

## 1. Course Introduction

- A. Throughout history, every culture and every people group has had a belief and understanding of the existence of a God or gods. That is why there are so many religions in the world. Mankind has been trying to find and know God.
- B. Because of our finiteness as human beings, it is impossible to know God without God revealing Himself to us. The word "revelation" means to uncover and lift the veil (*apokalypsis* in Greek). The only way to know God is if He reveals Himself to us (Col 1:25-26).
1. God has revealed Himself through general revelation. His existence is revealed through the wonders of creation. The beauty, the order and the magnificence of the universe reveal to us that there is a Creator (Ps 19:1-4, Rm 1:18-23). His existence is also revealed in the conscience of every person (Rm 2:14-15). Every person can sense that there is right and wrong and there is something in every person that longs to know God.
  2. God has also revealed Himself through specific, or special revelation. God has chosen to communicate with us directly through the Bible and through the person of Jesus Christ. The Bible reveals who God is and what He has spoken to us (Jer 30:2). Jesus reveals who God is because He is God in human form (Heb 1:2-3).
- C. There is a hiddenness about God (1 Kings 8:12). That is why we must seek Him (Ps 53:2, Dt 4:29, Acts 17:22-27). There is also a mystery to knowing Him. There is a mystery in knowing His will (Eph 1:9), there is a mystery in knowing Christ (Eph 3:2-6) and there is a mystery in the Gospel (Eph 6:19-20).
- D. There are two problems that hinder us from discovering the mystery of knowing God. The first problem is that God is infinite and we are finite (Isaiah 55:8-9). The second problem is that God is holy and we are sinful (Isaiah 59:2). God in His mercy has provided salvation so that we can know Him (Jn 3:16, Jn 17:3).



## 2. The Names of God

- A. When you meet someone, you usually tell that person your name. This identifies who you are. You also might share where you live and what you do for a living. Names are synonymous with identity.
- B. Biblically, the names of people and places had meanings. For example, Hannah was not able to have children. When God answered her prayer, she named her son Samuel because God heard her prayer (1 Sam 1:20). Places were often named to describe their location or an event that took place there. For example, Jacob had an encounter with God and named the place Bethel, which means "house of God" (Gen 28:16-19).
- C. Most people have more than one name. They have first names and family names. They often have additional names that further identify connection to their families or individuals. When we study the Bible, we discover that God has multiple names. Each name is descriptive of His character and reveals a part of His nature and who He is.
- D. Knowing God involves knowing who He is and what He does. When people met God throughout the Scriptures, God would introduce Himself by name. He lifted the veil and revealed Himself by name. We can know God and discover who He is by knowing the names of God in the Scriptures.
1. The Jewish people believed that God's name was so sacred and holy that it should not be spoken. Instead of speaking God's name, they would refer to "the name" of God. This became known in Greek as the tetragrammaton, "the four letters."
  2. Because the Jewish people did not say God's name verbally, no one is quite sure how it was pronounced. His name was written down, but in ancient Hebrew, there were no written vowels, only consonants. Thus, no one is quite sure how to pronounce God's name Y-H-W-H. When the Jewish people saw Y-H-W-H written, they would say Adonai, which meant "the Lord." The vowels for Adonai were then inserted into Y-H-W-H, so that God was referred to as YaHoWaH. In English we pronounce this as Jehovah.



Hebrew Name	Meaning	Reference
Y-H-W-H	I Am	Ex 3:13-14
El-ohim (plural)	All Powerful, Creator	Gen 1:1
El-yon	Most High, Above all	Gen 14:18-20
El-shadai	Almighty, Sufficient	Gen 17:1-3
El-olam	Eternal	Gen 21:32-34
Jehovah Jireh	Provider	Gen 22:13-14
Jehovah Nissi	Banner, Protector	Ex 17:10-16
Jehovah Roi	He Sees	Gen 16:7-14
Jehovah Rophe	Shepherd	Gen 48:15
Jehovah Tsebaoth	Warrior	1 Sam 17:45-47
Jehovah Rapha	Healer	Ex 15:26
Jehovah Shalom	Peace	Judges 6:22-24
Jehovah Tsidkenu	Righteous	Jer 23:5-6
Jehovah Shammah	Present	Ez 48:35
Jehovah M'kaddesh	Sanctifies	Lev 20:7-8

- E. The Scriptures also gives God titles to describe His role and function. He is the Holy One of Israel (Ps 71:22), He is the Judge (Gen 18:25), He is the Living God (Josh 3:10), He is our Strength (Ex 15:2), He is our Rock, Fortress, Deliverer, Refuge, Stronghold and Shield (2 Sam 22:2-3) and He is the Lord of Lords (Deut 10:17).
- F. Jesus is the exact representation of the Father (Heb 1:3). Thus, in human form, we can get to know God. If we get to know Jesus, we get to know God (Jn 14:5-9). Just like there are many names and descriptions for God, there are many names and descriptions of Jesus.