

GETTING TO KNOW

GOD

A study of His names & divine nature

BAND of BROTHERS

SPRING SERIES 2025 – WEEK 1

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

*Now this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God,
and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent.*

– John 17:3 BSB

- **Why isn't "God" good enough?**

- We have to begin at the beginning

In the beginning, God [‘ēlōhîm] created the heavens and the earth. – Genesis 1:1 ESV

- An old familiar name
 - Appears over 2500x in the Hebrew Bible
 - Featured prominently in Genesis
 - It is really a title, not a name
 - It means “Strong One”
 - But it was used of other gods as well

***God** [‘ēlōhîm] said to Jacob, “Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there. Make an altar there to the **God** [‘ēlōhîm] who appeared to you when you fled from your brother Esau.” – Genesis 35:1 ESV*

*“I am the Lord your **God** [‘ēlōhîm], who rescued you from the land of Egypt, the place of your slavery. You must not have any other **god** [‘ēlōhîm] but me.” – Genesis 20:2-3 ESV*

- *Elohim* is the plural of *El*
 - The Jews added other words to set their God apart from all others
El Shaddai – God Almighty

El Elyon – God Most High
El Roi – The God Who Sees
El Echad – The One God
El Hanne’eman – The Faithful God
El Emet – The God of Truth

- But they used *Elohim* to refer to Him as...Master – Creator – Judge

*“I am the **God** [ělohîm] of your father, the **God** [ělohîm] of Abraham, the **God** [ělohîm] of Isaac, and the **God** [ělohîm] of Jacob.”* – Exodus 3:6 ESV

- **The transcendent God**

- *Elohim* spoke of God’s majesty and might

*Who among the heavenly beings is like the LORD, a **God** [ělohîm] greatly to be feared in the council of the holy ones, and awesome above all who are around him?* – Psalm 89:6-7

“Why did God choose to introduce Himself to us as *Elohim*, the strong Creator God? One of the primary reasons could be that He wants us to recognize that He is transcendent – that He is distinct from His creation.”

“Another reason God introduces Himself to us with His name *Elohim* is that it lets us know that He is set apart from the constraints of time. God created time. And if God created time, then God preceded time...” – Tony Evans, *The Power of God’s Names*

“When we call Him the Creator God, we are referring to His strength or omnipotence. He is all-powerful, more powerful than any person in the universe. Nothing is equal to Him in power.” – Elmer L. Towns, *My Father’s Names*

- **Transcendent but immanent**

- *Elohim* created man for a relationship
- He made Himself known and knowable
- He entered into His creation
- And revealed Himself to man

*Then the Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground. He breathed the breath of life into the man’s nostrils, and **the man became a living person.*** – Genesis 2:7 NLT

- God made man to bring Him glory
 - That’s what it means to bear His image

*Then **God** [ělohîm] said, “Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us.”* – Genesis 1:26 NLT

- We were uniquely created to honor God

- With the capacity to know Him
 - The privilege of communicating with Him
 - The choice to obey Him
 - The free will to love Him
 - The responsibility to serve Him
- The opportunity of a lifetime

When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him? – Psalm 8:3-4 ESV

- Heaven on earth
 - ~ Adam and Eve had all they needed
 - ...Unbroken fellowship with God
 - ...Protection from disease and death
 - ...A purposeful life
 - ...And no unmet needs
- An opportunity squandered
 - ~ They enjoyed ultimate freedom
 - ...to willingly obey
 - ...to know and be known by God
 - ...to rely on His care and provision
 - ...to trust His word

The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” – Genesis 2:15-17 ESV

But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” – Genesis 3:4-5 ESV

*...when the woman saw that the tree...was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. **Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked.** – Genesis 3:6-7 ESV*

- **Opened eyes. Closed Hearts.**
 - Sin interfered with their knowledge of God
 - Their perception of Him was altered
 - Their intimacy with Him was damaged
 - Their desire for Him was replaced

- Their relationship with Him was marred

*When the cool evening breezes were blowing, the man and his wife heard the LORD **God** [ĕlōhîm] walking about in the garden. So they hid from the LORD **God** [ĕlōhîm] among the trees. Then the LORD **God** [ĕlōhîm] called to the man, “Where are you?” – Genesis 3:8-10 NLT*

- Disobedience brought distance
 - o They’re cast out of the garden
 - o And their loss is significant
 - They end up cursed
 - They lose access to God
 - Their sin spreads

The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the LORD regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. – Genesis 6:5-6 ESV

- o God’s relationship with man changes dramatically

“I will wipe this human race I have created from the face of the earth. Yes, and I will destroy every living thing...I am sorry I ever made them.” – Genesis 6:7 NLT

- **Elohim determines to begin again**

So God [ĕlōhîm] said to Noah, “I have decided to destroy all living creatures, for they have filled the earth with violence. Yes, I will wipe them all out along with the earth!” – Genesis 6:13 NLT

*“Look! I am about to cover the earth with a flood that will destroy every living thing that breathes. Everything on earth will die. **But I will confirm my covenant with you.**” Genesis 7:17 NLT*

- *Elohim* chose a new Adam

*Then **God** [ĕlōhîm] blessed Noah and his sons and told them, “Be fruitful and multiply.” – Genesis 9:1 NLT*

- o Same mandate, different man
- o But a similar outcome

*These are the clans that descended from Noah’s sons, arranged by nation according to their lines of descent. **All the nations of the earth descended from these clans after the great flood.** – Genesis 10:32 NLT*

- Four centuries later
 - New nations have formed
 - Each with their own *Elohim*
 - The one true *Elohim* was replaced
 - But they were without excuse

...they have no excuse for not knowing God. Yes, they knew God, but they wouldn't worship him as God or even give him thanks. And they began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. As a result, their minds became dark and confused. Claiming to be wise, they instead became utter fools. And instead of worshiping the glorious, ever-living God, they worshiped idols made to look like mere people and birds and animals and reptiles. – Romans 1:20-23 NLT

- **Same God. New Name.**

- 400 years after Noah, God calls Adam 3.0
- A worshiper of false *Elohim*
- He had no knowledge of Noah's *Elohim*
- An unexpected call from an unknown God

*The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your native country, your relatives, and your father's family, and go to the land that **I will show you. I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others. I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt. All the families on earth will be blessed through you.**" – Genesis 12:1-3 NLT*

- A different kind of *Elohim*
 - This *elohim* actually spoke
 - He led and didn't have to be carried
 - He was present and powerful
 - He kept His word
 - He wasn't just any *Elohim*
 - He was *El Elyon*

*Melchizedek blessed Abram with this blessing: "Blessed be Abram by **God Most High** ['ēl 'elyôn], Creator of heaven and earth. And blessed be **God Most High** ['ēl 'elyôn], who has defeated your enemies for you." – Genesis 14:19-20 NLT*

- Abram was getting to know *Elohim*
 - In real time
 - In real life circumstances
 - *Elohim* wasn't just the Creator God
 - He was King and Conqueror

“El Elyon not only has authority over all our enemies, but He has authority over all our circumstances....El Elyon gave Abram victory over his enemies not only to show Abram that He is sovereign over all his foes but also to reveal Himself as sovereign over all things in the universe.” – Rabbi Kirt A. Schneider, To Know Him by Name

- This is our goal for the next 11 weeks
 - God’s names reveal His character
 - They are tied to real-life circumstances
 - They prove His existence
 - They give evidence of His power
 - They demonstrate His love and care
 - Just as they did for Abraham

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to him and said, “I am El-Shaddai – ‘God Almighty.’ Serve me faithfully and live a blameless life. I will make a covenant with you, by which I will guarantee to give you countless descendants.” – Genesis 17:1-2 NLT

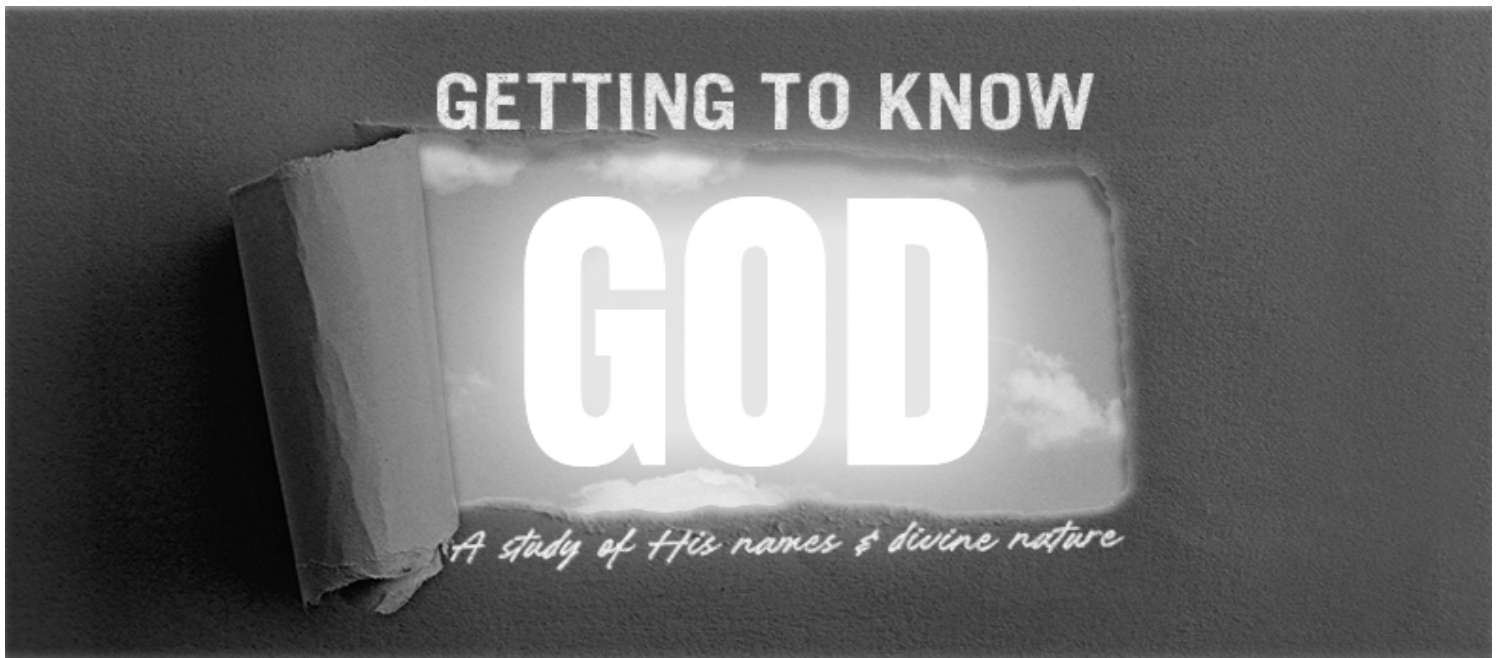
“...each of God’s names reveals a defining quality of His nature and character....God revealed these names to His people only as they needed them – in their moments of deepest crisis....this is how I want to learn my Lord’s nature also: to understand His heart toward us in our most desperate times.” – David Wilkerson, Knowing God by Name

- **Discussion questions**

How have let God’s name become too familiar and void of meaning?

Why is it essential that God be more than just be a character in a book? How do we begin to see Him as active in our own stories?

Have someone close by asking God to reveal Himself to your table this semester.



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SPRING SERIES 2025 – WEEK 2 HOMEWORK

WEEK 2 – *Jehovah-Jireh*: The LORD Will Provide

Jehovah-Jireh is one of the names of God found in the Bible, specifically in the Old Testament. It is derived from the Hebrew words "**YHWH**" (the personal name for God, often translated as "LORD") and "**Yireh**" (meaning "will see" or "will provide"). Therefore, **Jehovah-Jireh** can be understood as "The LORD will provide" or "The LORD will see to it." The name "Jehovah-Jireh" first appears in **Genesis 22:14** when God provides a ram as a substitute sacrifice for Abraham's son, Isaac. The story takes place when God tests Abraham's faith by asking him to sacrifice his son. Abraham obeys, but before he sacrifices Isaac, God intervenes and provides a ram caught in a thicket as a replacement. After this miraculous provision, Abraham names the place "**The LORD will provide**" (Jehovah-Jireh), acknowledging God's faithfulness in meeting his needs even in dire circumstances. Jehovah-Jireh signifies God's provision and faithfulness, encapsulating the belief that God sees His people's needs and provides in His perfect timing. It teaches that in moments of testing, God is not only present but actively works for the good of His people.

- Read pages 5-16 of Ken's Devotional™ on the names of God. Write down any key thoughts or insights you got from considering the name **Jehovah-Jireh**.

- Read Genesis 22 in its entirety, taking time to consider the gravity of the request God makes of Abraham. Write down any statements that jump out at you in this story.

If you read this week's Devotional™ reading, you understand that there is more here than meets the "eye." Moses named the location *YHWH yir'e*. The second half of that name is a transliteration of the Hebrew word *rā'â* which means "to see," "look," or "foresee."

Read the following quote from Ken's Devotional™ and then write down how it expands your understanding of what is going on in this passage.

"There seems to be far more going on here than the provision of a ram to take the place of Isaac. God *saw* Abraham's faith and responded by providing a substitute. In that gracious act of mercy, Abraham *saw* the hand of God. And in the entire sequence of events, we can *see* God's plan to send His Son as 'the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world' (John 1:29). The same Hebrew word that is transliterated as *jireh* is used in verse 13 where it states, 'Then Abraham looked up and saw a ram caught by its horns in a thicket. So, he took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering in place of his son.'" – Ken Miller, *Devotional™ on the Names of God*

- Now read John 1:24-34. In this passage, John the Baptist announces Jesus in a peculiar way. What does he say in verse 29?

He uses the Greek word *ide*, which can also be translated as "see." How many times does John the Baptist make references that have to do with sight or vision in this passage?

What connections can you make to John's account and that of Moses' descriptions of the sacrifice of Isaac?

Why is it important that we SEE what God is doing, not just that we benefit from His provision?