

HCAC Pastor's Sharin – To Know Jehovah

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Our church's theme for 2016 is "Renewing the mind, revitalising the spirit". The sub-theme for the first term (January to April) is "To know Jehovah".

Many believers do not understand why in the Bible God has so many different names. Do these names, used in different situations, have special meanings? Yes, the names of God appear in the Bible are not used casually. Every time God uses His name, He has a special meaning. In the Old Testament, God is also called "Jehovah" (the Lord). Therefore, what exactly is the difference between "God" and "Jehovah"?

GLORY
TO
GOD
IN THE
HIGHEST!

From Genesis to Exodus Chapter 3, God reveals Himself in at least three different names, with different meanings, so that His people may know Him. Three of these names used are "God", "the Lord" and "the Lord God". In Genesis, the name "God" is used throughout Chapter 1 whereas the name "the Lord God" is used in Chapter 2. Surprisingly, God has not said anything about the meaning of "Jehovah". Abraham did know this name (as God had told Abraham His name was "Jehovah"), but he did not know its meaning. Not until Exodus 3:14-15 did God tell His people the meaning of "Jehovah".

Why in Genesis Chapter 1 is God called "God" instead of "the Lord" or "the Lord God"? In Hebrew, the word "God" means the strong and powerful one. The name "God" is related to the creation, indicating a relationship between God and the creation. On the contrary, the name "Jehovah" (the Lord) is related to men, as Exodus 3:14-15 says:

14 God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.' " 15 God also said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob—has sent me to you.' "This is my name forever, the name you shall call me from generation to generation.

Here Moses asked a question to God: "Suppose I go the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is His name?' Then what shall I tell them?" Therefore God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM (Jehovah)." The name "Jehovah" is very closely related to the root "ehyeh", meaning "I am that I am" or "I am". This name also means "to be" or "to accomplish". What Jehovah emphasizes in this name is His intention to do something for others, not His existence. In fact, different Chinese Bible versions have different translations on this name.

God's reply to Moses can be translated as follows: "Say to the Israelites, 'The one who will accomplish' -- the God of your fathers -- has sent me to you." His reply indicates that He

will accomplish what He wants to do in order to fulfil His own will. God implies, through this name, that He guarantees to fulfil the covenants made with Moses' fathers, namely, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The name "Jehovah" means that God has a covenant and an intimate relationship with men.

Therefore in Genesis Chapter 1 the name "God" is used. In Chapter 2 the name "the Lord God" is used instead to highlight the relationship between God and men. It was mentioned In Genesis Chapter 1 that God created men on the 6th day. Here the name "God" is still used as the emphasis is on the creation. The name "the Lord God" is, however, used in Chapter 2 because men have already existed.

Whenever the name "the Lord God" is used, it means that there is a relationship between God and men. Whenever the name "God" is used, it indicates the relationship between God and the created.

"God" is a general name whereas "Jehovah" is an intimate name.

"God" refers His power whereas "Jehovah" refers to His love.

"God" refers to His creation whereas "Jehovah" refers to His intimacy.

In Genesis Chapter 1 the name "Jehovah" is not used although men are mentioned because in this context the emphases are on God's creation and His power. When it comes to Chapter 2 where there has been a close relationship between God and men, the name "the Lord God" is used. In Chapter 2 "the Lord God", instead of "the Lord", is used in order to show that "the Lord" (Jehovah) in Chapter 2 is the same "God" in Chapter 1. The name "the Lord God" demonstrates not only God's power but also His intimacy to men.

After God's explanation on the meaning of His name "Jehovah" in Exodus 3:14-15, when the name "God" is used, His power is emphasized; when the name "Jehovah" is used, His relationship with men is emphasized. Therefore each name of God contains its special meaning related to men's needs.