

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

Video Lecture Series

by Robert D. McCurley, ThM

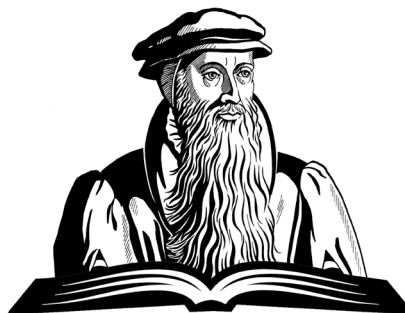
STUDY GUIDE

Module 2:

THE DOCTRINE OF GOD

Lecture 3:

THE NAMES OF GOD



The John Knox Institute
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Entrusting our Reformed Inheritance to the Church Worldwide

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STUDY GUIDE

Module 2

The Doctrine of God

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THE DOCTRINE OF GOD

Lecture 3:

The Names of God

Introduction

When Adam named the animals in the garden of Eden, that naming expressed his lordship over them. We also see that names can describe the character of the thing being named, and distinguish it from something else. This becomes significant when we turn our attention to thinking about how God names people. In Genesis 32, we read that God changed the name of *Jacob*, which means “deceiver,” to the name *Israel*, because he had power with God and prevailed. So that change of name was loaded with significance. God changed the names of *Abram* to *Abraham*, and *Sarai* to *Sarah*, and so forth. But this has even greater importance as we turn our attention to considering the names of God, because his names reveal the nature and character of God.

Theme: *The Names of God.*

I. Scriptural Basis

“And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them.” (Exodus 6:3)

And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.” (Exodus 3:14)

1. The name “*Jehovah*” referred to God’s self-existence and his immutability—his inability to change.
2. The LORD is the covenant-keeping God.

“I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.” (Revelation 1:8)

3. Jesus is identified as *Jehovah* in the New Testament.

“Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.” (Exodus 20:7)

4. All that is attached to God’s revelations of himself is summarized in his names.
5. The names of God reveal the nature, character, and attributes of God.

Questions:

1. Can you outline the structure of Exodus chapter 3? What things did God reveal about himself in this chapter?

2. How do we know that Jesus is identified as Jehovah in the New Testament? Please support your answer with Scripture.

3. What does the name of God tell us about God? How does this help us understand the Third Commandment, “Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain”?

II. Doctrinal Overview

1. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.
 - a. All these names reveal the glory, nature, and attributes of the Triune God.
2. Three basic names of God:
 - a. *Jehovah*—I AM THAT I AM, translated as LORD.
 - b. *El*, or, *Elohim*—God, refers to the overwhelming majesty of God.
 - c. *Adonai*—means lord, or master, or ruler.

3. Names connected with *El* or *Elohim*:
 - a. *El Shaddai*—The Almighty God.
 - b. *El Elyon*—The most high God.
 - c. *El Olam*—The everlasting God.
 - d. *El Roi*—The God who sees.
 - e. *El Gibbor*—The mighty God.
4. Compounded names connected with the name *Jehovah*:
 - a. *The LORD of hosts*, or, *Jehovah of hosts*—“hosts” can mean the angels of heaven, or can mean the armies of Israel.
 - b. *Jehovah-Jireh*—The LORD will provide.
 - c. *Jehovah-Nissi*—The LORD is my banner.
 - d. *Jehovah-Rapha*—The LORD your healer.
 - e. *Jehovah-Shalom*—The LORD is my peace.
 - f. *Jehovah-Rohi*—The LORD is my shepherd.
 - g. *Jehovah-Tsidkenu*—The LORD our righteousness.
 - h. *The LORD who sanctifies you*.
 - i. *Jehovah-Shammah*—The LORD is there.
5. The name *Jehovah* combined with *Israel*:
 - a. *Jehovah, the God of Israel*.
 - b. *The Holy One of Israel*.
 - c. *The Mighty One of Israel*.
6. New Testament names for God.
 - a. *theos*—Lord, as all three persons of the Godhead.
 - b. *kyrios*—Lord, meaning Jehovah.
 - c. *despotes*—Lord, meaning ownership and authority.

Questions:

1. What are the three most basic and common names of God in the Old Testament? Please give the meaning of each name.

2. List the names of God which are combined with *El* or *Elohim*, and give their meanings, with Scripture texts where they are used. Please memorize them and meditate on these passages.

3. List the compounded names of God connected with the name *Jehovah*, and give their meanings, with Scripture texts where they are used. Please memorize them and meditate on these texts.

4. List the combined names of Jehovah and Israel. What do these combined names mean?

5. List the Greek names for God in the New Testament, and give their meanings.

III. Polemical Exposition

Objection 1: “*God’s name is merely a label rather than being revelatory, rather than disclosing something to us about his God’s character.*”

1. The heretical groups who have denied that Jesus is God.

Questions:

1. Is God’s name really a label? How would believing this error influence a person’s meditation about God?

2. What is the significance of God's names being attributed to the Lord Jesus Christ? What is a well-known heretical group today that denies the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ?

3. How did the Lord Jesus get his name? What is the Old Testament equivalent of the name "Jesus"? What does it mean? How does this name prove that the Lord Jesus is God? What are some Scriptural proofs?

IV. Practical Exposition

1. God places his name on his people.
2. God's name signifies God's presence.
3. We must never take God's name in vain, as we see in the Third Commandment, but we should speak of God in reverent ways.
4. The believer bears God's name, so his or her whole life must show forth God's glory.

Questions:

1. What does it mean to say that God places his name on his people? Where do we see this wonderful truth in the Bible?

2. How does God's name signify his presence? What does this truth imply for the Christian?

3. What does it mean to take God's name in vain? What care should the Christian take regarding the use of God's name? What should the believer do if they hear someone using God's name in an irreverent or wicked way?

4. Please look up *The Westminster Shorter Catechism*, and read the answer to Question #1. How does the chief end of man relate to the name of God?

V. Self-Reflection

Proverbs 18:10 says, "*The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.*" Nothing is surer and more certain than the name of the Lord. The study in this lecture calls us to worship and adore God, rather than just seeking intellectual knowledge. Please meditate on all these precious names of God and their meanings. Have you found the wonderful truth that the supreme name of the Lord Jesus Christ relates to you personally through union with him?