

# Swept off your Feet

## Beyond Worship-as-Usual

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### CHAPTER 29

## Hallowed be Your Name

Agur ben Jakeh compiled legendary wisdom for an inspired oracle. Confronting intellectual pride, he probes our knowledge of by posing several prophetically charged questions.

***Who** has gone up to heaven and come down?*

***Whose** hands have gathered up the wind?*

***Who** has wrapped up the waters in a cloak?*

***Who** has established all the ends of the earth?*

***What is his name, and what is the name of his son?***

*Surely you know! (Proverbs 30:4 NIV)*

Agur's pointed inquiry begs the question—who is God? Knowing the truth about His identity provides eternal security and relational unity. Agreeing in prayer with His Father, Jesus affirmed, *“And this is **eternal life**, that they may **know You**, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent”*.<sup>1</sup> During this High Priestly prayer, Jesus emphasized the significance of His **Father's name**. He proclaimed that He had revealed this **name** to His apostolic team. Jesus literally *“manifested”* His Father's **name**, *“keeping”* His disciples secure in that **name**, which the Father had entrusted to Him.<sup>2</sup> Then, pleading with His Father, Jesus prayed, *“keep [tereo] them in Your **name**, the **name** which You have given Me, so that **they may be one** even as We are”*.<sup>3</sup> The Greek verb *tereo* means to guard or take care of.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> John 17:3 NAS

<sup>2</sup> John 17:6,12

<sup>3</sup> John 17:11 NAS

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.biblestudytools.com/lexicons/greek/nas/tereo.html> (accessed 5-22-21)

Our Heavenly Father has divulged His name to focus our attention beyond descriptive labels and religious titles. He designed us to relate intimately, on a first name basis. God possesses a sacred identity with unsurpassed distinction. He lives and reigns beyond theological notions and academic impressions. Knowing the truth about God's passion and presence invites an informed response—reinforced by authentic awe and affectionate reverence.

Interacting with our Heavenly Father includes embracing the truth about His name and the name of His Son. Yeshua (the Hebrew name for Jesus), revealed Himself on earth as the Son of God. He confirmed His familial identity with “*many convincing proofs*”.<sup>5</sup> Our Heavenly Father also revealed Himself by a proper name along with various descriptive epithets. Nonetheless, we normally address Him by the common noun “God”. Like angels, demons, and humans, God denotes a unique category of being. Yet, when addressing individuals in the bible, He does not call them “human”, He calls them by their given proper name.

English bible translators render the plural masculine noun 'Elohiym as God, e.g., “*In the beginning **God** ['Elohiym] created the heavens and the earth*”. Notwithstanding, this Hebrew word also refers to angels, human rulers and judges, and false gods and goddesses; it's not a unique identifier.<sup>6</sup>

Encountering God's presence before a burning bush, Moses asked a reasonable question—for the sake of his assignment in Egypt.

*Then Moses said to God, “Behold, I am going to the sons of Israel, and I will say to them, ‘The God ['Elohiym] of your fathers has sent me to you.’ Now they may say to me, ‘**What is His name?**’ What shall I say to them?”* (Exodus 3:13 NAS)

In a revelatory response, God instructed Moses to identify Him with both a descriptive term and a proper name.

*And God said to Moses, “**I AM WHO I AM**” [Hebrew, HYH 'aher HYH]; and He said, “This is what you shall **say** to the sons of Israel: ‘**I AM** [יהי, HYH] has sent me to you.’” God furthermore said to Moses, “This is what you shall **say** to the sons of Israel: ‘The **LORD** [an English word substituted, not translated, for the Hebrew letters יהוה], the God ['Elohiym] of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.’ **This is***

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<sup>5</sup> Acts 1:3 NAS

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.biblestudytools.com/lexicons/hebrew/nas/elohiym.html> (accessed 5/7/2021)

***My name forever, and this is the name for all generations to use to call upon Me.*** (Exodus 3:14-15 NAS)

After Moses returned to Egypt, God repeated His personal name saying, “*I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as God Almighty [El Shaddai], but by **My name, LORD** [יהוה, YHWH], I did not make Myself known to them*”.<sup>7</sup> Manifesting all His goodness while passing before Moses on Mount Sinai, God proclaimed His name.

*The LORD descended in the cloud and stood there with him [Moses] as he called upon the name of the LORD [יהוה, YHWH]. Then the LORD [יהוה, YHWH] passed by in front of him and proclaimed, “The LORD [יהוה, YHWH], the LORD [יהוה, YHWH] God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth.* (Exodus 34:5-6 NAS)

About 650 years later God spoke through Isaiah reminding Israel, “*I am the LORD [יהוה, YHWH], that is my name; I will not give my glory to another, nor my praise to idols*”.<sup>8</sup> God specifically instructed Moses to say, “*I Am*” sent you and then revealed His proper name as YHWH (יהוה), which means “the existing One”. It is derived from the primitive root HYH (הוה), translated “*I Am*”, and means to be or exist.<sup>9</sup>

Since the Babylonian Exile, the Hebrew language has experienced alterations in spelling and pronunciation, both of which are controversial among secular and religious factions. Complicating this semantic debate, Latin translators replaced the letters Y with J (since J does not exist in Hebrew), W with V, and V with B. Hence, the four-letter Tetragrammaton representing God’s name is transliterated (letter-for-letter) from יהוה to variations of YHWH, YHVH, or JHVH. With the spelling reversed in Hebrew script, the Hebrew pronunciation for each letter is Yōd-Hey-Vāv-Hey (Y-H-W-H).

By convention however, English bibles render neither a transliteration nor translation for God’s personal name. Instead, they choose to replace the Hebrew word יהוה (YHWH) with “*LORD*”. It refers exclusively to the One True God (not false gods) and occurs 6,828 times in the biblical text, both in *Biblia Hebraica* and

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<sup>7</sup> Exodus 6:3 NAS

<sup>8</sup> Isaiah 42:8 NASB2020

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.biblestudytools.com/lexicons/hebrew/nas/hayah.html> and

<https://biblehub.com/hebrew/1961.htm> (accessed 5/7/2021)

<https://www.biblestudytools.com/lexicons/hebrew/nas/yehovah.html> (accessed 5/7/2021)

*Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*. Without fabricating vowels, which do not appear in early Hebrew manuscripts, the pronunciation remains uncertain. Greek, Roman, and Samaritan transcriptions along with notations by Church Fathers and biblical scholars suggest Yahweh, Yehovah, or a Latinized rendition made popular by William Tyndale, Jehovah.<sup>10</sup> Without vowels however, these renditions run the risk of misspelling, mispronouncing, or misrepresenting God's proper name.

God instructed Moses to "say" both HYH (I Am) and YHWH (the existing One) to the enslaved Israelites pleading for emancipation. However, at some point, the decision was made to stop saying God's proper name. The original pronunciation for YHWH has lapsed from oral tradition and remains a mystery, though Jesus had "manifested" it to His disciples. After the Babylonian Exile, devoted Jews decided to refrain from articulating God's proper name. Instead of pronouncing (or mispronouncing) it during public ceremony or private prayer, observant Jews replace YHWH with "Adonai", which means Lord and is so rendered in English bibles. Most Christian bibles have adopted "LORD" in place of YHWH.

Variations among Orthodox, Ultra-Orthodox, Conservative, and Reformed Jewish traditions confine the use of Adonai to prayers rendered with an abbreviated spelling altered from אֲדֹנָי (ADNY) to יי (YY). During formal Jewish assemblies, prayer leaders summon participants to stand and focus their full attention on God. With words and gestures, the "Call to Worship" conveys reverence for God and His name in preparation for declaring the Sh'ma, i.e., "Here Oh Israel, Adonai is our God, Adonai is One...".<sup>11</sup>

### **Call to Worship (Bar'chu)**

Leader: Praise Adonai to whom praise is due forever!  
Hebrew: *Bar'chu et Adonai ham'vorach!*

Those that are able bend at the knees while saying *Bar'chu* and bow from the waist while saying *Adonai*.

Response: Praised be Adonai to whom praise is due, now and forever!  
Hebrew: *Baruch Adonai ham'vorach l'olam va-ed!*

Those that are able bend at the knees while saying *Baruch* and bow from the waist while saying *Adonai*.

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<sup>10</sup> See the writings of Early Church Father Clement of Alexandria

<sup>11</sup> Deuteronomy 6:4-9

Advancing their linguistic reverence even further, some Jewish traditions advocate referring to God during non-prayer conversation as “*HaShem*”, which means “*the Name*” from Leviticus 24:11.

## **Worshipping God by Venerating His Name**

Jesus taught His disciples to address God with pronounced reverence. The first declaration in His model prayer asserts veneration for His name. Rather than addressing God by His personal proper name, Jesus teaches us to address Him more intimately as our Heavenly Father. He said, “*Pray, then, in this way: 'Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed [Greek, hagiozo] be Your name.'*”<sup>12</sup> The verb *hagiozo* means to consecrate, separate, and dedicate as holy or sacred.<sup>13</sup> While agonizing in prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus addressed His Father with intimate affection by calling Him “*Abba*”, an Aramaic word not found in the Old Testament that means daddy.

Jewish tradition elevates respect for God’s identity; it hallows His name with audible abstinence. Since God transcends our most expansive appraisal of divine reality, labeling Him with human syllables underestimates the scope of His incomparable distinction. Similar to falling face down in worship, the gesture of laying down one’s voice in selective silence conveys reverent respect. While honoring God’s name promotes a sincere attitude of worship, the notion of worshiping His name by any means does not appear in scripture. Instead, the bible exhorts us to honor, give thanks, ascribe glory, love, bless, praise with speaking, singing and dancing, exalt, acknowledge, trust in, pray in, proclaim, and gather in His name. Refer to the end of this document for scriptures associated with these attitudes and expressions.

Knowing the truth about God’s identity carries a sacred responsibility to hallow it, consecrating His name with honor and gratitude. Depriving God of honor and neglecting to offer gratitude literally causes a person to go stupid—the consequences are incremental, detrimental, and punitive.

*For even though **they knew God**, they **did not honor Him as God** or **give thanks**, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and **exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image** in the form of corruptible **man** and of **birds** and four-footed **animals** and **crawling creatures**. Therefore God*

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<sup>12</sup> Matthew 6:9 and Luke 11:2 NAS

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.biblestudytools.com/lexicons/greek/nas/hagiozo.html>



*gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. For **they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator...*** (Romans 1:21-25 NAS)

As Creator, YHWH clarifies reality from an eternal perspective. He is the I AM who created ALL THAT IS and ALL THAT WILL BE.

### **Sacred Responses Associated with God's Name**

Note: Bible translators replaced God's proper name יהוה (YHWH) with LORD.

*"If you do not listen, and if you do not take it to heart to **give honor to My name**," says the LORD of hosts, "then I will send the curse upon you and I will curse your blessings; and indeed, I have cursed them already, because you are not taking it to heart. (Malachi 2:2 NAS)*

*Sing praises to the LORD, you his godly ones, and **give thanks to his holy name**. (Psalm 30:4 NAS)*

***Ascribe** to the Lord the **glory due his name**; bring an offering and come before him! **Worship the LORD** in the splendor of holiness; (1 Chronicles 16:29, Psalm 29:2, and Psalm 96:8 ESV)*

*Who will not fear, O Lord, and **glorify your name**? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and **worship you**, for your righteous acts have been revealed." (Revelation 15:4 ESV)*

*But let all who take refuge in you be glad; let them ever sing for joy, and shelter them, that those who **love your name** may exult in you. (Psalm 5:11 NAS)*

*Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! **Give thanks** to him; **bless his name**! (Psalm 100:4 ESV)*

*Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, **bless his holy name**! (Psalm 103:1 NAS)*

*My mouth will speak the praise of the LORD, and all flesh will **bless his holy name** forever and ever. (Psalm 145:21 ESV)*

*Praise the LORD! Praise, O servants of the LORD, **Praise the name** of the LORD! **Blessed be the name** of the LORD from this time forth and forever! From the rising of the sun to its setting **The name** of the LORD is to be **praised**. (Psalm 113:1-3 NAS)*

*I will give thanks to the LORD according to his righteousness and I will **sing praise to the name** of the LORD Most High. (Psalm 7:17 NAS)*

*I will be glad and exult in you; I will **sing praise to your name**, O Most High. (Psalm 9:2 NAS)*

*“All the earth will **worship** you and will sing praises to you; they will **sing praises to your name**.” Selah (Psalm 66:4 NAS)*

*I will **praise the name** of God **with a song** and magnify him with thanksgiving. (Psalm 69:30 NAS)*

*Let them **praise his name with dancing**, let them sing praises to Him with timbrel and lyre! (Psalm 149:3 NAS)*

*Oh, magnify the LORD with me, and let us **exalt his name** together. (Psalm 34:3 NAS)*

*Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that **acknowledge his name**. (Hebrews 13:15 ESV)*

*And **those who know Your name will put their trust in You**, For You, O LORD, have not forsaken those who seek You. (Psalm 9:10 NAS)*

*For our heart rejoices in him, because we **trust in His holy name**. (Psalm 33:21 NAS)*

*"Whatever you **ask in My name**, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. (John 14:13; John 14:14; John 15:16; John 16:23, 24, and 26)*

*“I will **proclaim your name** to my brothers, in the midst of the assembly I will sing your praise.” (Hebrews 2:12 NAS)*

*For where two or three have **gathered in my name**, I am there in their midst.” (Matthew 18:20 NAS)*

### **A Select List of Compound Names Cited in the Bible**

Individuals chosen by God to write the bible, refer to Him by His proper name YHWH along with various acclamations and epithets—descriptive words, phrases, and titles that reveal divine attributes, attitudes, roles, status, and activities.

- Immanuel, God with Us (Isaiah 7:14)
- El Shaddai, God Almighty (Genesis 17:1; Exodus 6:3)
- El Elyon, God Most High (Genesis 14:19; Psalms 7:17)
- El Olam, God Everlasting (Isaiah 40:28, 31)
- El Ro'iy Ra'ah, God Looking to See (Gen. 16:13)
- YHWH `Elohiym – YHWH God (Genesis 2:4-5; Zechariah 14:5)
- YHWH Jireh: Abraham named a place YHWH Provider (Genesis 22:14)
- YHWH Rapha: YHWH Healer (Exodus 15:26)

- YHWH Nissi: YHWH Banner (Exodus 17:15)
- YHWH Qadash: YHWH Sanctifier (Exodus 31:13)
- YHWH Shalom: YHWH Peace (Judges 6:24)
- YHWH Sabaoth: YHWH Hosts (1 Samuel 1:3)
- YHWH Shammah: YHWH Present (Ezra 48:35)
- YHWH Raah: YHWH Shepherd (Psalms 23:1)
- YHWH `Asah: YHWH Maker (Psalms 95:6)
- YHWH Tsidkenu: YHWH Righteousness (Jeremiah 23:6)
- YHWH Shammah: YHWH Is Here (Ezekiel 48:35)

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