesus in the powerful and loving Names of God revealed in Genesis.



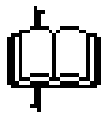
The "Map" for each lesson



The banner symbol highlights the name of God under study.



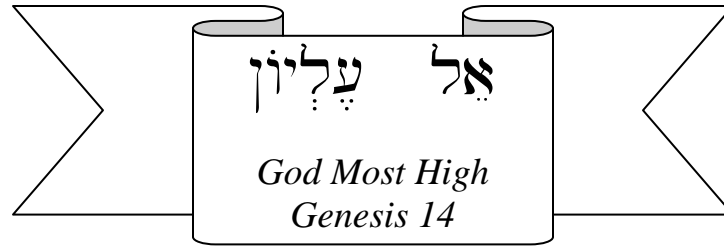
The Bible symbol is the section in the lesson that will examine the context of this divine name, both the narrow and wider context in Genesis.



The book symbol is the section in the lesson that will make a "catechism connection" to a doctrinal truth.



The lamp symbol is the section in the lesson that will make application to our lives as Christians and as servants of the Savior Jesus.



Lesson One: January 18, 2012

Objectives

By the Spirit's grace through the Word each participant will...

- Explain the difference between a human parent naming a child and the eternal God "naming" himself
- List three comforting truths revealed in the name "God Most High"
- Demonstrate three ways such truths impact a Christian's life of sanctification

Introductory Activity – Names are important and communicate quickly.

Working with a partner, use the space below list as many names for God as you can recall in 1 minute.

Human parents choose a name for child because _____.

God must "name himself" to reveal profound truths of his essence, for the finite human brain cannot comprehend the Infinite One. His ultimate purpose: Acts 2:21!

What is God's name?

*God's name is every expression which God uses to refer to himself.
God's name is everything God has revealed to us about himself in his word.*

For what purpose did God reveal his name to us?

*God revealed his name to us so that by its use he might bless and save us.
(From Luther's Small Catechism – An Exposition for Children and Adults, Kuske edition)*

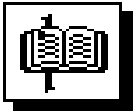
Scripture context: Genesis chapter 14

- The geopolitical situation (vv 1-4)
- The military strategy (vv 5-7)
- The rebellion crushed (vv 8-12)
- The rescue (vv 13-17)
 - Note Abram's witness
 - Note Abram's wealth
 - Note Abram's confidence

Focus verses: Genesis 14:19-20

Bible background

- God Most High is a name used often in the Old Testament, including over 20X in the Psalms alone
- Melchizedek is introduced in our focus section. He is mentioned four other times in Holy Scripture. (Psalm 110; Hebrews 5:1-10; Hebrews 6:19-20; Hebrews 7:1-18)
 - Note his name
 - Note his offices
 - Note his person
- Verse 22 is important to see how Abram understood the name Melchizedek used for God.
- Consider the message of the tithe.



Scripture study

Choose one question in each category and work with a neighbor or two. Spend five minutes on each question. If time allows, choose another task.

1. Compare Genesis 17:19-20 with Deuteronomy 32:8. What basic truths are revealed about this God Most High? Enumerate at least three.

2. Think of a couple of New Testament passages that underscore our conviction that Jesus Christ is truly God Most High.

3. As you consider this entire chapter of Genesis, how did Abram demonstrate that he knew and believed that God was God Most High. Two or three examples are possible.



Catechism Connection

1. At times we speak of Jesus our King ruling over three kingdoms: the kingdom of power, the kingdom of grace, and the kingdom of glory. How do you understand those terms and what is the relationship with the truth that God is God Most High?



2. God Most High is truly King of all, Creator of heaven and earth. As you read the following quote consider how these dogmatic truths are evident in the following episodes in Abram's life.

The providence of God manifests itself in particular: a) in His gracious preservation of all creatures; b) in His gracious cooperation with all that occurs; c) in His gracious direction and government of the whole universe. ...God freely and wisely governs all things to His own glory and the welfare and safety of the universe, especially of the godly. Christian Dogmatics, Mueller

Abram's travels –

Abram's dealings with Pharaoh –

Abram's accumulation of wealth –



Application to our lives as Christians

We worship and serve a Savior who is truly God Most High. For each example below, list three specific ways this Name of God changes the way we think and act.

- Our attitude as a worshipper

- As a Christian parent teaching our children about God's providing and protecting care

- As a pastor encouraging members of the congregation to share the Word of God with neighbors and friends

Review of Objectives

By the Spirit's grace through the Word each participant will...

- Explain the difference between a human parent naming a child and the eternal God "naming" himself

- List three comforting truths revealed in the name "God Most High"

- Demonstrate three ways such truths impact a Christian's life of sanctification



Lesson Two: January 25, 2012

Objectives

By the Spirit's grace through the Word each participant will...

- Display two ways God's omnipotence reveals his saving activity among sinful humans
- Demonstrate how the Spirit can use this name of God to both convict a soul and comfort a soul

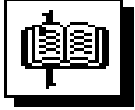
Scripture context: Genesis 15-16

- Note the years of waiting, and imagine the doubts Satan whispers
- God reassures by establishing the "Abrahamitic covenant" (Genesis 15)
- This covenant is unilateral and emphasizes pure grace
- See the failure of humans trying to do things the world's way (Genesis 16)
 - Legal practices and customs of that time (Nuzi)
 - Hagar and Ishmael

Focus verse: Genesis 17:1

Bible background

- Consider the impact of Genesis 17 with its list new or changed names
 - God Almighty
 - Abram → Abraham
 - Sarai → Sarah
 - Isaac
- Covenant of circumcision is instituted in this chapter; note grace
- God's amazing blessing even upon human "mistakes" (compare Genesis 12:2 with verse 20 and with Genesis 25:12)
- Unanswered questions need remain unanswered



Scripture Study

Choose one question in each category and work with a neighbor or two. Spend five minutes on each question. If time allows, choose another task.

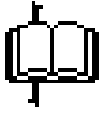
1. God's revealed name in verse one is a name frequently used. Why does God reveal himself as God Almighty for the first time in this particular appearance to Abram? Also compare Romans 4:18-21.

2. Look up the Genesis references below. In each verse this name for God is used. Do you see any similarities as you compare these passages with 17:1?
 - Genesis 28:3
 - Genesis 35:11
 - Genesis 48:3-4

3. God tells Abram in verse 1 to "walk before me and be blameless." This phrase is used also in Genesis 5:22 and 6:9. (Enoch and Noah) How do Enoch and Noah help us understand the meaning of God's command to Abram, especially in light of Romans 4:6-8 and Romans 4:20-22?

Compare this quote from the *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*, vol.69

Both the Revised Standard Version and the New American Standard Bible translate 17:1, "I am God Almighty; Walk before me and be blameless." The KJV says, "Walk before me and be thou perfect." All three translations make the words sound like law rather than gospel. However, the idea that God is asking for moral perfection simply is not in the context of this passage. Blameless, like perfect, diverts attention away from the real meaning. It appears that there is no adequate way to express the thought here without a paraphrase. The thought is, "I am el shaday; walk before me and be complete in this" or "do this in completeness, in the awareness that I am el shaday." The blamelessness of which God speaks is the blamelessness which He imputes to us as el shaday. An adequate translation ought to contain a marginal paraphrase to make the meaning of blameless apparent.



Catechism Connection

1. In the First Article of the Apostles' Creed we can easily see how the Creator God is "God Almighty." Explain how Abraham and Sarah personally experienced God's almighty power in their lives:
 - His power to create
 - His power to provide
 - His power to protect

2. In chapter 17 of Genesis we see God Almighty nurture and sustain Abraham's faith. Compare the phrases from Luther's explanation to the Third Article of the Creed. For each phrase explain why we can also say that the Holy Spirit is indeed God Almighty. (If possible, also be ready to list an appropriate Bible passage for each phrase.)
 - The Holy Ghost has called me by the Gospel

 - Enlightened me with his gifts

 - Sanctified

 - Kept me in the true faith



Application to our lives as Christians

1. As Christian who seek to share the Good News of Jesus with others, when in our evangelism witness is it important to teach that God is God Almighty? Be specific as you consider your friends and neighbors.
2. Is this name for God a law message or a gospel message?

Review of Objectives

By the Spirit's grace through the Word each participant will...

- Display two ways God's omnipotence reveals his saving activity among sinful humans
- Demonstrate how the Spirit can use this name of God to both convict a soul and comfort a soul



Lesson Three: February 1, 2012

Objectives

By the Spirit's grace through the Word each participant will...

- Define "oral transmission of the faith"
- Demonstrate how Jesus clearly claims to be "the LORD, the eternal God"
- Explain how God's children reflect some of the Father's attributes

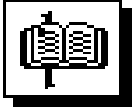
Scripture context: Genesis 18-20

- Unbelievable grace motivates an unbelievable intercession resulting in an unbelievable rescue (Genesis 18)
- Mercy amidst judgment (Genesis 19)
- The LORD is faithful to Sarah even when her husband is not (Genesis 20)

Focus verse: Genesis 21:33

Bible background

- The long-awaited son is born (verses 1-7; a "pattern" will emerge!)
- The heir is clearly identified (verses 8-21; see also Galatians 4:21-31)
- Abraham is a man to be reckoned with (verse 22)
- To make a treaty in verse 32 is literally "to cut a covenant"
- Who exactly are the Philistines?



Scripture Study

Choose one question in each category and work with a neighbor or two. Spend five minutes on each question. If time allows, choose another task.

1. “To call on the name of the LORD” is a significant phrase. Use the passages from Exodus to define what the phrase means. Then use the four passages from Genesis to describe what the patriarchs were doing.

- Exodus 33:19
- Exodus 34:5ff

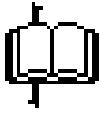
- Genesis 4:26
- Genesis 13:4
- Genesis 21:33
- Genesis 26:25

2. Abraham calls the LORD, **יְיָ**, the eternal God. What significance does the name the LORD have for the Bible reader? Use Exodus 3:13-15 in your answer.

יְיָ reveals Him as the absolute Being (cf. *יְיָ* *יְיָ*).

(A personal being, not a force; sufficient to himself; dependent on nothing; supreme; infinite; eternal; immutable; faithful; author of all things). WLS dog notes

3. Read John 8:58. How does Jesus allude to this great covenant name? Can you think of other “I Am” names that Jesus uses to constantly remind his hearers of the connection to the Tetragrammaton?



Catechism Connection

1. In these lessons on the names of God we have spoken often about God's attributes. Yet we need to carefully understand that when we speak of God's attributes, it is not the same as when we speak about characteristics or attributes for a human being. Use the following quote to explain the difference.

When we describe human beings, we ascribe to them both a nature and attributes. Just so Holy Scripture, accommodating itself to the laws of human thought and speech, ordinarily speaks of God as possessing both a divine essence and divine attributes. In other words, it speaks of God's attributes, such as omnipotence, grace, love, etc., as inhering in the divine essence. Nevertheless the attributes of God are His very divine essence. The properties, or attributes, of God are His very essence. Mueller, Christian Dogmatics

2. The catechism also speaks about attributes of God in two ways. Some divine attributes can only be used to describe God. Other divine attributes the Lord wants our faith to imitate, as the Spirit uses the Gospel to move God's people to "be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children." (Eph. 5:1) In the chart below, list two columns of attributes. One column contains attributes that can only be used to describe God. The other column contains attributes that the Spirit works in believers through the power and grace of the Gospel.

Attributes that are only of God	Attributes that the Spirit works in us



Application to our lives as Christians

1. Why is the name “God Eternal” such a fitting name for the God who hears our prayers?
2. To consider the concept of eternal is impossible for us creatures bound by time and space. How do you explain the “eternal God” to a youngster in your catechism class?

Review of objectives

By the Spirit’s grace through the Word each participant will...

- Define “oral transmission of the faith”
- Demonstrate how Jesus clearly claims to be “the LORD, the eternal God”
- Explain how God’s children reflect some of the Father’s attributes



Lesson Four: February 8, 2012

Objectives

By the Spirit's grace through the Word each participant will...

- Explain the two ways Scripture uses the term "testing" or "tempting" faith
- Relate how the Genesis 22 account visualizes three key truths of God's salvation plan
- Demonstrate how the name "The LORD will Provide" means so much more than the answer to the fourth petition

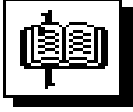
Scripture context

- Chronologically, there is no definitive reference in Scripture between chapters 21 and 22; simply "sometime later"
- Geographically, the place identified becomes very significant in God's salvation plan (2 Sam. 24:18-25 and 2 Chron. 3:1)

Focus verse: Genesis 22:14

Bible background

- We meet "the angel of the LORD" in this section (verses 11 & 15-18) - see also Genesis 16
- The last phrase in verse 14 can be understood in two different ways; both are valid



Scripture Study

Genesis 22 is rather well known from Sunday school lessons and devotional materials. If necessary, though, first skim through verses 1-14 to refresh your memory. Then choose one question in each category and work with a neighbor or two. Spend five minutes on each question. If time allows, choose another task.

1. Is Isaac a type of Christ? Various conservative commentators have said yes to that question, others have said no. Based on the chapter, list several ways why we can say “yes” to that question. Based on verse 14, however, why do we say “no”?
2. Use the following quote and then paraphrase in your own words the two ways that Scripture speaks about “testing” or “tempting” a person’s faith.

According to Scripture there is a) a temptation for good (tentatio Probationis) and b) a temptation for evil (tentatio seductionis). The first comes from God and is designed for the trial and strengthening of faith, Gen. 22:1–18; Deut. 13:1 ff.; Ps. 66:10 f. By sending tentationes probationis upon His children, God does not become the author of sin; for a) He proportions all trials to the strength of His saints, 1 Cor. 10:13, and b) sustains His beloved most graciously in their faith whenever they are tempted, Luke 22:31, 32; 1 Cor. 10:13. For this reason those who resist and overcome temptation do so not by their own strength or worthiness, but solely by the grace of God, Rom. 11:20–22; 2 Cor. 12:9.

Temptations for evil (tentationes seductionis) come a) from the devil, Matt. 4:1 ff.; 1 Pet. 5:8; b) from the world, 1 John 2:15–17; and c) from the flesh, Jas. 1:14; cf. 1 Thess. 3:5; 1 Cor. 7:5; 1 Tim. 6:9; Mark 14:38. It is of great comfort to all believers that Christ, who Himself was tempted, has promised to sustain His followers in their temptations, Heb. 2:18; 4:15; 2 Pet. 2:9. Mueller, Christian Dogmatics

3. The Bible does not tell us Isaac’s specific age as the chapter begins. By carefully reading the section, you have several hints that allow you to estimate his age. How old do you think he is?

4. Read Hebrews 11:19. How is this remarkable faith demonstrated in Abraham’s words and actions throughout chapter 22?



Catechism Connection

As you watch the “play” acted out before you, be ready to explain how each of these catechism terms were acted out.

- Active obedience of Christ

- Passive obedience of Christ

- Vicarious atonement



Application to our lives as Christians

1. Is the theme “The Supreme Test of Faith” the best theme for Bible class on Genesis 22 . Why or why not?

2. Would you ever consider using verse 14 and apply the phrase “The LORD will provide” to your people’s physical and temporal needs of shelter and food? Be ready to explain your reasons.

Review of objectives

By the Spirit’s grace through the Word each participant will...

- Explain the two ways Scripture uses the term “testing” or “tempting” faith

- Relate how the Genesis 22 account visualizes three key truths of God’s salvation plan

- Demonstrate how the name “The LORD will Provide” means so much more than the answer to the fourth petition