

Small Group Guide: Week 2

The Names of God Series: Yahweh Elohim - The Lord our God

Overview

This week's sermon introduced a series on the names of God, beginning with the foundational names Yahweh and Elohim. Pastor Clay explored how God's names are not mere labels but intentional revelations of his character, his covenant relationship with his people, and his supreme authority over every competing spiritual power. Understanding who God truly is equips believers to stand firm in a world full of deception and false allegiances.

Key Takeaways

- Elohim is a title describing the kind of being God is — the creator above all spiritual beings. Yahweh is his specific, personal name, pointing to covenant, intimacy, and relationship with his people.
 - God's names are not just theological categories. They are invitations to know him personally and to live in a way that reflects his character.
 - The Bible does not teach that false gods are simply imaginary. It teaches that they are real spiritual beings — lesser, created, and rebellious — who seek to draw human beings away from the one true God.
 - Jesus Christ, the Son of the Most High God, has been given a name above every other name. His death, resurrection, and ascension represent the decisive defeat of every false power.
 - Evil and suffering in the world are not attributed to God but to rebellious spiritual powers. Believers are called to resist these powers through prayer, holy living, love, and the proclamation of the gospel.
 - Idols do not have to be carved statues. Anything that takes the place of God in a person's life can become a portal for spiritual compromise.
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Discussion Questions

Opening Question

Go around the group and share your name and whether you know what it means. Does the meaning of your name reflect anything about who you are or who your family hoped you would become?

Section 1: The Meaning of a Name

1. Pastor Clay explained that in biblical culture, a name carried deep meaning about a person's identity, character, or calling. How does understanding this change the way you think about God giving himself names throughout Scripture?
2. The third commandment, found in Exodus 20:7, warns against carrying the name of the Lord in a worthless or empty way. The sermon described this not just as avoiding profanity but as living in a manner consistent with the character of the God whose name you bear. In what practical ways do believers carry God's name into their daily lives? Where do you feel the weight of that responsibility most?
3. God changed the names of Abram to Abraham and Jacob to Israel to reflect who they were becoming. If God were to rename you based on what he is doing in your life right now, what do you think that name might reflect?

Section 2: Yahweh Among the Gods

4. The sermon drew a distinction between Elohim as a title shared by various spiritual beings and Yahweh as the specific, personal name of the one true God. Why does this distinction matter for how we worship and how we pray?
5. The Ten Plagues in Egypt were each directed at specific Egyptian gods, culminating in darkness that challenged the supreme sun god, Amun-Ra. What does this tell you about how seriously God takes the question of who or what his people worship?
6. Pastor Clay described Solomon as the wisest man who ever lived, yet Solomon's heart was turned toward false gods through his relationships and compromises. What does Solomon's story warn us about the subtle ways idolatry can enter a life, even a life that began with genuine devotion to God?

Section 3: The War We Are In

7. Ephesians 6:10-12 describes the believer's struggle as being against principalities, powers, and spiritual forces of evil rather than against flesh and blood. How does this reshape the way you think about conflict — whether in your personal life, your relationships, your community, or the broader culture?
8. The Sermon pointed out that when Jesus encountered the demonized man in Mark 5, the demons immediately identified him as the Son of the Most High God. What does it mean to you that every spiritual power in existence recognizes the authority of Jesus, even when people do not?
9. Pastor Clay addressed universalism — the belief that all spiritual paths ultimately lead to the same God — and explained why the Bible presents this as a dangerous deception. How would you respond to someone in your life who holds this view, with both honesty and genuine compassion?

Section 4: Idols and Portals

10. The sermon brought up several things that can function as modern-day idols — children, sports, television, social media, entertainment, and even tools like artificial intelligence — not because these things are inherently evil, but because they can subtly displace God at the center of a person's life. Which of these do you find most personally challenging, and why?
11. The apostle John's final recorded words were a warning to keep away from idols. Why do you think that was the last thing he wanted believers to hear? What does that say about how seriously the early church took this issue?

Practical Applications

Choose one or more of the following to put into practice before your group meets again.

- Learn a name of God this week. Pick one of the names mentioned in the sermon — such as Jehovah Jireh, Jehovah Rapha, or Jehovah Shalom — and spend time this week studying what it means and how it applies to something you are currently facing.
- Audit your allegiances. Set aside fifteen to twenty minutes this week to honestly ask yourself what competes most with God for your attention, trust, and affection. Bring what you find to God in prayer and ask him to reorder your priorities.
- Pray with spiritual awareness. Using Ephesians 6:10-12 as a guide, pray specifically this week for a situation in your life or community where you sense spiritual resistance. Name what you are fighting against and call on the authority of Jesus Christ over it.
- Speak the name of Jesus intentionally. This week, find at least one opportunity to speak the name of Jesus in a setting where it might cost you something — a workplace conversation, a difficult relationship, or a moment when silence would have been easier.
- Examine what you consume. For one week, pay attention to the spiritual assumptions embedded in the media, music, or content you regularly take in. Note what worldviews are being presented and how they align with or contradict the biblical picture of God discussed in this sermon.

Closing Prayer Focus

Close your group time by praying together along the following themes:

- Gratitude that God has chosen to reveal himself to his people by name
 - Confession of any ways the group has allowed false allegiances or idols to take root
 - Declaration of the lordship of Jesus Christ over every area of your lives and your community
 - Intercession for those in your circles who are being drawn toward false spiritual paths
 - Boldness to carry the name of the Lord faithfully in the week ahead
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