

Who Is God? (Part III)

Genesis 1:1 *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*



As we have discovered from Parts I and II of this series, God is the “Mighty One” who has power and authority. He is the “Self-Existing One” who created humanity in His image for the purpose of having a personal relationship with them. Planet Earth was and is to be the eternal habitation of this human family. As God revealed Himself through man’s experiences, many aspects of His character became evident. He is the supreme and exalted “Sovereign LORD.” He is all-sufficient and caring, and He continually provides. He is not only “Jehovah Elohim” of individuals, but He is “Jehovah of Hosts.” He sanctifies, shepherds and brings peace to those who follow Him. He is our rock, our fortress, and through His providence, He provides salvation. This is a mere sampling of the breadth of God’s character as revealed in the Old Testament.

See applicable Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance references in the Bonus Material.

As we look to establish who God is in the New Testament, we want to focus on where His descriptions begin - in the first verses of the Gospel of Mark. Here is our link between the Old and the New. These verses connect Old Testament prophecies to New Testament accounts.



Mark begins by citing a prophecy from Isaiah which predicted the work of John the Baptist:

Mark 1:1-3: *1 The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the son of **Theos** God <2316>. 2 As it is written in Isaiah the prophet: Behold, I send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; 3 the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make ready the way of the **Kurios** LORD <2962>, make his paths straight.*

These verses introduce two Greek words that are frequently used throughout the New Testament to describe the majesty of God.

First, when Jesus is described as the *son of God*, the Greek word for *God* is **Theos**, translated in English as *God* over 1,300 times in the New Testament.

God: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #2316 *theos*; of uncertain affinity; a deity, the supreme Divinity; figuratively, a magistrate; by Hebraism, very: exceeding, God, god(-ly, -ward)

Second, *make ready the way of the LORD*, the Greek word for *LORD* is **Kurios**, translated in English as *Lord* over 660 times in the New Testament.

LORD: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #2962 *kurios*; supreme in authority, i.e. (as noun) controller; by implication, Master (as a respectful title)

Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon: 1) he to whom a person or thing belongs, about which he has power of deciding; master, lord 1a) the possessor and disposer of a thing
1a1) the owner; one who has control of the person, the master
1a2) in the state: the sovereign, prince, chief, the Roman emperor

These are both frequently used in the New Testament, but they are not used exclusively for THE God. Both words can be used to describe other beings.

This is the starting basis of who God is in the New Testament. We have **Theos** and **Kurois**. The Old Testament quote in Mark 1:1-3 comes from two different prophecies put together.

Mark 1:1-3: 1 *The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the son of **Theos** God <2316>*. 2 *As it is written in Isaiah the prophet: (next quoting from Malachi:) ...Behold, I send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; (next quoting from Isaiah:) 3 ...the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make ready the way of **Kurios** the **LORD** <2962>, make his paths straight.*

Why do some translations only mention Isaiah and yet quote from both Malachi and Isaiah?
See the Bonus Material.

Let's look at each prophecy:



Malachi 3:1: (KJV) *Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith **Jehovah Sabaoth** the **LORD** <3068> of hosts <6635>* (See Part II for more on this name).

Who sent His messenger? **Jehovah Sabaoth** the **LORD** <3068> of hosts <6635>. This statement from Malachi gives us a connection between the Old Testament and the New.



Isaiah 40:3: (KJV) *The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of **Jehovah** the **LORD** <3068>, make straight in the desert a highway for our **Elohim** God <430>*.

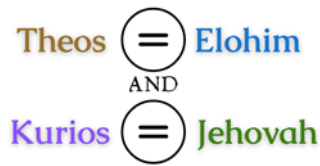
400 years after Malachi, *the voice of one crying in the wilderness* turned out to be John the Baptist. What did he do? His job was to clear a pathway for the kingdom of **Jehovah Elohim** to come through the ministry and sacrifice of Jesus. Jesus came to preach God's will and God's work. John came beforehand and prepared the hearts of the people to receive Jesus.



It is interesting how the first words to describe events in the New Testament pick up exactly from where the last couple of chapters of the Old Testament left off, giving us an unbroken story. We have God described so we can carry the connection over from the Old Testament to the New Testament.

These prophetic links show us that **Jehovah Sabaoth**, *God of hosts*, the mighty **Elohim** of the Old Testament, was necessarily prominent in preparing for Jesus and the gospel message of the New Testament. God is prominent, in the middle of everything.

Mark 1:1-3 shows us:



Jehovah Elohim was constantly present in the Hebrew Old Testament. **Theos** and **Kurios** will now carry over into the Greek New Testament.

This carryover link holds fast through the announcement and birth of John the Baptist. Zacharias, an old and faithful priest who served in the Temple, had just been told by the angel Gabriel that he would soon be the father of John the Baptist.

Let's look at how God would be introduced to Zacharias, which was the first time in the New Testament:

Luke 1:18-19: (KJV) *18 And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years. 19 And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of **Theos God** <2316>; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings.*

In other words, **Theos**, the Mighty One, sent me.

Zacharias asks, *Wait, how do I know this is true?* He was talking to an angel of God! Maybe he should have thought, *Let's use a little caution. Let's use a little forethought and think maybe I shouldn't quite ask that specific question!* Gabriel's response was, *I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of **Theos** – the God of power and authority.*

Why is God introduced with **Theos**, this word for power and authority in the New Testament? Because that is how He was introduced in the Old Testament.



He is "Elohim," the Divine Being of power and authority.

In the beginning, **Elohim**, the God of power and authority, created. We see the same pattern repeated. God is proclaiming Himself in a recognizable way.

God is described to Zacharias, and a few months later, Mary is also visited by the angel Gabriel.

Mary's experience added something to these descriptions of God:

Luke 1:26-28: (KJV) *26 And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from **Theos God** <2316> unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, 27 To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. 28 And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, **Kurios** the **LORD** <2962> is with thee: blessed art thou among women.*

Kurios equates to the Old Testament **Jehovah**, who was the LORD of relationship.

WHO IS GOD He is "Jehovah," the Self-Existent, Eternal One, who created mankind in order for us to have a relationship with Him.

Theos (⊖) Elohim ➤ God of power and authority
AND
Kurios (⊖) Jehovah ➤ LORD of relationship

With Zacharias, God was presented as power and authority. With Mary, we see power and authority and the LORD of relationship: **Kurios** *is with thee*. Why? *Because what we are about to tell you, Mary, is something that's never been told to anybody. And what you are about to experience is something that never has or ever will happen ever again.* The God of the Old Testament is shining through in all these events.

Here is another important description of God:

Luke 1:31-32: (KJV) *31 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. 32 He shall be great, and shall be called the son of the **Highest** <5310>: and **Kurios Theos** the **Lord** <2962> **God** <2316> shall give unto him the throne of his father David:*

Highest: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #5310 *hupsistos*; highest, i.e. (masculine singular) the Supreme (God), or (neuter plural) the heavens: - most high, highest

Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon: 1) highest, most high
1a) of place: the highest regions
1b) of rank: the most high God

The angel Gabriel used this superlative, *the son of the Highest*, to help Mary understand. This description elevated God, Jesus' Father, beyond everything and everyone else.

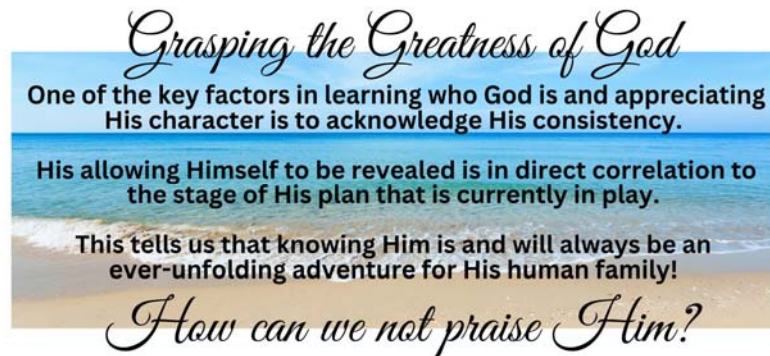
In Part I, we saw God made mankind the centerpiece of His creative process in Genesis 2. Here, the gift of Messiah is the centerpiece of His plan for mankind. God is reintroduced as **Kurios Theos**, but now as the **Highest**. There is nothing greater.

What was Mary's response?

Luke 1:34-35: *34 Mary said to the angel, How can this be, since I am a virgin? 35 The angel answered and said to her, The holy spirit will come upon you, and the power of the **Most High** <5310> will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy child shall be called the son of **Theos God** <2316>.*

God is introduced into the New Testament in the same way He was introduced in the Old Testament. Now we have this whole new aspect of God's plan to bring salvation to all men through Jesus.

We know God because we know Jesus.



Seeing God introduce Himself in the New Testament is exciting. We know it will just keep getting better!

**The New Testament picks up exactly where the Old Testament left off.
Are God's name and character expanding any further?**

There are changes, and they are significant. As we observed in the Old Testament with Abraham and then with the nation of Israel, God's role in the lives of those who follow Him ever expands as His plan moves forward. The next change we will observe is perhaps the most significant of all and it was already hinted at when the angel spoke to Mary.

Let's look at this verse again:

Luke 1:31-32: (KJV) *31 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. 32 He shall be great, and shall be called the son of the **Highest** <5310>: and **Kurios Theos** the **LORD** <2962> **God** <2316> shall give unto him the throne of his father David:*

Gabriel told Mary that Jesus would be called the *son of the Highest*. This is a different relationship from any we have seen so far unless we go all the way back to the beginning. We might not remember that kind of relationship because it wasn't revealed until the New Testament.

At the tail end of the genealogy of Jesus, there is a significant statement made that does not get a lot of attention:

Luke 3:37-38: *37 the son of Methuselah, the son of Enoch, the son of Jared, the son of Mahalaleel, the son of Cainan, 38 the son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of **Theos God** <2316>.*

Attention Adam, the perfect man created in God's image, was *the son of Theos*.

Once sin entered, sonship was set aside and being a friend of God or a servant of God became the closest any human could come until the subtle statement made by the angel Gabriel to Mary.

Adam was considered a son before he sinned. Thousands of years would go by before the relationship of being a son to God would again exist. You were either a friend, an enemy or a servant of God during these intervening years.

The first recorded words of Jesus:



Did you not know that I had to be in my Father's house?

Fast-forward twelve years from the birth of Jesus. In Luke 2, we find Jesus as a boy being accidentally left behind in Jerusalem. His panicked parents turn back after three days and find him in the Temple asking and answering questions. Mary tells him they had been looking anxiously for him, and then we have the first recorded words of Jesus as a human being when he answers in **Luke 2:49**, ...*Did you not know that I had to be in my Father's house?* This Greek word for Father means “father; a parent.”

My Father's house - at age 12, Jesus knew he was God's son. He was the first human to have such a relationship since Adam.

Luke 2:51-52: *51 And he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and he continued in subjection to them; and his mother treasured all these things in her heart. 52 And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with **Theos God <2316>** and men.*

How did Jesus know he was God's son? Mary knew. How did she know? Gabriel told her *he will be son of the Highest*. She would have been diligent in teaching him everything she knew would become true about him. At just 12-years old, he understood God was his Father.

We understand Jesus as God's son, but we don't often think about Adam as *the son of God* as mentioned in Luke.



SIDE NOTE:

This is WHY Jesus could die for all men as a ransom sacrifice.

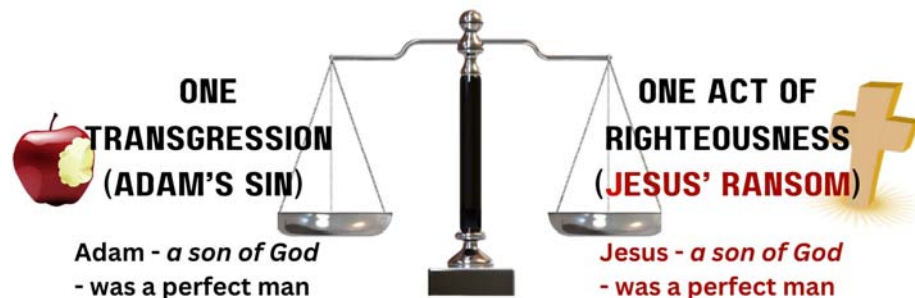
First, Jesus was a man himself:

1 Corinthians 15:21-22: *21 For since **by a man** came death, **by a man** also came the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.*

Second, Jesus was the exact corresponding price because a perfect man (Jesus) for a perfect man (Adam) was the ultimate satisfaction of justice.

Adam is called the *son of God*. Jesus is called the *son of God*.

It is the *son of God* (Jesus) who dies for the *son of God* (Adam), the perfect man for the perfect man. Justice is 100 percent satisfied.



1 Timothy 2:3-6: (KJV) *3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of **Theos God <2316>** our Saviour; 4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. 5 For there is one **Theos God <2316>**, and one mediator between **Theos God <2316>** and men, the man Christ Jesus; 6 Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.*

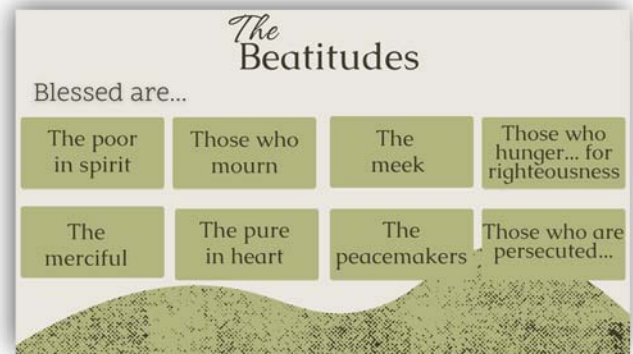
The meaning of this verse is beautiful. Jesus, God's son, saved everyone which will be witnessed at the right time. This is the original “good news” for all mankind.

Jesus saved everyone by dying for Adam because Adam condemned everyone. There is a perfect parallel with perfect harmony, and it satisfies exact justice.

But wait, it gets bigger! Jesus understands and proclaims himself as God's son. He did not hide this unique relationship. His preaching was constantly referring to the Father/son relationship, but there were conditions when it came to applying it to others. Jesus revealed that the ability to enter into this special relationship was limited to those who would be his true disciples.

Let's look at Jesus' Sermon on the Mount and see who is being spoken to.

The first 11 verses of Matthew 5 are called the Beatitudes.



Matthew 5:1-3: *1 When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. 2 He opened his mouth and began to teach them, saying, 3 Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

While massive crowds are gathered, Jesus is specifically teaching his disciples. Others are listening in. His teachings were revolutionary.



Matthew 5:16: *Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.*

Whose Father? *Your Father*. The Father of the disciples who were listening. But how can this be?

What a radical shift this was for the people listening. We take this for granted. They had been taught the great and mighty **Jehovah Elohim** was who they worship – power, authority, the Self-Existing One - this entity was so far above and beyond them. Suddenly, Jesus addresses God as *Father*. They would have never heard anyone use such language for God. How did that change their impression of this great and mighty Entity, and how do they now look at Jesus? What kind of man is this who can claim **Jehovah Elohim** is his (and their) Father?

He introduces a complete paradigm shift. In and of itself, the Sermon on the Mount is life-changing. But when we realize how *Father, my Father, your Father* is woven into this tapestry of amazing teachings, we realize Jesus is showing his disciples how elevated they can be.

Matthew 5:43-45: *43 You have heard that it was said, you shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy. 44 But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.*



Jesus WAS God's son, and he offered that same relationship to those who would truly follow him! But there were conditions. He is saying, *Act in this way so you may be sons of your Father. This is not natural for you. You must elevate your life to a higher level in order to have this amazing relationship.*

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus compares how a religious leader of their day would act and how those who would claim God as their Father should act.

Let's look at one example:

Matthew 6:1-4: *1 Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven. 2 So when you give to the poor, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. 3 But when you give to the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4 so that your giving will be in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.*

We have to think this is another reason why the Pharisees hated Jesus so much. After all, they were the ones who were supposed to have this special, direct-line relationship with the Mighty One, and here Jesus is amplifying that exponentially by publicly preaching God is *our Father in heaven*, and all who follow Jesus have a part in this unimaginable relationship.



To really get the flavor of this, we recommend looking for *your Father* wherever it is used for God, and let it sink in how deep and profound this is.

When it comes to prayer, the same principles apply.

Being a child of God requires living up to higher standards, which is reflected in the way Jesus taught us to pray:

Matthew 6:6,8-9: *6 But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father <3962> (not Elohim, the Mighty One, not Jehovah the Self-Existing One, not Adonai as Sovereign LORD, but YOUR FATHER) who is in secret, and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you. 8...your Father knows what you need before you ask Him. 9 Pray, then, in this way: Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name.*

For the listeners then and now, this is Jesus' Father, and *OUR Father*, making Jesus our brother. We are now part of a unified family. This is revolutionary!

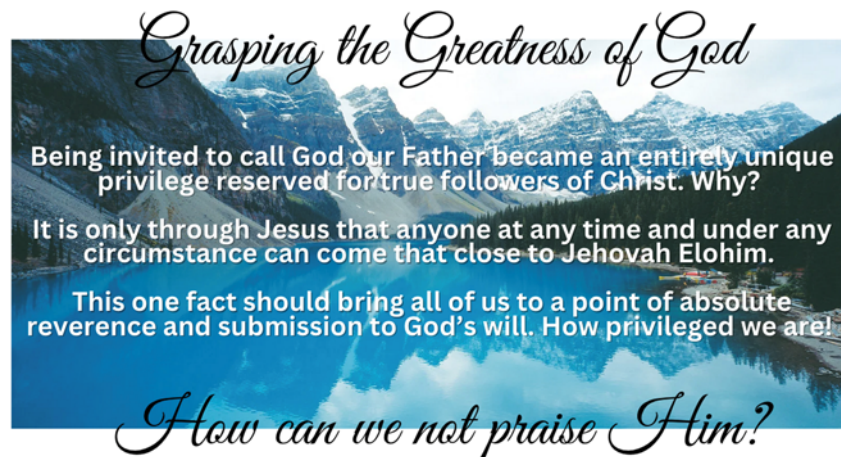
This should shake us up as to the depth and privilege this shows. How big was this revelation at that point in time? Jesus is the only one saying it, and yet this Father/son relationship was recognized even by the demons, the fallen angels.

One example is the man from Gerasene who was possessed by demons. He was out of control, and then he saw Jesus:

Mark 5:5-8: 5 *Constantly, night and day, he was screaming among the tombs and in the mountains, and gashing himself with stones.* 6 *Seeing Jesus from a distance, he ran up and bowed down before him;* 7 *and shouting with a loud voice, he said, What business do we have with each other, Jesus, son of the **Most High <5310> Theos God <2316>**? I implore you by **Theos God <2316>**, do not torment me!* 8 *For He had been saying to him, Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!*

This is the demon who when Jesus asked his name answered, *My name is Legion; for we are many* (**Mark 5:9**). This is scary stuff.

But he (or they) called *Jesus, son of the Most High God*. So, even the demons knew who he was and his special relationship to God. This was not something unusual. This was understood in the heavenly realm, even by those outside of God's inner circle. This special relationship changed everything!



The ease with which we as Christians call God *our Father* should not ever overshadow the immense honor it gives us!

Being able to address God as Father is a special privilege for a few called-out ones. But what does it really mean?

Getting to the bottom line of this meaning is profoundly important because it will reveal what God has been planning all along. By focusing on this realization, we will begin to assemble an understanding as to just how important and specific this particular change is.

Let's review four basic, scriptural observations about the Father:



First, the basic word for *Father* <Strong's #3962> is used over 260 times in the New Testament referring to God as *Father*. Of those over 260 times, almost 50 of them were used by Jesus referring to God on his last night before his crucifixion – that means nearly 20 percent of all scriptures referencing God as *Father* are in the account of this one evening.

There must be a profound message! Let's touch on just a few of those uses. We will look at John 14 where God as *our Father* appears in almost every single verse!

John 14:1-2: *1 Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in Theos God <2316>, believe also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you.*

In my Father's house, not "in God's house," but my Father's house. Why? Because it shows a personal family connection.

John 14:5-6: *5 Thomas said to him, Lord, we do not know where you are going, how do we know the way? 6 Jesus said to him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through me.*

On this last night before his crucifixion, Jesus is saying, the Father is accessible – but you must come to the Father through me.

John 14:23: *Jesus answered and said to him, If anyone loves me, he will keep my word; and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our abode with him.*



By his own words, Jesus was teaching us that the Father was becoming accessible to his disciples in ways never before experienced. There was a new calling, a new privilege and new method to access God!

This new method to access God is life changing, and Jesus brought this connection to God with him from the first part of his ministry when he was only twelve. He introduced this as something we need to understand. Our first point was that so many of these times where God is recognized as our Father were said on the night before Jesus' crucifixion.



Second, Jesus' first and last recorded words as a human being were about his Father.

His first recorded words:

Luke 2:49: *And he said to them, Why is it that you were looking for me? Did you not know that I had to be in my Father's house?*

His last recorded words:

Luke 23:46: *And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, Father, into your hands I commit my spirit. Having said this, he breathed his last.*

What beautiful scriptural “bookends” of Jesus’ first and last recorded words to and about his Father! We want to take a *Selah* moment here - pause and consider. This sums up what Jesus’ life was about. He was only and always about his Father.

Another set of “bookends” – Jesus’ first words as our resurrected Lord were about his Father, as were his last words before his ascension to the Father.

After his resurrection:

John 20:16-17: *16 Jesus said to her, Mary! She turned and said to him in Hebrew, Rabboni! (which means, teacher). 17 Jesus said to her, Stop clinging to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brethren and say to them, I ascend to my Father and your Father, and my Theos God <2316> and your Theos God <2316>.*

The concept of Father is paired with the concept of **Theos**, Mighty God.

I have not yet ascended to the Father –meaning, do not delay me; I have a lot of work to do.

As Jesus was literally ascending to the Father:

Acts 1:6-8: *6 So when they had come together, they were asking him, saying, Kurios, Lord <2962> is it at this time you are restoring the kingdom to Israel? 7 He said to them, It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; 8 but you will receive power when the holy spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.*

Every part of the life of Jesus shows this relationship with his Father. Jesus’ sole purpose for being here was to fulfill the will of his Father. What a beautiful look at how deep and close that relationship was and is.



By his own words Jesus is emphatically teaching us of the importance of the Father-son relationship he lived and opened up for us to live as he was on his way to be with God!



Third, using the “Father” description of God abruptly ceases at the beginning of the book of Acts.

The only uses of God as a Father in the book of Acts were at his ascension:

Acts 1:4: *Gathering them together, he (Jesus) commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, which, he (Jesus) said, you heard of from me;*


Acts 1:6-7: *6 So when they had come together, they were asking him, saying, Kurios LORD <2962>, is it at this time you are restoring the kingdom to Israel? 7 He said to them, It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority;*

At the beginning of Acts, we have clear references to God as *Father* surrounding the ascension of Jesus. Ten days later at Pentecost, there is a gathering of Jews, and the Apostle Peter speaks, and tongues of fire come down to show God's spirit is upon them. Now Peter speaks with amazing authority. Guess what he talks about?

This is near the end of his sermon:

Acts 2:33: *Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of **Theos** God <2316>, and having received from the Father the promise of the holy spirit, he has poured forth this which you both see and hear.*

 **Why is God never referred to as “Father” in the rest of the book of Acts?**

 This is an important question because the idea of God as our Father seems to suddenly go dark. This is about the establishment of Christianity by reaching out to Jews from all over and drawing them to God through Christ. Only later is it about reaching out to the Gentiles. What these initial Jewish converts needed to first see was the power and authority side of God before they could be introduced to the overwhelming concept of this Supreme Being as their personal Father.

Acts is a fundamental, beginning process of establishing the very early church. The focus is mainly on the Jewish nation having the opportunity to come to Christ. They would not yet be ready for the Father/child relationship.

As Christians, we readily adopt the concept of God as our Father, but it was not as easy at the beginning of Christianity. They needed to learn of God and His plan through Jesus Christ, and THEN be able to embrace such power and relationship.

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Acts began with Jesus and his followers and then was all about finding new followers and beginning to establish churches. These were very Jewish-based actions and recognizing Jesus and all he stood for was the main focus. The understanding of God as Father was just ripening.

The very early Christian church was just beginning, and there was SO much to learn. This is why we think that the use of *Father* as the name for God in their lives was so silent in the book of Acts.



Fourth, after the gospels, (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John), the use of “Father” appears at the beginning of EVERY book of the New Testament except for Hebrews and 3 John.

Why? 3 John was a short personal note to Gaius and not nearly as focused a general teaching as were the other epistles. It was a warning to an individual to watch for something going on that was not very Christian-like.

Hebrews was written to Jewish Christians who were having challenges appropriately elevating Jesus in their worship. The writer of Hebrews (whom we believe to be the Apostle Paul) built his argument step-by-step.

Paul masterfully and systematically built his argument towards the Fatherhood of God with subtlety at first, and then more directly:

Hebrews 3:5-6: *5 Now Moses was faithful in all His (God's) house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken later; 6 but Christ was faithful as a son over His (God's) house—whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end.*



Those in the Old Testament couldn't be "sons" because Jesus was not there to institute this new arrangement yet.

Jesus stands as an advocate between us and the Father, covering our sins and making us acceptable as sons.

In those days the concept of being sons was introduced slowly and carefully so it could be embraced and not rejected. They had to fundamentally look at God differently.

We saw that little hint at the beginning of Hebrews 3, *Christ was faithful as a son over God's house, as a son of whose house we are* – this could easily get missed.

Let's go to Hebrews chapter 12 to see how the apostle has built his argument and now comes back to sonship near the end of his letter.

Hebrews 12:7-9: *7 It is for discipline that you endure; **Theos God <2316>** deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? 8 But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. 9 Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live?*

A good father appropriately disciplines his children to guide and teach them.

This had to be difficult for the early Jewish Christians to put aside all they knew under the Law and now accept Christ and this offer of becoming a *son of God*. That jump from being a servant of God to His son was a difficult mental move. It is a wonder Christianity got off the ground!

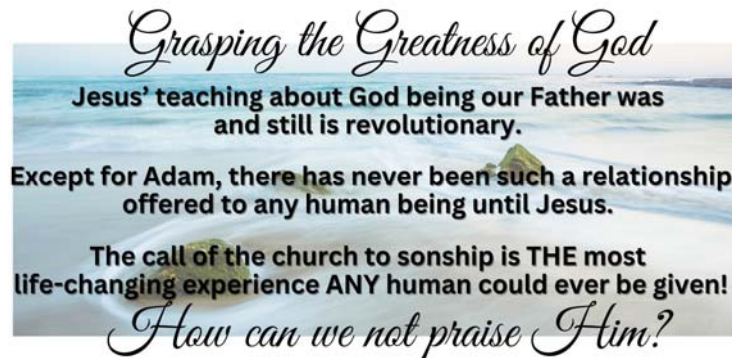
We see God's providence and spirit working. It was a small step-by-small-step process that helped them to be able to accept the remarkable sonship being offered.



Jesus is the absolute centerpiece of our loyalty to God.
It is through him that we can now call God our Father.
Never forget the most important things!

Who is God? For the true follower of Christ, God is *our Father*. We tend to take this for granted sometimes because it's all we've ever known, but this was a monumental change for the early Jewish Christian church, and it is the greatest privilege for us now to think of Him in this way.

Through Jesus, God is our Father. Pause and consider - this is not just some little title. It is the most privileged title any human being could ever claim in the relationship between God and His creation.



Q. If we profess Jesus as our savior and are a fan of Jesus and love what he stands for, does this on its own give us sonship?



No, it does not. Because sonship comes from brotherhood with Jesus. Brotherhood with Jesus comes with being his disciple, following in his footsteps, living a life of sacrifice as he did, having been called to do the will of God and having received God's spirit – then following through accordingly. It is nice and good to be a fan and it is nice to love Jesus – and we encourage that. But let's not fool ourselves. Sonship comes with a price. Jesus hung on the cross and died for all mankind. There is a price we pay in terms of being sons of God. It is an amazing privilege that comes with the cost of sacrificing our own will to do His will.

It is amazing to be able to call God our Father. What is more amazing is that He recognizes the true followers of Jesus as His children.

**Recognizing God as our Father seems like the pinnacle of this study!
 What more could there possibly be?**

Details. Lots and lots of revealing and important details. As has been the case with Parts I and II of this series, we will focus in on just attempting to sum up some of the details to further the depth of our appreciation of God. We will begin with a detail regarding the title of "Father" itself. It is no surprise that this detail began with Jesus.

The night before his crucifixion, Jesus was spending his last moments of freedom as a human being in prayer. He deeply prayed for the “cup” to be removed from him. We believe that to mean the suffering of having to be silent before his accusers, not being allowed to defend God and God’s face being turned from him at one point on the cross.

The Mark account of this prayer adds a powerful detail:

Mark 14:36: *And he was saying, Abba! Father! All things are possible for You; remove this cup from me; yet not what I will, but what You will.*

This is one of only three times this word *Abba* is used in the Bible, and we will look at all of them. *Abba! Father!* - *Abba* is Aramaic and the word for *Father* here is Greek.

When we look at Bible commentaries, some say this word *Abba* is a Syriac word, some say it’s Chaldee, and some say it is Aramaic. This all means the same thing.

- Syriac is the language of ancient Syria, a western dialect of Aramaic.
- Chaldee, meaning the language of the ancient Chaldeans, is the nontechnical term for biblical Aramaic.



We commonly say this shows a more tender relationship, like saying “Papa” or “Daddy” in English, as we might hear children call their fathers “Abba” in Jerusalem today.

(Source: John Gill’s Exposition of the Bible) *In the original text, the former of these is a Syriac word, and the latter a Greek one, explanative of the former... (using both these languages) is made to express the vehemency of his affection, and his strong confidence in God, as his Father, amidst his distress, as the Syriac version renders it, "Abba, my Father."*

(Source: Journal of Theological Studies by James Barr [vol. 39, 1988], “Abba Isn’t Daddy”) *“It is fair to say that Abba in Jesus’ time belonged to a familiar or colloquial register of language, as distinct from more formal and ceremonious language...But in any case, it was not a childish expression comparable with ‘Daddy’: it was a more solemn, responsible, adult address to a Father.” (p. 46)*

In other words, it is an expression of a profound, deep relationship, not “daddy” as in a childish expression. Jesus used this expression amidst his distress.

All three times this expression is used, there is a common thread.

For Jesus, it was putting aside his human preference, even though it was pure and righteous, for the sake of doing ONLY the will of God. Jesus used *Abba Father* to commune with his Father in this very personal way, and it was recorded for us so we could see it.

But what about us as footstep followers of Jesus?

Romans 8:13-15: *13 for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 14 For all who are being led by the spirit of Theos God <2316>, these are sons of Theos God <2316>. 15 For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, Abba! Father!*

What a privilege it is to have sonship with God - just like Jesus!

In Romans, it was all about leaving our human nature in its sinfulness to become God's sons. *Abba! Father!* the way Jesus used it and the way it is used here in Romans is about incredible trust; trust under great distress.

Rick's Experience

I will tell you of a personal experience of what it's like to be "abba father" to one of my children. When my daughter was 15, she was assaulted, she was raped, and her life was broken into a thousand pieces. All she had after that experience was me. Now our family was there and everybody was supportive, I want you to understand that. But I changed my entire life around so that I could help her heal and grow.

She didn't know which end was up, but she allowed herself to trust me implicitly in this dark hour where there was no answer. That's "abba father." Now she grew up and she grew out of and through that experience, and has become an amazing, wonderful, strong woman as a result. When I think of that little, tiny experience, that one experience in my own life, I realize that God does this for millions and you see the magnitude of who He is and His care for us as a Father in our moments and hours of the deepest distress of our lives.

Galatians 4:4-7: *4 But when the fullness of the time came, **Theos God** <2316> sent forth His son, born of a woman, born under the Law, 5 so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. 6 Because you are sons, **Theos God** <2316> has sent forth the spirit of His son into our hearts, crying, *Abba! Father!* 7 Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through **Theos God** <2316>.*

This is a slightly different perspective.

Here in Galatians, it was all about stepping into the freedom of Christ out of what previously bound them - the bondage of the Law - from the "outside in."

In Romans, it was about our own human flesh. It is from the "inside out."

Both are causes for distress. Both revolve around personally claiming the redemption that Jesus gave. They all have to do with the discipline of stepping up to spirituality out of the very real environment of our natural flesh, whether it be something from within that holds us back, that causes us stress, or what is around us.

For the Jewish Christians, it was the Law. They had to let go. They were bound all their lives by the Law. They were told to rise above it, be free, trust *Abba Father* for that freedom for something that they thought they could never go away from.

With our flesh, we must trust *Abba Father* so we can break free from the shackles of sinfulness and rise higher.

What is the LESSON

Jesus' own deep attachment to and trust in his Father's will lifted him even higher than perfect human righteousness. We also need that same profound trust to lift us higher than any form of our former selves.

How is it Jesus was lifted higher than perfect human righteousness? His perfect human righteousness said, *I will not allow my Father's name to be dragged through the mud. I will not do that.* But God said, *Yes, I want you to. It is important for you to have to do this so you can understand and let the fullness of sin overtake you.* So, he complied even though his perfect human moral sense knew that wasn't right. But God said, *Let it go for now and My name will be glorified later.* That was this lifting up higher. Sometimes in our lives we have to go through that same kind of thing. Let it go now so His name can be glorified later.

We want to see the depth of looking at God as our Father. What else does the New Testament tell us about God?

God is love:

1 John 4:16: *We have come to know and have believed the love which **Theos God <2316>** has for us. **Theos God <2316>** is love, and the one who abides in love abides in **Theos God <2316>**, and **Theos God <2316>** abides in Him.*

Jonathan's
Thoughts

On a personal note, this scripture was the lens for me in how I saw God. This goes way back to my childhood. My reasoning was, if God is love, He wouldn't hurt anyone. So, any teaching in Christianity that didn't harmonize with love couldn't be true. Later when I was an adult and able to prove scripturally that there is no place of torment and punishment, and that God sent His son, Jesus, who died for everyone - even for me, a sinner - is proof of God's great love. Not only does He love faithful followers of Jesus, but He also loves everyone who has ever been born. That's my Dad. He's amazing!

God defines what love looks like, what love is, what love does and what results because of love.

He is the God of hope, joy and peace:

Romans 15:13: *Now may the **Theos God <2316>** of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the holy spirit.*

Hope, joy and peace. These are what everybody is always looking for, but God is the God of those things. These are the things that should be in us here and now.

Rick's
Thoughts

In my own experiences when I get stressed, and believe me, I do, it comes down to going to the Father in prayer and resetting the fact that I DO have hope; that I CAN have joy even though the circumstances are very, very upside down; and that brings the peace of God, which passes all understanding. It changes the way we live our every moment. That's what my Dad does for me.

He is the God of mercy and ALL comfort:

2 Corinthians 1:3: *Blessed be the **Theos God <2316>** and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Mercies and **Theos God <2316>** of all comfort,*

Julie's Thoughts

We've seen the pivot point of Jesus introducing God as HIS Father, and through Jesus, his followers are graciously and undeservedly offered sonship. As the Father of Mercies, we are grateful He isn't vindictive, volatile, unpredictable or unforgiving. We can rely on His word. What I love is how it says He is the God of ALL comfort. That word ALL is used again in **1 Peter 5:10** when He is described as the God of ALL grace. (Strong's Exhaustive Concordance: "thoroughly, whatsoever" – Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon: "individually and collectively").

ChristianQuestions.com

And it came to pass.

In every trouble,
the problem or the difficulty
did not come to stay.
It came to pass.

It came to teach its particular lesson;
to leave its imprint upon our character;
but it was not, of itself, a finality.

It did not come to stay. "It came to pass."

Our trials will never be more severe
or last longer than we can bear.

That's merciful and ALL comforting!

This is God as our Father. Following Christ, having God's spirit and walking in those steps of sacrifice bring an amazing privilege we cannot find any place else.

Jehovah, Elohim, Theos - He is the God of ALL men:

Isaiah 2:2-4: 2 Now it will come about that in the last days the mountain of the house of **Jehovah** the **LORD <3068>** will be established as the chief of the mountains, and will be raised above the hills; and all the nations will stream to it. 3 And many peoples will come and say, Come, let us go up to the mountain of **Jehovah** the **LORD <3068>**, to the house of **Elohim** the **God <430>** of Jacob; that He may teach us concerning His ways and that we may walk in His paths. For the law will go forth from Zion and the word of **Jehovah** the **LORD <3068>** from Jerusalem. 4 And He will judge between the nations, and will render decisions for many peoples; and they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they learn war.

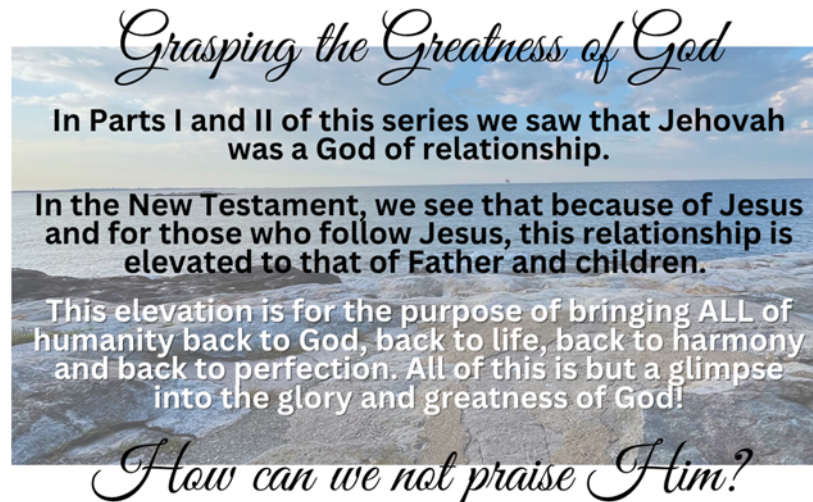
What an amazing prophecy of how God takes care of everyone and everything!

The earth will be restored. Nation will not lift up sword against nation. That takes care of everyone. Jew or Gentile, it doesn't matter. What matters is God becomes the God of ALL.

Let's look at one of the final prophecies of the entire Bible that verifies this:

Revelation 21:3-4: (KJV) *3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of **Theos God <2316>** is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and **Theos God <2316>** Himself shall be with them, and be their **Theos God <2316>**.
4 And **Theos God <2316>** shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.*

The former things are passed away. It shall come to pass. Mankind will say, Remember back when there was sorrow and crying and dying and pain? That is how man will look back in God's kingdom at this present world. It will be the restoration to what He put Adam on this earth for. That is who God is. He has a plan and it is comprehensive. It includes everyone.



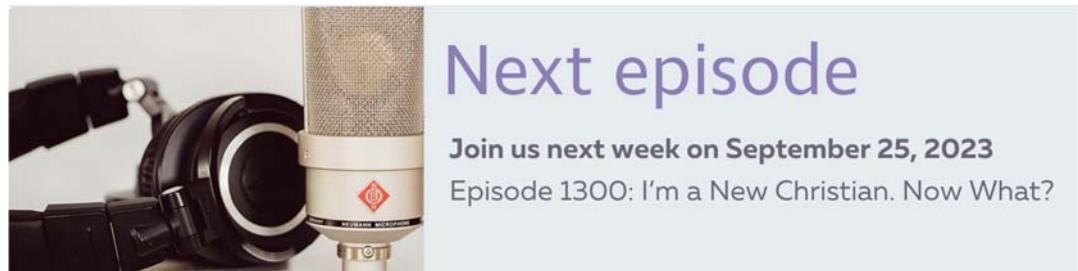
This is what we look at when we ask the question: Who is God?

How well do we know the name of God?

Psalms 72:17-19: *17 May His name endure forever; May His name increase as long as the sun shines; and let men bless themselves by Him; Let all nations call Him blessed. 18 Blessed be **Jehovah Elohim** the **LORD <3068> God <430>**, **Elohim** the **God <430>** of Israel, Who alone works wonders. 19 And blessed be His glorious name forever; and may the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen, and Amen.*

**So, who is God?
For Jonathan, Rick, Julie and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!**

All quoted scriptures are from the 1995 version of NASB unless otherwise indicated.



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Parents and Bible class teachers, continue your studies on this topic with these short, animated videos for kids at ChristianQuestions.com/YouTube:

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- **Who made God?** <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=PSH98AEf5KA>
- **What will God's kingdom be like?** https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=pUqK3p_uHxk
- **How do Christians receive the holy spirit?** <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=yfMYyuLj2t0>

Here are a few scriptures to help us appreciate God's greatness:

Isaiah 61:10-11: (KJV) *10 I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels. 11 For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.*

These texts refer to the title that the faithful disciples of Jesus will be given and show the end result of how they end up being so close to Jehovah:

Jeremiah 23:4-8: (KJV) *4 And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them: and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the LORD. 5 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch, and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. 6 In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness. 7 Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that they shall no more say, The LORD liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; 8 But, the LORD liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land.*

Jeremiah 33:15-16: (KJV) *15 In those days, and at that time, will I cause the branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land. 16 In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, The LORD our righteousness.*

Mark 1:1-3: *1 The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the son of **Theos God <2316>**. 2 As it is written in Isaiah the prophet: (next quoting from Malachi:) ...Behold, I send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; (next quoting from Isaiah:) 3 ...the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make ready the way of **Kurios the LORD <2962>**, make his paths straight.*

Why do some translations only mention Isaiah and yet quote from both Malachi and Isaiah? Several of the ancient manuscripts (and therefore several translations based on those manuscripts) translated the text as, *Even as it is written in the prophets* (or similar) to account for two scriptures being quoted, without mentioning which prophets. (For example, see Young's Literal Translation, Word English Bible, Webster's Bible Translation and others). But the larger/older/more reliable manuscripts do show *Isaiah*, so we see the majority of common translations using *Isaiah*.

(Source: Pulpit Commentary: <https://biblehub.com/mark/1-2.htm>)

“Assuming, then, that St. Mark wrote “in Isaiah the prophet,” we may ask why he mentions Isaiah only and not Malachi? The answer would seem to be this, that here the voice of Isaiah is the more powerful of the two. But in real truth, Malachi says the same thing that Isaiah says; for the messenger sent from God to prepare the way of Christ was none other than John, crying aloud and preaching repentance as a preparation for the receiving of the grace of Christ. The oracle of Malachi is, in fact, contained in the oracle of Isaiah; for what Malachi predicted, the same had Isaiah more clearly and concisely predicted in other words. And this is the reason why St. Mark here, and other evangelists elsewhere, when they cite two prophets, and two or more sentences from different places in the same connection, cite them as one and the same testimony, each sentence appearing to be not so much two, as one and the same declaration differently worded.”

It appears *Isaiah* is likely correct, used because the weight of his quote was given preference over that of Malachi, but it would not be incorrect to use *the prophets* as in some translations, because it is acknowledged that both Malachi and Isaiah are quoted one after the other. Both quotes together prophesy the role of John the Baptist in Jesus' life.



Elohim: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #430 *el-o-heem'*; gods in the ordinary sense; but specifically used (in the plural, thus, especially with the article) of the supreme God; occasionally applied by way of deference to magistrates; and sometimes as a superlative: angels, exceeding, God (gods) (-dess, -ly), (very) great, judges, mighty

The King James Version translates this as:

God, god, judge, GOD, goddess, great, mighty, angels, exceeding, God-ward, godly

Brown-Driver-Briggs' Definition:

1) (plural) a) rulers, judges b) divine ones c) angels d) gods 2) (plural intensive-singular meaning)
a) god, goddess b) godlike one c) works or special possessions of God d) the (true) God e) God

Jehovah: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #3068 *Yehovah*; (the) Self-Existent or Eternal; Jeho-vah, Jewish national name of God - Jehovah, the Lord

The King James translates this as: LORD, GOD, JEHOVAH

Brown-Driver-Briggs' Definition: Jehovah= "the existing One,"
the proper name of the one true God

Study QUESTIONS

Ep. 1299: Who is God? (Part III)

<https://christianquestions.com/doctrine/1299-who-is-god-part-iii/>

See:  CQRewind
SHOW NOTES

1. Define the first words used to describe God in the New Testament? From where in the Old Testament is Mark quoting? What do these quotes prophesy? Did the prophecy come true? (See Mark 1:1-3, Malachi 3:1, Isaiah 40:3)
2. In what way did the Angel Gabriel represent God differently to Zacharias compared to Mary? Why did Gabriel present God in a different way to these two? What did Gabriel say Jesus would be called? Who were sons of God before Jesus? (See Luke 1:18-19, 26-28, 31-38)
3. How did Jesus know he was God's son? Why was it possible for Jesus to pay the ransom to save *all men*? Please explain thoroughly. (See Luke 2:49-52, 1 Timothy 2:3-6)
4. Who was Jesus speaking to when he spoke the Beatitudes? Why would it have been difficult for Jewish Christians to think of God as "Father"? What conditions are required for people to become sons of God? (See Matthew 5:1-3, 16, 43-45, 6:1-9)
5. How do John 14:1-2, 5-6, 23 describe a relationship with God? How do these scriptures make you feel about *your* relationship with the Father? Why did Jesus warn Mary not to touch him after his resurrection? What did Jesus promise would come to his disciples after he ascended back to his Father? (John 20:16-17, Acts 1:6-8, 2:33)
6. Why is God never referred to as "Father" in the rest of the book of Acts? What were Moses, Abraham and all of Israel considered in relation to God? What was available to the Jewish people after Jesus? Why would this have been difficult for Jewish Christians? How are you following Jesus' precepts and footsteps to become a son of God? How do you feel when you "pause and consider" God as your Father? (See Hebrews 3:5-6, 12:7-9)
7. Can you feel his anguish when Jesus cries *Abba! Father!* in Mark 14:36? How is *Abba! Father!* used in Romans 8:13-15? What are the circumstances for crying *Abba! Father!* in Galatians 4:4-7? What will this relationship with God allow us to do? How have you been able to rest and trust in your *Abba* during times of stress?
8. How do the following scriptures reveal more of God's character? Which do you find speaks to you most?

1 John 4:16 Romans 15:13 2 Corinthians 1:3 1 Peter 5:10
9. What is promised for the future in Isaiah 2:2-4 and Revelation 21:3-4? How do you see the reality of God's plan for man being very close to fruition? How do you feel the privilege of knowing God in your life? How has knowing God's various names in the Bible influenced how you think of Him?