

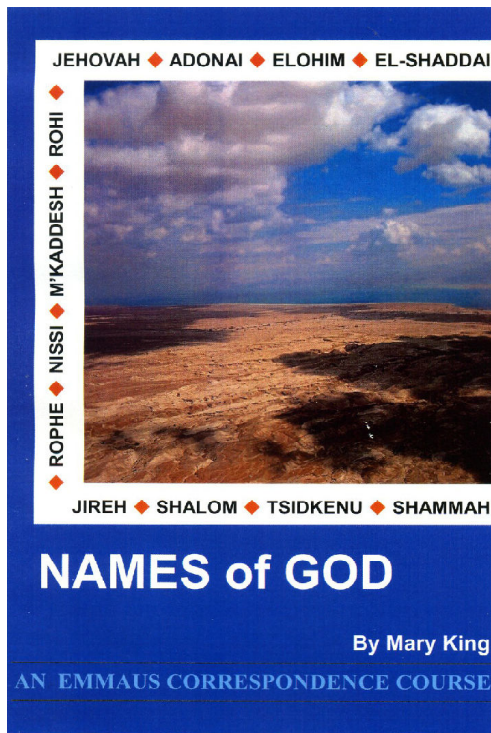
NAMES OF GOD

INTRODUCTION

'And those who know Your name will put their trust in You...' Psalm 9:10

If we are to trust someone to do something for us, we need to know whether they are reliable, helpful, considerate, etc. It is essential to know their character and their capabilities.

In the same way we need to know God, as day by day, we put our trust in Him. But can the infinite, eternal Creator and Sustainer of the universe be known so personally? Is it possible to understand and appreciate His character, His ways, His thoughts and purposes for us, in a way which will make a difference to our lives?



God's revelation of Himself in our Bible is usually linked to people, times, places and events. Our God made Himself known to men and women within the context of their daily lives – often in times of crisis when they had no choice but to trust Him. But through such experiences a feature of God's character, previously unknown, would be discovered. In the process both individuals and even the nation of Israel as a whole, found out more about Him – His knowledge of their present need, His power, His love and understanding and much, much more. By putting these experiences on record in the Bible, the Holy Spirit has made it possible for us to share in their discovery of God. And that must make a difference to our lives.

Knowing God's name – having confidence in all that He is - will increase our trust in Him and like David, we will learn to say, 'And those who know Your name will put their trust in You, for You, LORD, have not forsaken those who seek You.'

Our studies will take us into the Old and the New Testaments, into the lives of individuals and the nation of Israel. Each lesson will conclude with a study of the Lord Jesus Christ, who was 'the express image' of God and who declared in perfection, through His life and love, death and resurrection, the whole and wonderful name of God.

When you have read through each lesson carefully, write down your answers to the questions then use the back arrow ↶ at the top left of your screen to return to the website menu.

Click on '**EXAM FORM A**'.

Complete this Form, including your answers then click '**SUBMIT**'.
Do this for each lesson. Your exams will be marked and returned to you.

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LESSON 1. ELOHIM - GOD

1. The works of God

a. Genesis Chapters 1 & 2

“In the beginning God - Elohim - created the heavens and the earth...”

Our finite minds find it difficult to comprehend the infinite and eternal nature of God. But although we cannot see God's Person - He is invisible - we can see God's handiwork, which is a constant display of His wisdom, His power and His glory. Paul explains this fact in his letter to the Romans, *“For since the creation of the world His **invisible** attributes are clearly seen, **being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead**, so that they are without excuse...”* Romans 1: 20-21. We can begin to know God and His characteristics through what we see and experience around us. The heavens and the earth have always spoken of their Creator and as Paul points out, it follows that men and women have no excuse for not acknowledging the existence of God. Although created beings themselves, so many people have refused to recognise or admit to God's power both around them and within them.

Elohim is the first and general name for God in the Bible and is used 2555 times - 2310 times for the true and living God and 245 times to describe other gods and men; e.g. idols - Genesis 35: 2; judges - Exodus 22: 8; representatives of God - Exodus 7:1. Elohim derives from the Hebrew word for 'power' but when referring to God, projects much more than this word alone suggests. Moses' description of God to the nation of Israel aptly sums up His absolute sovereignty and omnipotence, *“For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome...”* Deuteronomy 10:17.

Similar titles for God include Eloah and El and are found mainly in the poetic books, such as Job and Psalms, and in the compound titles of God, e.g. El Roi - the God who sees, Genesis 16:13; El Eloe Israel - the God of Israel, Genesis 33:20; El Bethel - the God of Bethel, Genesis 35:7.

Elohim is a plural word - a singular title could never do justice to the greatness and the infinity of God. He is the Supreme Being, the Omnipotent One, Who is able to do all things - whether in heaven, on earth or under the earth. It was Job who said, “...He does great things past finding out, yes, wonders without number.” Job 9: 10. These wonders began, as far as the physical world is concerned, when, ‘in the beginning’ the heavens and the earth were created and filled by the word and power of Elohim, Genesis 2:4. Some commentators suggest that the title, Elohim, can be seen as evidence of the plurality of persons within the Godhead, ie. the Trinity of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Elohim said, “Let **us** make man in **our** image, according to **our** likeness,” Genesis 1:26

b. Psalm 104

“Come and see the works of God - Elohim - He is awesome in His doing toward the sons of men.” Psalm 66:5.

While the facts of creation are given in the early chapters of Genesis, the poetry of creation is found in the Psalms, Job, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. Their imagery illuminates the vitality and energy of creation; they provide a unique insight into the mind and heart of God as He creates, controls and uses nature for Himself. In Psalm 104 we see Him clothed with light, the clouds His chariot, walking on the wings of the wind. In the glory and majesty of creation we constantly see the glory and majesty of God.

This ongoing relationship with the universe is reflected in the way that nature responds to God’s will - the waters respect their boundaries, the rains refresh the earth, the moon and the sun keep to their allotted times. The goodness and kindness of the Creator is seen in His daily provision for animals and men - springs in the valleys, grass for the cattle, trees for the birds, night for the lions and day for man and his labour - proof of God’s constant consideration for the needs of the humblest of His creatures, “these all wait for You, that You may give them their food in due season,” v. 27.

And this is God - Elohim, the All-Powerful. No wonder the psalmist could say, “I will sing praise to my God, Elohim, while I have my being, may my meditation be sweet to Him...” v. 33-34.

2. The companion of God - Enoch. Genesis 5:21-24;

Hebrews 11:5-6; Jude 14-15

“After he begot Methuselah, Enoch walked with God - Elohim - three hundred years...” Genesis 5: 22.

Although He is “the great God, mighty and awesome,” Creator and Sustainer of all things, God looked for the companionship of Adam and Eve, the man and woman He had created in His own image. Too soon, this relationship was spoiled - their sin and disobedience forced Him to expel them from His holy presence and out of the Garden, although not from His ongoing care, Genesis 3: 8-24, 4: 25.

Seven generations removed from Adam when the world was still young, another man was given the privilege of walking with God, his name was Enoch. The Genesis narrative is brief but

instructive. Twice the writer states that *“Enoch walked with God”* i.e. he walked side by side with God, conversing and discussing - their enjoyment was mutual, their range of subjects was infinite. For Enoch, it was a life-journey, which lasted for 300 years on the earth and then went on into eternity, *“he was not, because God took him”*. Enoch’s consistent walk with God led, not to death, but to a direct translation into heaven.

What was Enoch’s secret? Why was he able to maintain such a close companionship with God? The epistles to the Hebrews and to Jude tell us that it was Enoch’s faith that pleased God. Like Noah, who also ‘walked with God’, Genesis 6: 9, he lived out his steadfast belief in the existence and in the goodness of God - the One Who rewards those who genuinely love and serve Him. Enoch’s spiritual lifestyle was in direct contrast to his surroundings and he would have suffered for his witness. Already violent and evil men were speaking out in defiance against God and the world was moving swiftly towards its inevitable judgment - the flood, Genesis 6:11-13.

We may wonder why the God of heaven and earth - Elohim - should choose to walk with men and women, should reward us, should be our friend. The reason is that He created mankind for Himself; to teach us and to care for us; to guide us in wisdom and understanding and to enjoy our company. And Enoch, who was no prophet or king, no great man of learning - we know him only as the father of Methuselah - was a man after God’s own heart. Steadfast in his faith, always ready to learn and eager to listen, a true companion for Elohim, *“How precious are your thoughts to me, O Elohim... when I awake, I am still with you,”* Psalm 139: 17-18.

3. The revelation of God (Theos) in the New Testament

John 1:1-18; Colossians 1: 12-17, 2: 6-10; Hebrews 1: 1-4.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only be gotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” John 1:1,14.

The Greek word for God is ‘theos’. In the Greek translation of the Old Testament (the Septuagint) the translators used one word ‘Theos’ to represent the Hebrew words Elohim and Jehovah. The power and pre-eminence of Elohim was linked with the eternal, self-sustaining existence of Jehovah. New Testament writers and translators also used Theos to affirm and declare the title, nature and the attributes of God, e.g.

“...His eternal power and Godhead (Theos),” Romans 1:20.

“Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God (Theos),” Romans 11:33.

“...God (Theos) Who created all things through Jesus Christ,” Ephesians 3:9.

The deity of Christ is the bedrock of the Christian faith. The opening verses of John’s gospel state this fact with startling simplicity and certainty, *“...and the Word was God.”* (‘The Word’ was a title used by John for the Lord Jesus Christ). In a similar way the beginning of the Hebrew epistle leaves us in no doubt as to the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ - Son of God, Heir of all things, Creator of worlds, Saviour of sinners, seated at the right hand of God in heaven. The New Testament never tries to prove that Jesus is God, it simply states the facts.

When Paul wrote to the Colossians he needed to correct the teaching which was threatening the faith of the believers - that Christ was only a created being. Paul takes his readers into the eternal realms where Christ is, *“...for by Him all things were created...and He is before all things and in Him all things consist,”* 1:16. Then, as now, this world’s ideas and traditions can easily distort our view of the Lord. Paul declares that *“...in Him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead*

(Theotes) bodily,” 2: 9. The word ‘Godhead’ indicates absolute deity - not the characteristics of God, but the essential nature of God - and this is our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the One Who can give us all that we need for fulfilment both in this life and in the life to come, for we are “complete in Him.”

In the Old Testament God could only be known in a limited way. Although men like Enoch and Moses were privileged to speak with God, they never saw God’s face, Exodus 33:18 - 20. But when the Lord Jesus Christ came, who was “*the express image of His person,*” He made it possible for men, women and children to hear the words of God, to see the works of God, to meet with God Himself. When the disciple Philip asked the Lord to show them the Father, Jesus had to say to him, “*Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father...*” John 14: 8-11.

There was a day when God passed before Moses and declared His Name - Jehovah Elohim, merciful and gracious, longsuffering and abounding in goodness and truth...Exodus 34: 6-7. There was a day when Jesus, praying to His Father for his disciples said, “*And I have declared to them Your Name...*” John 17: 20-26. Not in words only, but by His life, His love, His sacrifice, His death and resurrection, Jesus had made it possible for men and women to know God personally. “*No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him,*” John 1:18.

ELOHIM - GOD

EXAM 1

(Use EXAM FORM A on the website menu)

Choose the correct answer.

1. How did God create man?
 - a. From the dust of the earth
 - b. From primeval life
 - c. In His own image
 - d. From an angelic being

2. What does creation teach us about God?
 - a. His wisdom
 - b. His power
 - c. His glory
 - d. All of the above

3. What does the compound name for God, ‘El Roi’ mean?
 - a. The God who cares
 - b. The God who is king
 - c. The God who sees
 - d. The God who understands

4. In which books is the poetry of creation found?
 - a. Psalms and Proverbs
 - b. Kings and Chronicles
 - c. Song of Solomon
 - d. Job and Ecclesiastes

5. In Psalm 104, where do the birds make their nests?
 - a. Fir trees
 - b. Cedars
 - c. Oaks
 - d. All of the above

6. What was it about Enoch that particularly pleased God?
 - a. His courage
 - b. His steadfast faith
 - c. His hope
 - d. His wisdom

7. Enoch was the father of
 - a. Noah
 - b. Lamech
 - c. Jared
 - d. Methuselah

8. In the Gospel of John, Jesus is given the title
 - a. The Word
 - b. The Presence
 - c. The Wisdom
 - d. The Prophet

9. What came to this world through the Lord Jesus Christ?
 - a. Philosophy
 - b. The Law
 - c. Prophecy
 - d. Grace and Truth

10. How did Jesus reveal God's Name? By His
 - a. Life
 - b. Love
 - c. Sacrifice
 - d. All of the above

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

Why have men and women no excuse for not acknowledging the existence of God? See Romans 1:20-21

LESSON 2. JEHOVAH - I AM WHO I AM - LORD

1. The meaning of the Name Exodus 3: 1-15

“And God said to Moses. ‘I AM WHO I AM...This is My name forever, and this is My memorial to all generations.’”

Exodus 3: 14 -15.

It was a time of crisis for the children of Israel. 400 years before, Jacob’s sons and their families had emigrated from Canaan to Egypt during a time of severe famine - 70 people in all. Now their population had increased to such an extent that Pharaoh, king of Egypt, who saw them as a threat to national security, had embarked upon a programme of ethnic cleansing. He was determined to weaken and even destroy this alien people, Exodus 1: 8-14. But the God of Israel was aware of the people’s misery and was about to embark upon a powerful and miraculous programme of deliverance.

God chose Moses to lead the people out of Egypt, out of bondage. Through all the varied experiences of this man’s life (40 years as a prince in an Egyptian palace and 40 years as a shepherd in the Sinai desert) God had been preparing His servant for future responsibilities. When the time came for God’s will to be revealed to Moses, he was not particularly enthusiastic about the mission and tried, without success, to excuse himself from the task. Right in the middle of his dialogue with God, Moses realised that to have any credibility as God’s chosen leader, he would need to know His name. When he presented his case to the children of Israel, the knowledge of God’s name would be his own title to authority and leadership. The reply came back, “I AM WHO I AM” i.e. Jehovah, (usually translated ‘LORD’, and written in capital letters in many translations).

The name Jehovah is derived from the Hebrew verb ‘havah’ – ‘to be’ or ‘being’. Jehovah is existence in its absolute and purest sense; He is the source of all life and the giver of all life. He does not depend on anyone or anything for His existence - He is the Self-existent One. Jehovah is known as ‘the plain name’ amongst the Jewish people, because it teaches plainly and simply the essence of God, Who is the Eternal Presence.

2. Jehovah’s covenant with the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Genesis 12: 1-5, 13: 14-18, 28: 1-4, 28: 10-17. *“And the LORD said to Abram...”lift your eyes now...for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever.”*

Genesis 13: 14-15.

The first mention of Jehovah in the Bible is in Genesis 2:4, *“...the LORD God (Jehovah Elohim) made the earth and the heavens...”* introducing the fact that Jehovah (his personal name) is Elohim, the mighty creator God. The patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, certainly knew the name Jehovah, but never fully understood the significance of it. These men were the founding fathers of the nation of Israel who had received in faith, God’s promises concerning their descendants - that they would one day inherit the land of Canaan. This was the land which the patriarchs had only ever walked through. They owned nothing, apart from the field of Machpelah, which was the family tomb, Genesis 23: 17-20.

But the faith of the patriarchs in the promises of Jehovah never failed. Joseph, the son of Jacob, died in Egypt but gave instructions to his family ‘concerning his bones.’ His words were emphatic. *“I am dying; but God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land to the land of*

which He swore to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob...,” Hebrews 11: 22, Genesis 50: 24-26.

3. Jehovah’s covenant with His people

a. Jehovah – Israel’s Redeemer Exodus 6: 1-8

“I have also established My covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan... I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians... I will take you as My people, and I will be your God...” Exodus 6:4-7

The time had come for Jehovah’s promises to the patriarchs to be fulfilled. After four hundred years in Egypt the sons of Jacob had become a nation - now God was ready to take them back to the land which had been promised to their ancestors. But more than that, Jehovah would establish a relationship with the people on the grounds of another covenant (promise), just as He had with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

For any relationship to develop there must be knowledge and understanding between the two parties - in this case it is Jehovah and Israel, the LORD and His people. If the gentile nations had worshipped Jehovah, they would have worshipped Him and known Him as Elohim, the Supreme God. Only to Israel did He give His personal Name; only to Israel was He known as Jehovah; only Israel would go through the long process of discovering the God behind the Name - His love, His faithfulness, His holiness, His righteousness and His mercy.

But first, the emerging nation must learn that Jehovah is their Saviour, their Deliverer, and their Redeemer from bondage in Egypt. And the fact that this redemption will be the foundation of their relationship with God.

Many years later, God spoke to His people through Isaiah the prophet. He was reminding them of their responsibility to the surrounding nations. which was to declare that Jehovah was the only true God and Saviour. There were many gods - elohim - amongst the nations, but there was only one true Elohim and His name was Jehovah.

*“You are my witnesses,” says Jehovah,
“And My servant whom I have chosen,
That you may know Me, and understand that I am He.
Before Me there was no God formed.
Nor shall there be after me.*

I, even I am Jehovah.

And besides Me there is no saviour.”

Isaiah 43: 10 -11

b. Israel – Jehovah’s people, His special treasure Exodus 19: 1-8

“And Moses went up to God and the LORD called to him from the mountain, “Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel...now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special people to Me above all people, for all the earth is Mine.” Exodus 19: 3,5.

Jehovah had delivered His people out of Egypt and set them on the journey to the Promised Land. It was deliverance with a purpose - not only for the children of Israel, but also for Jehovah. *“I bore you on eagles’ wings and **brought you to Myself.**”* They were to be His special

treasure - a nation set apart to Himself.

But if Israel was to be the LORD's special people there were laws and instructions to obey, a covenant to keep, v. 5. In the giving of the law - summed up in the Ten Commandments - Jehovah would be revealed as a holy, righteous God, Who would demand from His people behaviour which reflected His own character. **"If you will indeed obey my voice...then you shall be a special treasure..."** When making a covenant, both parties must pledge themselves to keep their side of the agreement. So when challenged by Jehovah to keep His covenant and obey His voice, the people never hesitated, **"All that the LORD has spoken we will do."**

4. Jehovah's revelation to Moses Exodus 33: 18 - Ch.34: 8

"And the Lord passed before him and proclaimed, 'Jehovah Jehovah Elohim, merciful and gracious, longsuffering and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and fourth generation,'" Exodus 34: 6-7.

Moses had a long hard road ahead. He longed for a special revelation of Jehovah, *"Please, show me Your glory."* But to see God Himself, without the covering of cloud or fire, could not be granted to a mere man. Instead, Moses witnessed, not brilliance and beauty in form - which appeals to the soul of man - but a vision of beauty in character and conduct which warms the heart and inspires the spirit.

*"...I will proclaim **the name** of the LORD before you..."* Exodus 33:19. This would be a detailed revelation of the **character** of Jehovah and there, hidden in the cleft of a rock, Moses learned that Jehovah Elohim was love. Love which would be constantly displayed in His forgiveness and longsuffering towards a rebellious and stubborn nation. Although justice and punishment would follow habitual sin and disobedience - the righteous God cannot ignore these things - His mercy would always precede His anger. Jehovah delivered Israel out of Egypt and made them His special people because He loved them, Deuteronomy 7: 6-8. And always faithful to His promises, the LORD would never fail to act toward His people in love, according to His Name.

5. Jehovah's revelation in Jesus

a. His Name - Jehovah-Saviour Matthew 1: 18-25

"And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." Matthew 1: 21

God first revealed Himself to Israel as Jehovah, when He promised to bring them out of Egypt and slavery, *"I am Jehovah... I will rescue you... I will redeem you..."* Exodus 6: 6. Salvation and redemption are emphasised in the verse, anticipating deliverance by an all-powerful Saviour. Over three thousand years later, another deliverance was promised, this time from spiritual slavery to sin and Satan. Again, Jehovah would be the deliverer, but in the person of Jesus, God's Son, whose name means, 'Jehovah-Saviour'.

The angel who brought the word to Joseph also confirmed the virgin birth of Jesus and gave the coming child another title, *"...Emmanuel - which is translated, 'God with us.'" God was entering into history, as He did in Egypt, with the same message of love and salvation, John 3: 16. Just as God took the initiative in delivering Israel out of bondage in Egypt, so He has taken*

the initiative in sending His Son, to deliver the world out of spiritual bondage.

b. His new covenant Luke 22: 14 - 20

“In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood...” 1 Corinthians 11: 25

When Jehovah made His covenant (agreement) with Israel, Moses offered sacrifices to God. They were to confirm the covenant before the LORD and before the people; it was a solemn act of dedication, *“And Moses took half the blood and put it in basins, and half the blood he sprinkled on the altar,”* Exodus 24: 1-7.

When Jesus ate the Passover supper with His disciples, He took the cup of wine and with His words made it the guarantee of the new covenant, *“This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you,”* Luke 22: 20. It represented His blood, His death, His sacrifice for sin. It was His eternal promise that whoever receives the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour, trusting in His blood - His sacrifice for their sin - would receive forgiveness and eternal life. This is a spiritual salvation - an eternal deliverance from the penalty and power of sin is freely available for every individual. Paul speaks of our ‘redemption through His blood’ Eph. 1: 7, while Peter reminds us that we have been redeemed. *“not with corruptible things like silver and gold...but with the precious blood of Christ,”* 1 Peter 1:18-19.

It was when the covenant with Israel was made, that their Redeemer, Jehovah revealed His Name - a righteous God of love, mercy and forgiveness, Exodus 34: 6-7. In the new covenant, accessible to all who believe in His Name, Jesus our Redeemer, has revealed that Name of righteousness, love, mercy and forgiveness again, *“For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.”* John 3: 16-17.

JEHOVAH - I AM WHO I AM - LORD

EXAM 2

(Use EXAM FORM A on the website menu)

Choose the correct answer.

1. What does Jehovah mean?
 - a. The Eternal One
 - b. Source of Life
 - c. I am who I am
 - d. Giver of all life

2. With which of the Patriarchs did God make a covenant?
 - a. Adam and Noah
 - b. Moses and Aaron
 - c. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob
 - d. Ham, Shem and Japheth

3. What did God promise to give?
 - a. The land of Egypt
 - b. The land of Canaan
 - c. The land of Midian
 - d. The land of Chaldea

4. What was the first thing that Israel learned about Jehovah?
 - a. He was their King
 - b. He was their Father
 - c. He was their Redeemer
 - d. He was their Shepherd

5. What did Jehovah have in mind for Israel? They were to be His
 - a. witnesses
 - b. servants
 - c. special treasure
 - d. all of the above

6. Jehovah promised to care for the nation. How did Israel respond?
 - a. 'Where the LORD leads, we will follow.'
 - b. 'We will serve and obey Him.'
 - c. 'All that the LORD has spoken we will do.'
 - d. 'We will set ourselves apart for the LORD.'

7. When Jehovah gave Moses a revelation of His Name (His character), He spoke of His
 - a. Strength
 - b. Beauty
 - c. Love
 - d. Wisdom

8. The name of 'Jesus' means
 - a. Jehovah Healer
 - b. Jehovah Saviour
 - c. Jehovah Shepherd
 - d. Jehovah Provider

9. At the Passover supper, the cup of wine represented
 - a. the death of Jesus
 - b. the sacrifice of Jesus
 - c. the blood of Jesus
 - d. all of the above

10. Peter speaks of the 'precious blood of Christ' as of
 - a. The Passover lamb
 - b. A lamb without blemish
 - c. A lamb of the sin offering
 - d. The sacrificial lamb

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

What does the name *Jehovah* mean and why is it known as 'the plain name' amongst the Jewish people?

LESSON 3. EL-SHADDAI - ALMIGHTY GOD

1. The appearing of El-Shaddai Genesis 17:1-6

“When Abram was ninety-nine years old, Jehovah appeared to Abram and said, ‘I am Almighty God (El-Shaddai); walk before Me and be blameless. And I will make my covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly.’” Genesis 17:1-2

Abram was seventy-five years old when he was called upon to obey the instructions of a God he hardly knew. He left his home in Ur of the Chaldees and with some of his family travelled to Canaan, which was a land he knew nothing about, Genesis 12: 1-5, Hebrews 11: 8-9. Over the next ten years God proved His faithfulness to Abram, who himself acknowledged his own commitment to *“the LORD, God Most High, the Possessor of heaven and earth”* Genesis 14: 21- 23. Not long after this God made a covenant - an agreement or promise - with Abram, that the land he had been exploring and discovering would be the possession of his descendants, 15: 18-21.

Over thirteen years later, it was confirmed, 17: 1-2. Why the long wait? Why the command to walk before God and be blameless? Abram, with his wife Sarai, had not been blameless - they had doubted God’s promise of an heir. Impatience and frustration in their own inability to produce the promised son had resulted in Ishmael – Abraham’s child by Hagar, Sarai’s servant, Genesis 16. It was action outside of the will of God and resulted in this long delay. God needed to wait for Abram to come to an end of himself and discover the truth of the all-sufficiency of God.

Convicted of his unbelief and conscious of long years away from God, Abram humbly acknowledged his sin as God confirmed His covenant and His promises. The impotence of Abram and Sarai would be the opportunity for the power of El-Shaddai to provide them with their own son, even in old age, Genesis 17: 15-19.

God, in His mercy, was giving Abram a fresh opportunity to walk before Him, not now in his own strength, but by the enabling of El-Shaddai, Almighty God. Only through Him could Abram’s life be blameless (perfect) - not in the sense of absolute perfection before God, but before men. Abram’s righteousness must be transparent, his faith, wholehearted and his obedience, habitual. He was a living witness to the one true God in the land of Canaan and as such, his walk was spiritual as well as physical, Genesis 12: 7-9. Restored, renewed, renamed, Abraham was ready to receive the fulfilment of God’s promise of a son through Sarah and to begin again his journey of faith and discovery.

2. The meaning of El-Shaddai Genesis 17: 1-8

“I am El-Shaddai. Be fruitful and multiply...” Genesis 35:11

Because Abraham had been made aware of his own insufficiency he was now able to experience the sufficiency and power of El-Shaddai – ‘El’ meaning power, ‘Shaddai’ denoting bounty - in other words, the all-sufficient, all-powerful, giving God.

Paul, in Acts 17: 24-25 describes Him as *“God, Who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands, nor is He worshipped with men’s hands, as though he needed anything, **since He gives to all life, breath and all things.**”*

The word ‘shaddai’ comes from the Hebrew ‘shad’ meaning breast, suggesting fruitfulness - the provision of love, comfort, and sustenance, the very essence of life-giving nourishment for growth and development.

Genesis 17: 1 & 6 *“I am El-Shaddai - Almighty God - I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you...”*

Genesis 28: 3 *“May El-Shaddai - God Almighty - bless you and make you fruitful and multiply you...”*

Genesis 49: 25 *“By El-Shaddai - Almighty - who will bless you with blessings of heaven above...of the breasts and of the womb.”*

God is never miserly with his blessings. ‘Exceedingly fruitful; multiply; a nation shall proceed from you; blessings of heaven...of the breasts and the womb...’ All these words imply an extraordinary generosity and a supreme love of giving. El-Shaddai is the God who not only possesses limitless supplies *but Who has the power within Himself to give and give again*. In the New Testament Paul speaks of Him as being able to bless us in ways ‘above all than we can ever ask or think’, cf. Ephesians 3: 14-21.

3. The authority of El-Shaddai Genesis 17: 4-16

a. A change of names

“No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be called Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations.” Genesis 17: 5.

The authority of El-Shaddai is stamped upon the whole of His dialogue with Abram –‘I will’ is repeated again and again in relation to His promises. And what God promises, He is able to perform, because He is the all-powerful One - El. To confirm His intentions for Abram and for Sarai, God changed their names to Abraham and to Sarah: -

Abram - Exalted Father, changed to Abraham - Father of a multitude, v. 5;

Sarai - the princely, changed to Sarah - Princess, mother of kings, v. 16.

These new names looked ahead to the fulfilment of God’s promises to Abraham and Sarah - declaring, even before the birth of Isaac, the reality of their status as the father and mother of the nation of Israel.

b. An everlasting promise

“Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an ever lasting possession: and I will be their God,” Genesis 17: 8.

God originally promised the land of Canaan to Abraham when he first left his home in Ur of the Chaldees, Genesis 12:7. The covenant had been initiated by God and Abraham had accepted it, *“And Abram believed in the LORD and He accounted it to him for righteousness.”* God would give the land and Himself in response to Abraham’s walk of faith and obedience, Genesis 15: 4-7 cp. Hebrews 11: 1-2, 6.

But Abraham never actually received the land himself, apart from a burial plot, Genesis 23:19. *“These all died in faith, not having received the promises,”* Hebrews 11:13. He lived as a stranger and a pilgrim in Canaan - content to know the presence of El-Shaddai, Almighty God, and to walk before Him in a relationship which promised eternal blessings.

The Lord Jesus Christ - Abundant provision for the Church
Ephesians 5:22-32, Colossians 2: 16-19

*“For no-one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, **just as the Lord does the church.**”*

The verb ‘to nourish’ (‘feed’ NIV) in Ephesians means to ‘bring up to maturity/to cherish/to train’; in Colossians ‘to nourish’ (‘supported’ NIV) has the sense of fully supplying. Each word reminds us of the Old Testament concept of El-Shaddai; the God Who supplies in abundance the blessings which His people need.

Writing to the Ephesians, Paul takes up the special relationship between husband and wife as an illustration of the union between Christ and His church. He terms it ‘a great mystery’ and goes on to develop the concept of responsibility and care. The Lord Jesus Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it, *“He is the Saviour of the body”* and now as Head of His church, He takes full responsibility for its growth and well-being, v. 23, 29.

In his letter to the Colossians, Paul uses the analogy of a physical body to describe the relationship between Christ and His church. The purpose of the Lord Jesus Christ, as Head of the body, is to see His church - His body - grow in the knowledge of Himself, nourished by Himself. The Colossian church was in danger from false teachers and Paul was concerned for the spiritual growth of the individual believers. It was and still is imperative that the church *“...holds fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase which is from God,”* Colossians 2: 19.

When the Lord Jesus Christ ascended into heaven to the place of authority and power - seated at the right hand of God - He did not leave His people without help or companionship. He sent the Holy Spirit to live within us and He gave gifts to the church - all of which echo the abundant provision of El-Shaddai. The Lord’s gifts are for *“the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ...”* Ephesians 4: 11-13. So, we all have a place in the service of Christ; we all have a place in the building up of the church - under the authority and care of the Head, the Lord Jesus Christ, our El-Shaddai.

The Lord Jesus Christ - Abundant provision for the individual

2 Peter 1: 1-11

“As His divine power has given to us all things which pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him Who has called us by glory and virtue.”

These verses are full of words which reflect the character of the Lord Jesus as our El-Shaddai: -

- a. Grace and peace **be multiplied** to you
- b. His **divine power** has **given to us all things**
- c. By which have been **given to us exceedingly great and precious promises**
- d. For if these things are yours and **abound**, you will be **neither barren or unfruitful**
- e. For so an entrance will be **supplied to you abundantly** into the everlasting kingdom

Abraham was commanded by El-Shaddai, *“Walk before me and **be blameless**”*. Alongside the provision and the power there is always a challenge and Peter reminds us of the need to turn our backs on the corrupting influences of the world, 1: 4. We are in God’s sight – *“partakers of the divine nature”* - but we must make every effort to practise a corresponding life style - adding to our initial faith, progressing in our knowledge of and likeness to Christ.

The word ‘add’, v. 5, came to mean in Greek, ‘generous and costly co-operation.’ There is a

price to pay if we want to add virtue to faith, knowledge to virtue etc. We will need to be generous ourselves, in time and effort and sacrifice, so that “we will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” And by living the life according to our calling, we shall be kept from habitually failing in our Christian walk, v10. Finally, our Lord and Saviour, guarantees us an abundant welcome and ongoing provision for our lives in His everlasting kingdom. El-Shaddai - eternally generous – there are many more of His blessings still to come.

EL SHADDAI - ALMIGHTY GOD

EXAM 3

(Use EXAM FORM A on the website menu)

Choose the correct answer.

1. El-Shaddai means
 - a. Righteous God
 - b. Almighty God
 - c. Creator God
 - d. Covenant Keeping God
2. What particular truth did Abram need to discover about God?
 - a. That He was all-powerful
 - b. That He was ever-present
 - c. That He was all-sufficient
 - d. That He was all-knowing
3. To walk ‘blameless before God’ means to live a life of
 - a. habitual obedience
 - b. transparent righteousness
 - c. wholehearted faith
 - d. all of the above
4. From the words which describe God’s gifts, we learn that He
 - a. loves to give
 - b. gives generously
 - c. has the power to give
 - d. all of the above
5. God changed the names of Abram and Sarai to confirm that
 - a. Abram was to become the father of a multitude
 - b. they were to become the parents of Isaac
 - c. Abram was to become the head of a great tribe
 - d. Sarai was to become a mother of kings
6. Although the whole land of Canaan had been given to Abraham, he only owned one plot of land - the field of
 - a. Ephron
 - b. Machpelah
 - c. Mamre

d. Hebron

7. The Lord Jesus Christ nourishes the church...what does 'nourish' mean?
- a. To bring to maturity
 - b. To cherish
 - c. To supply fully
 - d. All of the above
8. When the Lord Jesus ascended into heaven, how did He provide for the care of His church?
- a. He sent the Holy Spirit
 - b. He appointed particular men as leaders
 - c. He gave spiritual gifts
 - d. He left a set of rules and regulations
9. Some of the Lord's gifts to the church are
- a. evangelists
 - b. pastors
 - c. teachers
 - d. all of the above
10. Peter gives a list of spiritual qualities we should aim for - what must we add to self control?
- a. Knowledge
 - b. Brotherly kindness
 - c. Perseverance
 - d. Love

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

What difference does it make in your life to know that God is El Shaddai — Almighty God?

LESSON 4. ADONAI - MASTER - LORD

1. The meaning of the Name

“Unto you I lift up my eyes. O you who dwell in the heavens.

Behold. as the eyes of servants look to the hand of their masters (adonai), And the eyes of a maid to the hand of her mistress, so our eyes look to the LORD our God...” Psalm 123: 1-2.

“And to man he said, “Behold the fear of the Lord (Adonai) that is wisdom and to depart from evil that is understanding.” Job 28:28.

The Hebrew word adonai is the plural of adon, meaning ‘lord’ or ‘master’ and is applied constantly to God in the Old Testament. In most translations the title is written in the lower case, apart from the first letter, ie. ‘Lord’. (The NIV however, translates Adonai as ‘Sovereign Lord’)

In the Old Testament ‘adon’ often described the relationship of a master to his slave or to his servant; e.g. Eliezer, Abraham’s trusted slave, was sent to find a bride for his son Isaac. When he was approaching his destination in Mesopotamia, Eliezer prayed, *“O LORD God (Jehovah Elohim) of my master (adon) Abraham, please give me success this day and show kindness to my master (adon) Abraham,”* Genesis 24: 12.

This mutual respect and care between Abraham and Eliezer, as a faithful master and an obedient slave is a perfect illustration of the relationship between Adonai and His people. Many years before, God had appeared to Abraham and promised, *“I am your shield and your exceeding great reward.”* In other words, *“I am the One Who will provide you with all your needs, I will protect you and I will guide you.”* And Abraham had responded to that promise by addressing God as ‘Adonai Jehovah’. This great man, owner himself of hundreds of slaves, was honoured to be known as Jehovah’s possession - confident that in all things, he could count upon the faithfulness of such a Master, Genesis 14:14, 15:1-2.

2. The implications of the Name

a. A challenge to the will Isaiah 6: 1-13

“Also I heard the voice of the Lord - Adonai, saying, ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?’ Then I said, ‘Here am I! Send me.’”

The previous titles of God - Elohim, Jehovah and El-Shaddai - have dwelt upon His nature, what God is -

i. Elohim proclaims His power and majesty

ii. Jehovah speaks of His eternal presence and moral being - righteous, holy, loving, the Redeemer

iii. El-Shaddai expresses His all-sufficiency and power in giving.

All of God's names should evoke a response in the lives of those who discover the wonder of His Person. Our spirits are strengthened by the power of Elohim and the eternal presence of Jehovah; our hearts are thrilled by the grace and generosity of El-Shaddai; but when we recognise God as Adonai - Lord and Master - and realise the implications of the Name, a challenge to the *will* is inevitable.

Isaiah's almost overwhelming vision of Adonai brought such a challenge. When Adonai reveals His greatness and glory and confronts head-on, life's small ambitions, there can be only one response to the Master, 'Here am I! Send me.'

Isaiah's calling was as a prophet to his own people, who were known to Jehovah as “*Jacob My servant, and Israel whom I have chosen,*” Isaiah 44:1. Chosen to serve, chosen to be God’s witnesses to the nations around, Israel had failed in *their* calling and needed the prophets to guide them back into the ways that Adonai Jehovah had intended for them, Deuteronomy 4:1-9. But they were a stubborn people and Isaiah would find, like Jeremiah and many other prophets, that obedience to Adonai would mean sacrifice, there would be a price to pay.

b. A challenge to faithfulness Jeremiah 1: 4-19

“*Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations. Then said I: ‘Ah, Lord GOD - Adonai Jehovah! Behold I cannot speak, for I am a youth.’”*

When God called Jeremiah to serve him, the prophet had serious doubts about his own abilities. God’s reply and his symbolic action were to show His servant that He had authorised him to speak His word to the nation of Israel and that His power and presence would preserve Jeremiah in the face of future opposition, “*They will fight against you, but they shall not prevail against you. **For I am with you,** says the LORD, to deliver you,*” Jeremiah 1: 19.

It had to be a relationship of trust on the part of the servant. Jeremiah was tested constantly by the aggressive reactions of a people who had no intention of changing their idolatrous life style. His own faithfulness to Jehovah was often a painful experience as he acknowledged God’s right as Adonai to command and his responsibility as the slave, to obey, Jeremiah 20: 7-12. But Jehovah’s faithfulness was never in question and the prophet’s words of affirmation have echoed through the centuries to encourage and strengthen the people of God.

*“Through the LORD'S mercies we are not consumed,
Because His compassions fail not,
They are new every morning,
Great is Your faithfulness.
'The LORD is my portion,' says my soul,
'Therefore I hope in Him!'”*

Lamentations 3:22-24.

3. The implications of the Name...continued

a. The privileges of a relationship Deuteronomy 7: 6-11

“*For your Maker is your husband, the LORD of Hosts is his name...*” Isaiah 54: 5.

There is another personal relationship between Jehovah and His people reflected in the word Adonai - that of husband and wife; e.g. Sarah,

Abraham’s wife, laughed at the thought of having a child in her old age, “*After I have grown old, shall I have pleasure, my lord (adon) being old also?*” Genesis 18:12. In the world of the Old Testament the wife was the possession of her husband, in subjection to him, but also having his lifelong care and protection. Marriage was intended to be, like the servant and master, a relationship of mutual respect, love and faithfulness, a blessing to both partners, Gen 23: 1-2.

Just before the nation of Israel took possession of the Promised Land, Moses gave them his final word, setting out their privileges and responsibilities as the people of God. He reminded them of their unique status, *“For you are...a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth...because the LORD loves you...”* Deuteronomy 7: 7-8. No other nation on earth had such a God - One Who declared His love for His people; Who proved His love through redemption and provision; Who would remain faithful to all His promises - the true Husband.

b. The responsibilities of a relationship Jeremiah 31: 31-37

“Return, O backsliding children,’ says the LORD, ‘for I am married to you...” Jeremiah 3: 14.

“...My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them,’ says the LORD,” Jeremiah 31:32.

The servant may betray the trust of his master and the master may violate the rights of his servant but there is a greater sin within the unique and intimate relationship of marriage when one partner is unfaithful. The spiritual counterpart of marriage is expressed in Jehovah’s love for the nation of Israel and His longing to see them blessed and fulfilled in their response to His love and provision. There was a time when Israel had returned the affection which God lavished upon her, but she turned away from Him, practising spiritual adultery by worshipping the idols of Canaan. The marriage commitment between Jehovah and His people was spoiled through Israel’s habitual disobedience, Jeremiah 2: 1-5 Hosea 2: 2-5.

Adonai Jehovah - Lord and Redeemer - this was a privileged relationship which Israel should have nurtured and valued. To realise the enormity of the nation’s sin in the eyes of Jehovah, her Adonai, her Lord, her Husband, you need to read Ezekiel chapter 16 - it makes for unpleasant reading, but is a graphic account of the depths to which a nation can sink. The title ‘Adonai Jehovah’* is repeated again and again, emphasising the covenant relationship - Jehovah, the master and servant relationship and the marriage relationship - Adonai. Such a wealth of privileges but no sense of responsibility – Israel’s conscience had been disabled by recurring sin and shameless disobedience - her unfaithfulness could not go unpunished, Ezekiel 16: 59.

“Nevertheless I will remember My covenant with you...when I provide you an atonement for all you have done,’ says the Lord GOD”, Ezekiel 16: 60-63.* In spite of His anger and the righteous judgments which He poured out on the nation, the Lord’s devotion and love for Israel continues. *“Thus says the LORD, who gives the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and the stars for a light by night...if those ordinances depart from before Me...then the seed of Israel shall also cease from being a nation before Me forever,”* Jeremiah 31: 35-36. The relationship is never annulled, never ended. He promises to forgive and to restore - Adonai Jehovah - eternally faithful Husband, Master and Lord of His people Israel.

* In some of the scriptures quoted from Jeremiah and Ezekiel, God is written in capital letters - GOD - this indicates another translation of Jehovah.

4. The Lord - Kurios - in the New Testament John 13: 1-17

a. The authority of the Lord

“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ”, Acts 2:36.

Just as Adonai denotes Lord and Master in the Old Testament, so the Greek word Kurios - Lord and Master - in the New Testament, indicates the one who has power and authority. The apostle Paul acknowledged the authority of Jesus along the road to Damascus, 'Lord, what do you want me to do?' Acts 9: 6. From the moment of his conversion he recognised and acted upon the relationship of servant and master, counting it a privilege to be the bondservant/slave of the Lord. He saw himself as the Lord's rightful possession through salvation and had no other life apart from His Saviour - "For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain," Philippians 1:1,21.

b. The example of the Lord

"...who made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of the bondservant and coming in the likeness of men...became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross..."
Philippians 2:7-8.

Paul also recognised the fact that the Lord Himself, although supreme Master, is the perfect Servant. The Lord Jesus was always careful to teach by example as well as by words. When He knelt to wash His disciples' feet, He made it plain that He was their Lord - Kurios - as well as their Teacher - Didaskolos, v13. The inference could not have been clearer, "For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you, most assuredly...the servant is not greater than his master..." John 13: 13-17.

The Lord Jesus Christ was God's perfect Servant, the One in whom the Father was 'well-pleased,' Luke 3: 21-22 cp. Isaiah 42: 1. His obedience to God's will was never in question, His ministry of teaching, preaching and healing fulfilled the needs of all - from the outcast to His personal friends and ultimately His death upon the cross met the need of the whole world, John 3: 16.

c. Our relationship with the Lord

"And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord...for you serve the Lord Christ," Colossians 3: 23-24.

Adonai Jehovah - the God who freed Israel from bondage in Egypt - had the right to be Lord and Master over His people Israel. In the same way, the Lord Jesus Christ, who has delivered us from spiritual bondage, can claim to be our Master and Lord. This is our present privilege - to be servants of the Lord Christ. Remembering that obedience, faithfulness and respect to our Lord and Master is fundamental in sustaining and developing this relationship.

Adonai promised Abraham that He would protect him and guide him, providing for all his needs; our Lord, Kurios, has promised us that He will never leave us or forsake us - the One who was the perfect Servant will be the perfect Master.

ADONAI - MASTER - LORD

EXAM 4

(Use EXAM FORM A on the website menu)

Choose the correct answer.

1. What sort of relationship best describes Adonai and His people?
 - a. Employer and employee
 - b. Master and slave
 - c. Father and son
 - d. King and subject

2. What response should there be to the Name Adonai?
 - a. Fear
 - b. Thankfulness
 - c. Obedience
 - d. Wonder

3. From what source did Israel receive their wisdom & understanding? Deuteronomy 4:1-9.
 - a. The wisdom of Egypt
 - b. The writings of the Patriarchs
 - c. The commandments of the LORD
 - d. Visions and prophecies

4. Adonai gave Jeremiah the power to speak His word by
 - a. anointing him with oil
 - b. giving him a vision
 - c. touching his mouth
 - d. taking him to Mount Sinai

5. At times, Jeremiah found it hard to obey and speak out against the people, but God's word in his heart was like
 - a. a mighty waterfall
 - b. a heavy weight
 - c. a burning fire
 - d. a still, small voice

6. Jehovah saw His relationship with Israel as that of a husband. Marriage is intended to be a relationship of
 - a. love and faithfulness
 - b. mutual respect
 - c. care and protection
 - d. all of the above

7. Israel's idolatry was spiritual adultery and prostitution in the eyes of Adonai. Which of the following verses in Ezekiel 16 speak of idol worship (high places)?
 - a. v 47-48
 - b. v 24-25
 - c. v 14-16
 - d. v 31-32

8. At his conversion Paul acknowledged the authority of the Lord Jesus by asking
 - a. Lord, what do you want me to be?
 - b. Lord, what do you want me to do?
 - c. Lord, where do you want me to go?
 - d. Lord, who do you want me to see?

9. Although Jesus was the Lord (Kurios), He took the place of a servant to the disciples by
 - a. preparing their meal
 - b. mending their nets
 - c. carrying their loads
 - d. washing their feet

10. Isaiah 53 is a wonderful description of the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. Which verse speaks of Him as a 'righteous Servant'?

- a. v 7
- b. v 2
- c. v 3
- d. v 11

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

Paul counted it a privilege to be a bondservant/slave of the Lord Jesus Christ, seeing himself as the Lord's rightful possession through salvation. Is this your experience?

LESSON 5. JEHOVAH JIREH - THE LORD WILL PROVIDE

The name Elohim brings the great Creator God to mind, whereas the name Jehovah speaks of the God of personal revelation, (lesson 2, Exodus 3:13-16). To know God's name is to know God - His name reveals His character. Jehovah is a moral and spiritual Being, i.e. a God of mercy and compassion; a God of righteousness and holiness; a God who made a covenant with the children of Israel and became *their* God, "....O Jehovah, You are our Elohim..."
2 Chronicles 14:11.

The next eight lessons cover the compound names of God. Linked with the name Jehovah are words which will extend our understanding and deepen our appreciation of the LORD in a different way - and more than that. Because Jehovah always acts according to His name - His revealed nature - it will strengthen our confidence in Him when we bring Him our requests and our praise.

"The LORD also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble. And those who know your name will put their trust in You; For You LORD, have not forsaken those who seek You." Psalm 9: 9-10.

1. God's command Genesis 22: 1-19

"Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love...and offer him as a burnt offering..."
Genesis 22: 2.

Abraham was an old man, experienced in the ways of men and of God. Feeling secure in the knowledge that through his son Isaac, all God's promises would be fulfilled, Genesis 17: 5-8, he may have thought that nothing more in life could be given or taken away. But God had one final test for his servant. This trial, more severe than anything Abraham had previously known, was the command to sacrifice his son Isaac, God's gift - the child of promise.

The nature of the test may seem strange. Nowhere in the Bible does God condone child sacrifice, rather He condemns such actions, Jeremiah 19:5. But in Abraham's time these events would have been a common occurrence; pagan deities were appeased by the sacrifice of the dearest and the best - so Abraham himself would not have questioned the command. What must be remembered is that God had no intention of seeing Isaac sacrificed. The crucial issue was the extent of Abraham's obedience, the reality of his faith.

When God asked Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac, his mind would have gone back to the promise that God would 'establish his covenant with Isaac for an everlasting covenant and with

his descendants after him,' Genesis 17: 19. With gratitude and faith Abraham had believed God's promise; now it *appeared* that there would be no fulfilment, no everlasting covenant. And yet, as he looked back on all God's dealings with him and the miracle of Isaac's birth, Abraham *had* to believe that God was able to raise Isaac from the dead and keep His promises, Hebrews 11: 17-19. His faith was about to be tested 'as by fire' but the end result would be a faith proved to be genuine and in its reality, precious to God. 1 Peter 1: 7.

There was the danger too that Abraham loved Isaac -the gift, more than God - the giver. Ishmael, Abraham's son by the slave girl Hagar, had been sent away forever and Isaac, the son of promise, filled his heart, his thoughts and his plans for the future. Many years before, God had instructed Abraham, "Walk before me and be blameless." It was a relationship which promised future blessing and prosperity but which also involved loyalty and obedience. By commanding Abraham to sacrifice his son, God in fact, was asking *Abraham* to die - to die to anything which might come between himself and his God.

2. Abraham's obedience

"By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac...his only begotten son." Hebrews 11: 17.

The content of God's command seems harsh beyond understanding, but gentleness and compassion temper the words which Abraham received. God knew that the knife would never be used against Isaac, but in order for his servant's faith and obedience to be proved without question, the knife of submission must be thrust into *Abraham's* heart; *his* will must be bound to the altar; his mind must make its way through the fire of doubt and contradictions. Abraham would need to know *himself* before he could walk before his God to Mount Moriah and in the offering of his son Isaac, be blameless.

When dawn broke, Abraham had already prepared himself for the journey and, with his son and two servants, he set out for the land of Moriah. After three days, Abraham saw the place of sacrifice 'afar off'; it was time to leave behind the servants and travel on alone with Isaac. There were matters to be resolved between father and son and their God.

It was inevitable that Isaac would ask for an explanation, "My father!" and Abraham's reply was exactly the same as his response to God, "Here I am." Throughout his life, in all his relationships Abraham showed himself to be within reach - available, ready to act, ready to speak, v. 1, 7, 11 (cp.12:4, 14:14, 18:1-4). Apprehension did not dull his discernment. There was no hesitation in Abraham's reply to Isaac's enquiry, "...where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" Did Isaac understand his father's answer that God would provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering? Whatever the young man's thoughts, his actions display a willingness to continue with his father. 'So the two of them went together,' up to the place of sacrifice, on to the altar itself. The silence and submission of Isaac speak louder than any words, he trusted his father to the end.

An altar was built and wood put in readiness for the fire. Isaac was bound and laid upon the altar, upon the wood, for this was no symbolic sacrifice. It was deliberate and time consuming, with the end always in view - the sacrifice of Isaac.

3. The LORD's provision

"And Abraham called the name of the place, 'The LORD will provide (Jehovah Jireh)' as it is said to this day, 'In the Mount of the LORD it shall be seen.'" Genesis 22: 14.

Abraham and Isaac had reached the end of their journey together - the father 'took the knife to slay his son'. But at the very moment of sacrifice, God (the Angel of the LORD) restrained Abraham's hand and provided a ram in place of Isaac, for the burnt offering.

'To this day' - what happened on Mount Moriah was of such significance, that the place of sacrifice was given a permanent memorial in the name Jehovah-Jireh. 'Jireh' in relation to God, means both to see and to provide - prevision and provision. In the place of Isaac a ram was provided - an appropriate offering - as the ram would become one of the symbols of consecration in tabernacle worship, Exodus 29:15-21. Abraham had been willing to give completely and without reservation his only son to the LORD as a burnt offering, and at the same time, Isaac himself had submitted to his father's will in an unforgettable act of obedience.

4. Abraham's reward

"...concluding that God was able to raise Isaac up, even from the dead..." Hebrews 11: 19

"Now I know that you fear God", v12. Not the fear which cowers and cringes in the presence of an unknown and powerful Being - but the fear which inspires reverence and submission to the will of One who can be trusted and loved. And God values such obedience, cp. 1 Samuel 15: 22, and rewards his servant Abraham, *"...because you have done this thing...blessing I will bless you and multiplying I will multiply you."* Here is abundant blessing, provided and guaranteed by Jehovah himself, with the assurance (given twice over -vs12, 16) that the LORD understood perfectly just how great a sacrifice Abraham had been willing to make. Unknown to father and son, this journey to Mount Moriah had been to prove *beyond all doubt* the reality of Abraham's submission to God's will and obedience to His word. Marked out to be the father of the nation of Israel and one who would teach his family *all the ways* of Jehovah, this encounter was an extreme but wonderful discovery of another attribute of the LORD, Genesis 18: 17-19. And more than that - Paul writes to the Romans that in the matter of faith, *"Abraham is the father of us all"* Romans 4: 16-17. Through Abraham's personal experience of this provision, we are taught and blessed as well.

Walking before God had made great demands upon Abraham. There were times when he failed Him, when his faith wavered in the face of circumstances. But in his desire to obey the LORD, even when that pathway took him up into the mountain of the shadow of death, he steadfastly continued on his journey. And his God, Jehovah Elohim/Jireh, saw him through - forgiving him, strengthening him, providing for him, confiding in him - He valued his companionship. Abraham has many high honours linked to his name and his faith, but one of the most precious is that he became known as the friend of God.

"And Abraham was called the friend of God." James 2:23, 2 Chronicles. 20:7, Isaiah 41:8.

5. The Lord Jesus Christ - The Lamb of God

"And Abraham said, 'My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering.' So they went both of them together." Genesis 22: 8.

"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, 'Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!'" John 1: 29.

The gospel of John has many references to the Father. The Lord Jesus Christ constantly refers to 'the Father' and we sense throughout, the unity of the Father and the Son in the work of salvation.

“...for I am not alone, but I am with the Father who sent me.” John 8:16

“...Many good works I have shown you from My Father...” John 10: 32

“For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak.” John 12:49

“...Have I been with you so long and yet you have not known Me. He who has seen Me has seen the Father...” John 14: 9

Mount Moriah is a wonderful foreshadowing of Calvary - the Father who gave His only Son; the Son who submitted to the will of the Father and became the fulfilment of Abraham’s words of faith and certainty, *“God will provide for Himself the lamb...”* For at Calvary there was no substitution for the Lord Jesus Christ. As the Lamb of God, He was the substitute; He was the offering; He was the only One able to take away the sin of the world; He was the only One who could give himself as the perfect offering – *“...how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”* Hebrews 9:14.

Like Isaac, the Lord displayed an obedience which reflected

- a. the devotion of a son to a father he loved and respected
- b. the faith of a son in a father he could trust and obey
- c. the understanding of a son in the purposes and ways of his father.

“So they went both of them together.”

Unlike Abraham, God had to wield the knife of judgement and sacrifice on His own Son. If there had been a terrible cost to Abraham in the anticipation of sacrifice, can anyone begin to understand the cost to God in the realisation of sacrifice?

“...there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour...when Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, ‘My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?’” Mark 15: 33-34.

But, like Abraham, God received His Son again, in resurrection. Jehovah Jireh had provided the Lamb - the only way of redemption for a world without hope, John 3: 16. Now everyone who trusts in God’s Lamb for their personal salvation, can go on to discover, day by day, more of the infinite and loving provision of Jehovah Jireh for themselves.

“He did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?” Romans 8:32.

JEHOVAH JIREH - THE LORD WILL PROVIDE

EXAM 5

(Use EXAM FORM A on the website menu)

Choose the correct answer.

1. When God commanded Abraham to sacrifice his son, He was testing the extent of Abraham’s
 - a. obedience
 - b. love
 - c. faith
 - d. all of the above

2. Many children in Old Testament times were sacrificed to
 - a. Baalak
 - b. Bela
 - c. Baal
 - d. Baalam

3. Where was the place of Abraham's sacrifice?
 - a. Midian
 - b. Moab
 - c. Manasseh
 - d. Moriah

4. Abraham's reply to God, his son and the angel showed that he was
 - a. always responsive
 - b. ready to help
 - c. always available
 - d. all of the above

5. In relation to God, what does 'Jireh' mean?
 - a. To know and to provide
 - b. To see and to provide
 - c. To care and to provide
 - d. To hear and to provide

6. The value of obedience to God is summed up in 1 Samuel 15: 22
 - a. to obey is better than a burnt offering
 - b. to obey is better than sacrifice
 - c. to obey is better than the blood of bulls and goats
 - d. to obey is better than the fat of rams

7. God appreciated Abraham's companionship - he became known as
 - a. the friend of God
 - b. the confidant of God
 - c. the man of God
 - d. the disciple of God

8. Mount Moriah foreshadows
 - a. Calvary
 - b. The Father who gave His Son
 - c. The Son who submitted to His Father's will
 - d. All of the above.

9. We are cleansed from our sin by
 - a. the miracles of Christ
 - b. the love of Christ
 - c. the blood of Christ
 - d. the words of Christ

10. Isaac was a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ in that he
 - a. loved his father
 - b. trusted his father
 - c. obeyed his father
 - d. all of the above

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

In what ways have you experienced the Lord's provision in your life?

LESSON 6. JEHOVAH ROPHE - THE LORD WHO HEALS YOU

"The LORD said, "If you diligently heed the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in his sight...I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians. For I am the LORD, who heals you," Exodus 15: 26.

1. Out of Egypt Exodus 14: 21-31, 15: 1-2

"So the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore," Exodus 14:30.

Elohim, the mighty God, was entering into the experience of the Israelites. He had already proved the reality of His power by bringing about their supernatural deliverance out of Egypt - a whole nation taken through the Red Sea, the water piled high on either side, while their former masters drowned in the returning waves. Israel's journey to the promised land of Canaan had begun with a high note of victory and on the edge of the wilderness they stopped to celebrate the triumph. *"Sing to the Lord for He is highly exalted. The horse and its rider He has hurled into the sea."*

This was to be a unique journey for the nation. As they travelled through the wilderness, guided by the pillar of cloud and of fire, Israel would discover a destination other than a country. *"The LORD called to Moses and said... 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself.'" Exodus 19: 3-4.* Jehovah was their ultimate destination - the God of Israel would not only be their guide and protector, leading them to the Promised Land, He would be taking the people on a journey of revelation about Himself, *"He made known His ways to Moses, His acts to the children of Israel," Psalm 103: 1-14.*

2. Into the wilderness Exodus 15: 22-27

"They wandered in the wilderness in a desolate way...hungry and thirsty their soul fainted in them..." Psalm 107: 4-5

They were only three days into the wilderness but already the heat, the dust and the lack of water began to have its effect upon the people.

Their frustration boiled over when Marah's water failed to satisfy, in fact it was undrinkable, *"...so the people grumbled/complained against Moses."* But in reality, their complaint was against the LORD - they felt that He was the cause of all their problems.

The LORD *had* led them into the desert, but there was a purpose in His leading - there is always a purpose in divine direction. Forty years later Moses spoke to the Israelites on the borders of

Canaan, “And you shall remember that the LORD your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, **to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not,**” Deuteronomy 8: 2*.

Through the physical trials of the way God would be teaching His people spiritual lessons about themselves and their relation to Him. In their song of thanksgiving at the Red Sea, the people had praised Jehovah and said,

*“The LORD is my strength and song,
and He has become my salvation;
He is my God, and I will praise Him;
my Father’s God, and I will exalt Him.”*

To have Jehovah as their God was only a recent experience for the Israelites as a nation. In every new relationship, there is a process of discovery and Israel had to learn, often the hard way, that whatever the situation Jehovah had only their blessing in mind.

*We need to understand that it had never been God’s will that the Israelites should remain forty years in the wilderness. The intention was that they should travel more or less directly to Canaan, which should have taken just over a year. But their lack of faith and rebellion against Moses and Aaron in refusing to enter the Promised Land brought about this lengthy delay. Numbers 14: 26-35, Deuteronomy 1:21-40.

3. Jehovah’s healing power

“Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble and He delivered them out of their distresses and He led them forth by the right way.” Psalm 107: 6-7a.

The acrid waters at Marah were there by design, rather than by accident. This was a potentially life threatening situation - how would the people respond? Fresh in their minds was their deliverance from Egypt by God’s intervention and power. Surely they would look to Him for help? But memories are short when throats are dry and bodies are weary. Their words - as stinging and sharp as the waters of Marah - were precursors of many more in their history.

This is the first appearance of the word ‘complain’ – ‘grumble or murmur’ - and sadly it appears time and again in the experience of the Israelites. The songs of joy and triumph expressed at the Red Sea gave place at Marah to shouts of accusation and criticism. In the minds of the Israelites, Jehovah was on trial - what sort of a God would bring them to an oasis, only to deny them water? But the Bible says that it was the people who were on trial, “...and there He tested them” Exodus 15: 25. The LORD was taking His people on a spiritual pilgrimage, developing their faith, giving them opportunities to discover His love and care. This difficult situation would be an opportunity to prove His faithfulness to Israel, even in the face of their hostility. The LORD was well aware of the need of the hour and as with Abraham at Mount Moriah he had the provision close by. “So Moses cried out to the LORD and the LORD **showed him a tree.**” Jehovah Jireh, the LORD who sees and provides, is encountered again at Marah and discovered to be Jehovah-Rophe, the LORD who heals.

However, there were conditions attached at Marah, v. 25-26. The people would experience Jehovah as their healer and protector from disease only if they were obedient to His word. The ten commandments had not yet been given, but God is setting a principle here, which would be established in His covenant with them at Sinai - obedience would always result in blessing for Israel, Exodus 19: 1-8, Deuteronomy 10: 12-13.

4. Jehovah's blessing Exodus 15: 27 Psalm 103: 1-5

"Who satisfies your mouth with good things, so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's."
Psalm 103: 5.

On every journey, as in life, there are the good times and the bad times; Elim was one of the good times for Israel. There was an abundant supply of sweet, fresh water, food and shelter - it was the ideal place to camp. At Marah the Israelites were taught, from a literally bitter experience, that Jehovah was able to heal as well as deliver, provide as well as protect. At Elim their confidence in God was restored by His generous provision. The people were given the opportunity to become more aware of Jehovah's love and care through their daily experiences along the desert roads of Sinai – God's character was revealed in His ways as well as His words – 'Jehovah-Rophe, I am the LORD, who *heals* you.' Sadly, lessons given were not always lessons learned and further times of testing would prove that the people were often lacking in faith and obedience, failing to remember the miracles and power of their God.

5. The Lord Jesus Christ - the remedy 1 Peter 2: 21-25

"But He was wounded for our transgression, He was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed." Isaiah 53: 5.

The image of the tree at Marah, which became the means of healing the bitter water, brings to our minds the Lord Jesus Christ and His sacrifice at Calvary. The tree - possibly just a piece of wood - had been marked out by Jehovah as the remedy. It was close at hand, readily available and effective.

Paul speaks of the 'word of faith' which, like the tree at Marah, is near at hand - in your mouth and in your heart. Can anything be closer? *"...that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved,"* Romans 10: 8-9.

Centuries later, a jailor at Philippi had shouted out to his prisoner Paul, *"What must I do to be saved?"* Paul's reply in so many words had been, *"Take hold of the death of Christ and believe that He died for you – cast Calvary's tree into the bitter waters of your life and you will be saved."* Acts 16: 25-34.

The most graphic account of the Lord's sacrifice in the Old Testament is found in Isaiah 53: 4-5 - we have peace with God because *He* was punished. As Peter sums it up, *"Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we having died to sins, might live for righteousness - by whose stripes you were healed."* The Lord Himself endured the penalty for sin, the judgment which we deserved; He was the remedy, the tree cast into the waters. By believing and taking to ourselves the sacrifice of Christ, we receive healing and forgiveness for our sins. By dying to our old life and the sins which cause so much bitterness and sorrow, we will find a new location - a life of righteousness, a life for God, a life of blessing, *"Then they came to Elim."*

6. The Lord Jesus Christ - the healer Matthew 11: 1-6

"Go and tell John...the blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them."

John the Baptist had been arrested by King Herod and faced almost certain death; doubts concerning all he had ever believed filtered into his mind. Had he been right about Jesus of

Nazareth? Was He the Lamb of God – God’s own provision for the redemption of the world? John 1: 29-34. It may be that John imagined that the Coming One would be far more aggressive in His ministry, cp. Matthew 3:11-12. John had ‘heard in prison about the works of Christ’ - surely these miracles of healing, 4:23 - 24 were hardly the works of the Messiah for whom Israel so eagerly awaited. (Messiah – the Christ – the Anointed One – the Coming One – the Deliverer that God had promised to His people Israel.)

Jesus realised that John’s expectations were not being realised, because they were wrong and He reminds him of Isaiah’s prophecy, 61: 1-2. At the beginning of His ministry Jesus had preached in the synagogue at Nazareth from that same reading and at the close the Lord had stated, “*Today, this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing,*” Luke 4: 18-21. The Anointed One, the Messiah, had come and His miracles were His credentials, the proof of His identity. Jehovah-Rophe was amongst them to give relief and healing from the physical suffering of a people under the bondage of sin and Satan, cp. John 10: 24-25, 37-38. John’s fears were dispelled; he had done his work well and prepared the way of the LORD. At that very moment Jesus was bringing relief and healing from the physical and mental afflictions of His people, prior to His supreme work of delivering a world suffering from the spiritual afflictions of sin and death. Jehovah Rophe had come in Person, amongst His people. John need not look for another.

JEHOVAH ROPHE - THE LORD WHO HEALS YOU

EXAM 6

(Use EXAM FORM A on the website menu)

Choose the correct answer.

1. After their deliverance through the Red Sea, the Israelites praised the LORD and sang, “He is...
 - a. my strength and support”
 - b. my strength and song”
 - c. my strength and salvation”
 - d. my strength and satisfaction”

2. How many days were the Israelites in the wilderness of Shur?
 - a. Thirteen
 - b. Five
 - c. Twenty
 - d. Three

3. The problem at Marah was that
 - a. there was not enough water
 - b. there was no water
 - c. the water was bitter
 - d. the water was polluted

4. The Israelites remained in the wilderness longer than God had intended because of
 - a. their lack of faith in God
 - b. their fear of the tribes people in Canaan
 - c. their rebellion against Moses and Aaron
 - d. all of the above

5. At Marah, the Israelites learned that Jehovah could
 - a. protect
 - b. heal
 - c. provide
 - d. destroy

6. If the people kept God's commandments He would protect them from
 - a. their enemies
 - b. famine
 - c. the diseases of Egypt
 - d. all of the above.

7. One of the most graphic accounts of the Lord's death is found in Isaiah 53
 - a. verses 1-2
 - b. verses 3-5
 - c. verses 7-9
 - d. verses 11-12

8. For the believer our Elim - our new location - is a life
 - a. in Christ
 - b. of righteousness
 - c. for God
 - d. all of the above

9. John the Baptist saw the Messiah as One who would
 - a. purge out all that was wrong in the temple worship
 - b. drive the Romans from Israel
 - c. baptise with fire and the Holy Spirit
 - d. destroy the corrupt court of King Herod

10. The proof that Jesus was the promised Messiah was
 - a. His miracles
 - b. His preaching
 - c. Fulfilments of prophecy
 - d. All of the above

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

“by His stripes we are healed”. Have you experienced the healing from sin made available by Christ's death on the cross?

LESSON 7. JEHOVAH NISSI - THE LORD IS MY BANNER

1. The Israelites Exodus 16 - 17: 7.

“Therefore the people contended with Moses and said, ‘Give us water that we may drink.’ So Moses said to them, ‘Why do you contend with me? Why do you tempt the LORD?’” Ex. 17: 2.

The children of Israel had commenced their journey to the Promised Land. They had already experienced the power of God:-

- a. ...at the Red Sea, where they witnessed the wholesale destruction of the Egyptians, Exodus 15: 3-4.
- b. ...at Marah, where the bitter waters were sweetened and purified through the healing power of God, 15: 22-27.
- c. ...in the wilderness of Sin where God had satisfied their hunger and provided them with meat(quails) and bread (manna), 16: 11-15.
- d. ...finally at Rephidim, God had quenched their thirst and given them water from a rock, 17: 5-6.

In all these varied and testing circumstances the people were discovering the character and the power of their Elohim, the true God whose name was Jehovah. But progress was slow - hindered continually by their lack of faith, short memories and great aptitude for complaining. Not six weeks out of Egypt and it had seemed that the people were ready to rebel against Moses and Aaron, the very men who had secured their freedom from slavery, 17: 3-4. The Israelites tested their leaders and they tested God; although in reality, *He* was testing *them* - proving what was in their hearts, whether they loved Him, trusted Him and were willing to obey His word, cp. Deuteronomy 8: 2.

2. The Amalekites Exodus 17: 8-9, Deuteronomy 25: 17-19.

“Remember what Amalek did to you on the way as you were coming out of Egypt,” Deuteronomy 25: 17.

The news of the exodus of Israel out of Egypt would naturally stir up suspicion and fear amongst the local tribes in the Sinai peninsula. A vast number of people travelling through the area would pose a real threat - where would they camp, how would they sustain such a population, were they a militant, hostile nation?

Diplomatic contact had no place in the thinking of the Amalekites, even though they were related to the Israelites - Amalek being the grandson of Esau, Jacob's brother, Genesis 36: 12. It was a question of attack and destroy, first of all by harassing the weakest element of Israel, Deuteronomy 25: 18 and then by a full scale offensive. The Amalekites had no fear of God and they were the first of the nations (i.e. the heathen) to oppose His people after they came out of Egypt. They created a scenario for destroying Israel which will continue to be the aim and objective of the Gentile nations, until the Lord returns in judgment, cp. Joel 3: 1-2, 12-16, Revelation 16: 14-16.

The Amalekites' attack caused no confusion in the Israelite camp. God had provided life-giving water for them through a powerful miracle and it may well be that their leaders, who had witnessed the striking of the rock, had done much to change Israel's rebellious attitude, Exodus 17: 5-6. Without complaint or questioning the people took up arms under the leadership of Joshua, the young man who had been chosen to command the Israelite army.

Because entry into Canaan and possession of the land would involve conflict, it was necessary for the Israelites to gain experience in warfare. Over many years the Canaanites had literally polluted the land with their idol worship and it was God's will for them to be annihilated.

“Also you shall destroy all the peoples whom the LORD your God delivers over to you...you shall not be terrified of them...for the LORD your God, the great and awesome God, is among you.”
Deuteronomy 7: 16, 21.

3. The battle Exodus 17:10-14

*“The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?
...Though an army may encamp against me,
my heart shall not fear;
Though war may rise against me, in this will I be confident.”*
Psalm 27:1,3.

An inexperienced army, commanded by an unknown leader, fighting in unfamiliar terrain - this surely was a formula for defeat. But against Amalek the Israelites would have their first opportunity to experience the LORD's presence and power in battle. They would do the fighting, He would give the victory.

The symbol and assurance of His presence was the staff (rod) held aloft in Moses' hands. On a hill overlooking the battlefield, the staff would glisten in the sunlight and direct the minds of the soldiers to the power of Elohim. For this was the staff of God (Elohim, v9), the Mighty One, Who had authority over *all* nations and not merely Israel. As a symbol of His supreme authority the rod had been used against Pharaoh in Egypt; it had opened up the path through the Red Sea; it had brought back the waters and destroyed the armies of a nation which despised and opposed Him, Exodus 5: 2; 14:16-18, 26.- 28.

Amalek like the Egyptians, 'did not fear God'. They were not afraid to attack His people and during the battle there were times when Israel was threatened with defeat. Moses' arms grew tired and the staff had to be lowered while he rested. But Aaron and Hur were dependable co-workers who saw the need and solved the problem, 'and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun.'

Moses held the rod high in the attitude of supplication; the persistence of prayer was as important as the activity of the sword and the twin disciplines had their desired effect in the warfare against Amalek. Jehovah responded to the fact that Moses, Aaron and Hur were looking to *Him* to give the victory, as did the soldiers, who were inspired and encouraged to be fighting under the banner of Elohim.

The battle resulted in a victory for Joshua (who eventually became Israel's leader) and God promised him that He would exterminate the Amalekites - 'blot out their remembrance.'

4. The altar - the LORD is my Banner – Jehovah Nissi Exodus 17:15-16

“Hear the voice of my supplications, when I cry to You, When I lift up my hands toward your holy sanctuary.” Psalm 28:2.

When the fighting had ended Moses built an altar. This was to stand as a reminder to the people that Amalek was *always* to be counted as an enemy of Israel. With this nation, no treaties were to be signed, no compromises made. It represented Satan's opposition to God and His kingdom and would be the forerunner of many other nations, who in their arrogance and pride, would lift up Satan's banners in order to fight against and destroy the Israelites.

The altar would remind the people as well, that battles are won, not only by the sword but also by the faith of men whose confidence is in the LORD. **He** was their rallying point, their banner - the One they fought for, the One they looked to for success. The prayers of Moses, Aaron and Hur were as necessary for victory as the arms of Joshua and his fighting men.

Many years later, David, Israel's great warrior king, wrote a psalm of praise to the LORD, acknowledging the truth that it is God's presence and power alone which brings victory and honour. Rephidim was Israel's first experience in battle of a truth which is perhaps, more easily forgotten than remembered.

*"Yours, O LORD is the greatness, the power and the glory, the victory and the majesty...in your hand is power and might; **in your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all.**"* 1 Chronicles 29: 11-12.

5. Christ Jesus our Lord - the present victory Romans 8: 31-39

"Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph through Christ..." 2 Corinthians 2:14

The last nine verses of chapter 8 are an impressive finale to the catalogue of truths which Paul sets out for the Roman Christians:

- i. ...no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus... v. 1
- ii. ...the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus... v. 2
- iii. ...we are children of God... v. 16
- iv. ...conformed to the image of His Son... v. 29

The whole chapter is a recital of praise. It lists the blessings we have received from God through His Son and ends with Paul's own testimony to the all-powerful and always present love of God in the Lord Jesus Christ.

"What shall we say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?" These are the words of victory. There is nothing we need fear. Like Israel fighting against the Amalekites, we need to understand that God is much more than our support or our helper (although He is all of these things). God has redeemed us from the power of sin and Satan - we belong to Him, we are His people, He is our God - and because of this, no one and nothing can separate us from His love, v. 39.

In heaven, the Lord Jesus Christ is always speaking for His people, *"Who also makes intercession for us,"* v. 34. At Rephidim, the Israelite soldiers could look across to Moses, Aaron and Hur, faithfully holding up the staff of God and be encouraged by their steadfast prayers. So too, the Church and every individual believer can be strengthened and comforted by the knowledge that the Holy Spirit and the Lord Jesus Christ are praying for us - Romans 8:26, 34, cp. Hebrews 7: 25.

Can we doubt God's love and care? Can we doubt God's power to save and keep us? The proof is there to reassure our faith - *"He did not spare His own Son..."* God gave the very best He had, in order that everything necessary for our salvation should be accomplished at Calvary. Day by day we can prove the presence and the power of the Saviour's eternal love and *through Him* be more than conquerors in the often times battle of life. For Christ **Himself** is our banner, our rallying point, our victory, our Jehovah Nissi.

6. Our Lord Jesus Christ - the final victory

1 Corinthians 15: 50-58

“But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Paul dealt with the subject of the resurrection in chapter 15, giving hope and encouragement to the believers. Some had asked, “How are the dead raised?” and Paul answered their questions with an image of the harvest and the contrast between natural bodies and spiritual bodies, v35-49. He concluded with the straightforward fact that *“Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God,”* v. 50. Our bodies are corruptible, liable to decay and as such cannot enter into the eternal state. God’s intention is that we shall all be changed - receiving through His power, bodies which are appropriate for eternity. The change will be affected in a moment, both for the dead and the living, at the end of time when *“death will be swallowed up in victory.”* *Isaiah 25: 8.* For the believer, there is no fear in death; sorrow often - in this life - but the sting of death is removed by the knowledge of eventual resurrection into everlasting life.

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast...always abounding in the work of the Lord ...” Having encouraged the Christians with thoughts of their eternal future, Paul throws down the challenge for the present. We have a sure hope and a life which, through the Lord, can be characterised by victory. Knowing all this, our lives and service for Him should reflect the loyalty and dedication of grateful servants, who give and give again to the God Who Himself - **is giving** us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

JEHOVAH NISSI - THE LORD IS MY BANNER

EXAM 7

(Use EXAM FORM A on the website menu)

Choose the correct answer.

1. God provided the Israelites with meat and bread
 - a. at Marah
 - b. in the wilderness of Sin
 - c. at Elim
 - d. in Rephidim

2. In all the varied circumstances of their journeys, God was testing the Israelites to see whether they
 - a. loved Him
 - b. trusted Him
 - c. were willing to obey Him
 - d. all of the above

3. When attacking the Israelites, Amalek’s strategy was to
 - a. wait in ambush
 - b. confront the people head on
 - c. attack the stragglers in the rear
 - d. infiltrate the camp

4. The final battle against Israel will take place in
 - a. the valley of Jericho
 - b. the valley of Jiphthah-el
 - c. the valley of Jehoshaphat
 - d. the valley of Jordan
5. The rod, held aloft by Moses, was a symbol of God's power over
 - a. Israel
 - b. Amalek
 - c. Every nation
 - d. Egypt
6. Israel's victory was achieved through
 - a. the persistence of prayer
 - b. the faith of the soldiers
 - c. the presence and power of Jehovah
 - d. all of the above
7. 'There is therefore now no condemnation to those...'
 - a. who live good lives
 - b. who keep the ten commandments
 - c. who are in Christ Jesus
 - d. who are members of a church
8. We can be encouraged by the fact that when we pray, we are helped in our praying by
 - a. The Holy Spirit
 - b. The angels
 - c. The Lord Jesus Christ
 - d. All of the above
9. When Paul explained the nature of resurrection he used the image of
 - a. the olive tree
 - b. sowing a seed
 - c. a child in the womb
 - d. a vine and its fruit
10. 'We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed...'
 - a. in a moment
 - b. in the twinkling of an eye
 - c. at the last trumpet
 - d. all of the above

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

In what ways is the Lord Jesus Christ our Jehovah Nissi?

LESSON 8. JEHOVAH M'KADDESH - THE LORD WHO SANCTIFIES

1. The Holy One of Israel Isaiah 45: 20-25

“Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, ‘I am the LORD your God...who leads you by the way you should go,’” Isaiah 48: 17.

The name Jehovah M’Kaddesh is never written in scripture, as for example, ‘Jehovah Jireh’ Genesis 22: 14. It is nevertheless the title which above all other names expresses the fundamental characteristic of deity - holiness.

In our Bibles the verbs translated ‘to sanctify/to be holy’ mean in the original Hebrew, ‘to be consecrated, to be set apart.’ This is the true definition of the words whether in relation to God, to people, to places or to events.

When Isaiah received his call to serve the Lord (Adonai - Master), he was granted a vision of the three times holy LORD of hosts, Isaiah 6: 1-8. It was a vision which remained with him to the end of his life - the throne, ‘high and lifted up’, the very doorposts of the temple shaken by the voices of the seraphim, their eyes shielded from the glories of God’s holiness. Time and again, Isaiah would refer to the LORD as the Holy One of Israel - the One set apart from all things, for He created all things - unique, eternal, all-powerful.

As Isaiah was caught up in this vision of holiness, he knew, he felt his sinfulness - he was in the presence of the righteous God, where no corruption or impurity or any form of evil could exist. Set apart from the gods of the heathen and their immoral and depraved theology, the LORD must be worshipped ‘in the beauty of holiness’ Psalm 96:8-10.

2. The LORD who sanctifies Deuteronomy 26: 16-19

a. The nation of Israel - sanctified to the LORD

*“Consecrate yourselves therefore and be holy, for I am the LORD your God. And you shall keep my statutes and perform them: I am the LORD who **sanctifies** you.”* Leviticus 20: 8.

The Israelites were on the borders of the Promised Land. After forty years wandering in the wilderness (because of their lack of faith) it was time to enter into all that God had in mind for them. They were a privileged people and they would not only inherit a land but *could* become a powerful nation. Israel had declared that Jehovah was their God - they were ready to obey Him. Jehovah had declared them to be His special people - He was ready to bless them and enable them to become a leader amongst the nations. Assured by God’s own word that they were a nation set apart to God, nevertheless Moses had to warn Israel that their words were not enough, *“Therefore, **you shall be careful to observe them** (these statutes and judgments) with all your heart and with all your soul...”* v. 16.

Jehovah M’Kaddesh made demands on His people. He had delivered them out of slavery and cared for them in the wilderness; He had made a covenant with them and become their God; He had shown them His willingness to bless them and to prosper them in every conceivable way. But He was holy and as such, He expected His people to be like Him. And they *would* be like Him if they kept His laws and walked in His ways, Leviticus 11: 44, 20: 7-8. Holiness can only be attained through obedience and respect for the laws of the Holy One. Israel needed to be set apart in practice as well as in name, Deuteronomy 28: 9-14.

b. People, places, times, things - sanctified to the LORD

Only one nation in history - Israel - has ever been set apart by God for Himself, only one people - the Jews - can claim to be 'a special treasure above all peoples on the face of the earth' Deuteronomy 7:6. However, there have been many individuals set apart by the LORD, many places and things which are holy to the LORD, many feasts and fasts which the LORD has sanctified.

i. A person Jeremiah 1: 4-10

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations." Like Isaiah, Jeremiah was given a special call to service - set apart, even before his birth, to serve the LORD in a particular way. His was the task of telling the nation of Israel - known to God as 'holiness to the LORD' Jeremiah 2: 2-3 - that their behaviour and attitude had caused great sorrow to Jehovah. They had become 'unholy', having failed in their promises to obey His law and keep themselves apart from the idolatry and lifestyle of the surrounding nations.

ii. A city Psalm 132: 13-18

"For the LORD has chosen Zion (Jerusalem): He has desired it for His dwelling place." David's psalm of praise reflects the mind and heart of God for the city of Jerusalem - He loves it more than any other place on the earth, Psalm 87:1-3. In the last days the Lord Jesus Christ will return to Jerusalem, and in that day *"Jerusalem shall be called the City of Truth...the Holy Mountain"* - forever set apart for the LORD, Isaiah 62:11-12, Zechariah 8:3.

iii. A day Exodus 31: 13-17

"Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy..."

When God rested on the seventh day, after His work of creation, He set it apart from the other six days. Established as a law at Sinai - it was to become a day of rest for the nation of Israel and also a perpetual link between the people and their God, Ezekiel 20: 20. Sadly, the people despised the Sabbath and showed no respect for the day and no fear of God. What was important to the LORD was of no importance to them. If they had *"called the Sabbath a delight, the holy day of the LORD...not doing (their) own ways..."* God would have blessed and rewarded them, Isaiah 58: 13-14.

iv. A place and its contents Exodus 40: 1-16

"And you shall take the anointing oil, and anoint the tabernacle and all that is in it; and you shall hallow it and all its utensils, and it shall be holy."

When the tabernacle was completed and set up, this great tent of meeting was set apart for the LORD. It was to be a place of worship for the nation while they were in the wilderness and Moses was instructed to anoint everything - from the golden altar to the smallest utensil. Not only the priests - Aaron and his sons - but their robes as well. In fact, engraved on a gold plate attached to the High Priest's turban were the words, 'HOLINESS TO THE LORD', Exodus 28: 36-38.

These few examples will be enough to show that whether a person, a place, a time or a thing was sanctified - in every instance the holiness was because of contact with or relationship to the LORD - Jehovah who sanctifies. And as the people received God's Word through the

prophets, worshipped in the Tabernacle, celebrated the feasts, kept the Sabbath and eventually had Jerusalem as their chief city, they would have constant reminders that the nation of Israel, was set apart to the LORD.

But their consecration was not for their benefit alone. The LORD's intention was that Israel should be a witness to other nations of the one true God and all that He is, in wisdom, understanding and righteousness. And by their witness bring truth and blessing to those who were still in bondage to their idols, without hope or guidance, Deuteronomy 4: 6-7 cp. Ephesians 2: 11-12.

3. The Lord Jesus Christ

a. Sanctified by the Father John 10: 22-40

"Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness more than your companions." Hebrews 1: 9

This quotation in the Hebrew epistle is taken from Psalm 45 and announces the fulfilment of the Old Testament prophecy concerning the Messiah (the Anointed One). The outward sign of sanctification was always through an anointing with oil and highlighted the individual as one who was commissioned for God's service, e.g. Exodus 28:41, priests; 1 Samuel 16:1, kings.

The anointing of the Lord Jesus Christ was different from all others because of who He is - the eternal Son of God, whose kingdom is righteousness - the One, who *"loved righteousness and hated lawlessness"*, Hebrews 1:8-9. In John's gospel, the Lord Himself speaks of being set apart by God the Father when answering the accusations of the Jews. They hated Him and wanted to destroy Him and were questioning His divine commission, *"If you are the Christ (the Anointed One), tell us plainly..."* But although the Lord gave His miracles as proof that He was who He said He was and that His Father had sent Him into the world to give eternal life to all who believe in Him - the Jews would not accept His testimony.

b. Anointed by the Holy Spirit Luke 3: 21-22, 4: 16-21

From His conception and birth the Lord Jesus Christ had been described as 'the Holy One' Luke 1:35. But there was a public anointing of the Lord Jesus Christ which took place at His baptism. The heavens were opened, the voice of God was heard and the Holy Spirit, in the form of a dove, rested upon Him, symbolically setting the Lord apart for the service of God. The significance of this event was explained by the Lord when He quoted from the prophecy of Isaiah, in the synagogue at Nazareth. He was about to commence His public ministry and made it clear to all who would listen and believe, there in His home town in Galilee, that He was the Messiah, the Anointed One, *"Today, this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."*

4. The Lord Jesus Christ The One who sanctifies

Hebrews 10: 1-14

"For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified"

The purpose of the Lord's coming into our world, the purpose of His sanctification was the redemption of mankind. In order that 'the world' might be saved, the Lord needed a body, He needed to die, to shed His blood, *"...and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness,"* Hebrews 9:22. On the night He was betrayed, Jesus prayed for His disciples, calling to mind the fact that He had sanctified Himself for their sakes, John 17:19. Consciously setting Himself apart for the work of salvation, *"holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners...higher than the heavens,"* Hebrews 7:26.

Paul reminds the Corinthians that the Lord Jesus Christ has the power to be all things to the believer, 1 Corinthians 1:30. Through Him we have received redemption, righteousness and sanctification. If we enjoy and appreciate the peace and forgiveness which comes with our redemption and righteousness, we must also be ready to face the challenge which comes with our sanctification. Are we prepared to progress from theory to practice, from words to actions. In the light of *His* sacrifice, are we willing to “*present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.*” Romans 12:1-2.

“...Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word...that she should be holy and without blemish.”

Ephesians 5:25-27.

Our Jehovah M’Kaddesh, the LORD who sanctifies.

JEHOVAH M’KADDESH - THE LORD WHO SANCTIFIES

EXAM 8

(Use EXAM FORM A on the website menu)

Choose the correct answer.

1. In our Bibles the meaning of ‘to sanctify/to be holy’ is
 - a. to be consecrated
 - b. to be pious
 - c. to be self righteous
 - d. to be set apart
2. According to Psalm 96: 1-10 we must worship the LORD
 - a. with a new song
 - b. on the mountains
 - c. in the beauty of holiness
 - d. in the streets of the city
3. God is set apart from all other gods because He is
 - a. Eternal
 - b. All powerful
 - c. Absolutely righteous
 - d. All of the above
4. God promised Israel in Deuteronomy 26:19 that if they obeyed His commandments He would
 - a. make them more prosperous than other nations
 - b. make them more powerful than other nations
 - c. make them popular amongst the nations
 - d. make them higher in name and honour than all other nations
5. Jehovah set apart to Himself
 - a. the prophet Jeremiah
 - b. the Sabbath day
 - c. the city of Jerusalem
 - d. all of the above

6. The outward sign of sanctification was through
 - a. sprinkling with water
 - b. a public announcement
 - c. anointing with oil
 - d. laying on of hands

7. The consecration of something was always because of contact with or relationship to Jehovah. It could be
 - a. a person
 - b. a place
 - c. a day
 - d. all of the above

8. The title 'Christ' means
 - a. The Servant
 - b. The Anointed One
 - c. The King
 - d. The Messiah

9. When and where was the Lord's public anointing?
 - a. At His first miracle, in Cana
 - b. At His baptism in the river Jordan
 - c. At His birth in Bethlehem
 - d. When He preached for the first time at the synagogue in Nazareth

10. According to Paul, our reasonable service is
 - a. to present our bodies as a living sacrifice
 - b. to refuse to be conformed to this world
 - c. to be willing to be transformed
 - d. all of the above

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

Jesus prayed in John 17:17 "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth". How does the Word of God sanctify us?

LESSON 9. JEHOVAH SHALOM - THE LORD IS PEACE

Introduction

When the LORD confirmed His relationship with Israel and set up the tabernacle and the priesthood, He determined that Aaron and subsequent high priests would always bless the nation in a particular way. *"Speak to Aaron and his sons saying, 'This is the way you shall bless the children of Israel...*

The LORD bless you and keep you;

The LORD make His face to shine upon you,

And be gracious to you;

The LORD lift up His countenance upon you,

And give you peace."

Numbers 6: 23-26.

The word for peace, 'shalom' can be understood in many different ways - wholeness and completeness, peace and perfection, to prosper, to recompense, to reward. The basic meaning is of completing a work, bringing harmony to a relationship because of a debt paid, a work well done. And this is what the LORD had done for Israel - He had bought His people out of slavery in Egypt and now His will for them in the land of Canaan was peace and prosperity and His Presence (which is peace), *"I will give peace in the land...and none shall make you afraid...I will walk among you and be your God and you shall be My people,"* Leviticus 26: 6, 12-13.

But why was God's promise of peace not always granted to the land or its people? What went wrong with the relationship? The remainder of Leviticus 26 will give us the reasons – *"But if you do not obey Me... I will set my face against you..."* v.14-17. The face of the LORD - which was to shine upon the nation in blessing and peace - would be turned away from His people. However, although sin and disobedience grieved and angered the LORD, it could not disturb His own peace - the perfect balance in the Divine nature can never be unsettled or destroyed.

2. Israel - a nation without peace Judges 2: 6-23

"And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel. So He delivered them into the hands of plunderers who despoiled them; and He sold them into the hands of their enemies all around so they could no longer stand before their enemies." (v. 14)

The book of Judges takes up the history of Israel from the time of Joshua's death - its theme is one of failure. The problem for God's people was their attitude. The tribes went against Jehovah's express command to exterminate the Canaanites. Instead, they put the local people to forced labour and taxation and accepted their presence in the land, Judges 1: 27-28. As Moses had warned them before they entered into Canaan, these associations would lead the nation into idolatry and all the vile practices which were part of the worship of Baal, Deuteronomy 7: 1-6. But the LORD allowed the Canaanites to stay, because through them He was able to test His people - to see whether they would honour their promise to Him, remember His love and mercy and keep themselves from idol worship.

If their conduct brought down Jehovah's anger and judgement on Israel, His love and faithfulness towards them were never lacking. When the people could bear their punishment no longer and they cried to the LORD to save them, He would send a leader from amongst the tribes who was able to bring a measure of peace and prosperity to the land. These 'judges' would sometimes govern the people as well as lead them in battle and their powerful influence on the nation would create a measure of faithfulness and obedience to the LORD, e.g. Deborah, Judges 4: 4-5. But only for a time – *"So the land had rest for forty years. Then Othniel the son of Kenaz died. And the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord..."* Judges 3:11-12. This was the pattern, repeated again and again - alternating sin and oppression with repentance and peace.

3. Joash the Abiezrite - a family without peace Judges 6: 1-13.

"O my lord, if the LORD is with us, why then has all this happened to us? But now the LORD has forsaken us and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites." Judges 6: 13.

Two centuries had passed by since the LORD had revealed Himself to His people as Jehovah M'Kaddesh - the LORD who sanctifies, who made a covenant with Israel and set them apart to Himself. As God's chosen people they were privileged above all other nations, but had failed in their responsibility to live in a way which reflected His Name. The image of Gideon - hidden

away, beating out some wheat for his family in fear of the Midianites - is a graphic illustration of the nation as a whole. Although the land belonged to them by divine right, they had forfeited their claim to it because of their disobedience to the LORD. Constant harassment by the Midianites made daily life a misery, resulting in near famine conditions. All that the people possessed through Jehovah, in His Name -

- a. Jehovah Jireh His power to provide
- b. Jehovah Rophe His power to heal
- c. Jehovah Nissi His ability to give them victory in battle

- all these blessings had been forfeited, because they had ignored.

His commandment as Jehovah M'Kaddesh, *"You shall be holy (set apart), for I the LORD your God am holy."* The gods of the Amorites were feared more than Jehovah and His anger was aroused in the face of a degenerate and loathsome idol worship, Psalm 106: 34-42.

God had waited for the people to realise that they were unable to save themselves and when they eventually pleaded with the LORD for deliverance, He sent them a prophet who gave them the reason for their troubles, *"But you have not obeyed my voice."* Judges 6: 6-10. God's punishments are never arbitrary; His disciplines are always for good. *"My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, nor detest His correction; for whom the LORD loves He corrects, just as a father the son in whom he delights."*

Proverbs 3: 11-12.

The drift toward idolatry was widespread - there was no sense of spiritual or political unity amongst the tribes and the Bible calls it a time when *"everyone did what was right in their own eyes,"* Judges 21:25. So when Gideon's father, Joash, built an altar to Baal for his household, 6:25, it seems there was no realisation that this was a cardinal sin against Jehovah. Otherwise why should Gideon have struggled with the fact that the LORD had abandoned His people? But this was a young man who was beginning to think matters through - he cared for the nation as well as his own family and looked for an answer to his question, *"Why then has all this happened to US?"*

Disobedience and sheer stubbornness had resulted in affliction and adversity for the people. Nevertheless, Jehovah remained faithful to His covenant and His Name and in answer to their cries for help He prepared to deliver and bless the nation through Gideon. At this time they were virtual refugees in their own land, distressed and alarmed by the constant attacks of the Midianites and filled with fear and anxiety, 6: 1-4. They needed a fresh revelation of Jehovah, the only One who could save them out of their dire situation.

4. Gideon - a man without peace Judges 6: 14-24

"O my Lord, how can I save Israel? Indeed my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house." 6: 15.

Gideon would have felt nothing like a mighty man of valour as he beat out the pathetic amount of wheat he had managed to save. And yet, this one who admitted to being least in his father's house must have sensed that the man who stood before him and addressed him as a hero had an air of authority. There was no answer given to his enquiry as to why Jehovah had abandoned them, only a command, *"Go in this might of yours and you shall save Israel...have not I sent you?"*

It was natural for Gideon to experience fear at the thought of having seen the eternal God. *“Alas, O Lord GOD - Adonai Jehovah...”* v.22. But alongside that fear was a positive response to the will and word of God. For this was a title which acknowledged Jehovah as Sovereign Lord and Master (Adonai) and when He called, He would equip for the task, however daunting, however difficult.

God always takes account of the fears of His people and He promised Gideon that although he had been in the presence of Jehovah, he would not die. Filled now with divine strength for a mission which would transform his life and the life of the nation, Gideon built an altar and called it ‘Jehovah Shalom, the LORD is peace.’ Gideon’s altar, like the altar built to Jehovah Nissi, was not a place of sacrifice, but a memorial to the LORD, Whose name is peace. Jehovah is the source of true peace and the only One able to impart it to His people. And it would be a reminder too, that God’s thoughts and plans for an individual as well as a nation are always shalom.

“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you” says the LORD, “thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope,” Jeremiah 29: 11.

5. The Lord Jesus Christ

a. Peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ Colossians 1: 12-23

“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ...” Romans 5:1

In the early chapters of Luke’s gospel, we read of the miraculous conception and birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, referred to Him as the One who had come *‘to guide our feet into the way of peace.’* And the angels, at the very moment of His birth, praised God and said, *“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!”* Luke 1:79, 2:14. A child had been born in Bethlehem whose name would be called the Prince of Peace, Isaiah 9: 6.

It is important to understand the difference between peace *with* God and the peace *of* God. In the epistles to the Romans and Colossians Paul is dealing with the fact of our salvation - our being reconciled to God - this is peace *with* God. All those who have accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour have this peace - sins are forgiven and the sinner is pronounced not guilty. In Colossians we read that *“...it pleased the Father that in Him (the Lord Jesus Christ) all the fulness should dwell and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself (God)...having made peace through the blood of His cross,”* 1:19-20. The word ‘fulness’ expresses all that is contained in the divine nature - righteousness, mercy, power, grace, peace, love and much, much more. And all this fulness was poured into the work of reconciliation - making peace with God possible for a rebellious and thoughtless sinner, *“But God demonstrates His own love towards us, in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us,”* Romans 5:8. God Himself initiated our peace and the Lord Jesus Christ made the peace possible. Father and Son together - our Jehovah Shalom.

The Lord Jesus Christ – the peace of God John 14: 25-27 Philippians 4: 4-7

“Jesus said... ‘These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace...’” John 16:33

Just as Gideon needed the revelation of Jehovah Shalom and His peace, so also the disciples - with the prospect of the death of Jesus ahead - needed to be assured that His peace was there

for them. *“Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you; not as the world gives, do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid,”* John 14:27. The peace of the Saviour is not something which is controlled by circumstances - it is something far deeper and much more than a mere feeling of tranquillity. It is a peace which has its source in trusting God, whatever the situation; it is a way of life, even in the midst of the fear and conflict which so often marks the state of the world and our own small lives. This gift of the Saviour’s peace - the peace of God - is there for us all.

Although every believer has peace *with* God, not every believer has this peace *of* God in his or her life. Paul encourages the Philippians to take *“everything to God in prayer...be anxious for nothing.”* And the result of their prayers will be the peace of God *“which surpasses all understanding... through Christ Jesus”* - the One who promised His disciples a peace which the world cannot give or even understand.

Jehovah’s desire for His people Israel was always shalom - peace, quietness, rest, harmony, satisfaction; it was conditional upon their trust in Him and their obedience to the law. So too our own daily inner peace depends upon our confidence in the Father and our response to His word, Isaiah 26:3, Psalm 119:165.

Paul wrote two letters to the believers in Thessalonica and ended each one with a challenging and comforting benediction:

*“Now may the **God of peace** Himself sanctify you completely: and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,”* 1 Thessalonians 5:23.

*“Now may the **Lord of peace** Himself give you peace always in every way. The Lord be with you all.”* 2 Thessalonians 3:16.

The God of peace and the Lord of peace - Father and Son together, our Jehovah Shalom.

JEHOVAH SHALOM - THE LORD IS PEACE

EXAM 9

(Use EXAM FORM A on the website menu)

Choose the correct answer.

1. The word ‘shalom’ can be understood as
 - a. to prosper
 - b. peace and perfection
 - c. completeness
 - d. all of the above
2. The basic meaning of ‘shalom’ is
 - a. an expression of blessing for the future
 - b. to bring harmony to a relationship
 - c. a thanksgiving for blessings
 - d. completing a work

3. The theme in the book of Judges is
 - a. victory and success
 - b. peace and prosperity
 - c. obedience and fulfilment
 - d. failure and disobedience

4. The Israelites failed to
 - a. be at peace amongst themselves
 - b. cultivate the land properly
 - c. exterminate the Canaanites
 - d. appoint tribal chiefs

5. When faced with a Midianite invasion the Israelites
 - a. went out to fight them
 - b. made a treaty with them
 - c. hid in caves in the mountains
 - d. became their servants

6. The LORD's punishment or correction is always
 - a. for our good
 - b. as from a father to a son
 - c. because He loves us
 - d. all of the above

7. Zacharias prophesied that Jesus would guide our
 - a. lives into the way of fulfilment
 - b. hearts into the way of sacrifice
 - c. feet into the way of peace
 - d. spirits into the way of worship

8. Our peace with God comes through
 - a. daily prayer
 - b. the blood of Jesus Christ
 - c. meeting God's standards in life
 - d. living according to the sermon on the mount

9. In his letter to the Philippians Paul encourages us to
 - a. rejoice in the Lord always
 - b. be anxious for nothing
 - c. let our requests be made known to God
 - d. all of the above

10. John 16: 33. In Jesus we have peace, in the world we will have...
 - a. satisfaction
 - b. anticipation
 - c. tribulation
 - d. all of the above

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

What is the difference between peace **with** God and the peace **of** God?

LESSON 10. JEHOVAH TSIDKENU - THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS

The meaning of righteousness

Deuteronomy 32: 1-4 Psalm 119: 137-144

When the Israelite nation stood on the borders of the Promised Land, Moses gave them his final instructions. He began by calling upon the heavens and the earth to hear his teaching, a witness to what he was about to say - in detail - to the people he had led for over 40 years. And then he 'proclaimed the name of Jehovah',

*"...Ascribe greatness to our God.
He is the Rock, His work is perfect;
For all His ways are justice (just/righteous),
A God of truth and without injustice;
Righteous and upright is He."
Deuteronomy 32: 3-4.*

The words translated 'righteousness, righteous, just and justice' in the Bible all have their roots in the Hebrew word 'tsadak', which conveys the idea of being right or making right, morally; i.e. conforming to the straight line of God's law; living according to His commandments. The writer of Psalm 119 speaks of his love for the law and a longing that he might understand it, v144. Others had that desire as well. The only man who ever kept God's law perfectly, said in answer to the Pharisees' question, "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?"

"You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind...you shall love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." Matthew 22: 34-40.

The Pharisees were both scrupulous and strict in their adherence to God's commandments, cp. Matthew 23:23. Jesus was instructing these men, that in order to keep the righteous law of God day by day **in the way which He intended**, they must take hold of its spirit as well as its letter. They needed to recognise that God's **love** was present within His commandments; they needed to be loving as well as righteous towards their neighbours, cp. Luke 10: 25-37. All the commandments are important but they must be seen and understood in the context of love, cp. 1 Corinthians 13. When love is absent, injustice is done - whether to God or to individuals or to society as a whole. Obeying God's commandments without acting in love towards Him or towards our neighbours is not acceptable to the Lord - it is an offence to all that God is. *"...God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in Him," 1 John 4: 16.*

2. The practice of righteousness Deuteronomy 6:1-9

Only as we consider God's character as revealed in His words and His works, can we understand the true nature of righteousness. The law, which was given in love, was for the care and blessing of His people - standards were set, which if adhered to, would result in a peaceful and prosperous society.

i. Righteousness in public life Deuteronomy 25: 13-16.

"You shall not have in your bag differing weights, a heavy and a light...you shall have a perfect and just weight, a perfect and just measure...for all who do such things, all who behave unrighteously, are an abomination to the LORD your God."

ii. Righteousness in national life Deuteronomy 16: 18.

“You shall appoint judges and officers in all your gates, which the LORD your God gives you, according to your tribes, and they shall judge the people with just (righteous) judgment.”

iii. Righteousness in private life Deuteronomy 16: 20-22.

“You shall follow what is altogether just (righteous)...you shall not plant for yourself any tree as a wooden image near the altar which you build for yourself to the LORD your God.”

iv. Righteousness towards the LORD Deuteronomy 12:10-11.

“...There you shall bring all that I command you: your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes, the heave offerings of your hand all your choice offerings which you vow to the Lord.”

3. The unrighteousness of Judah Jeremiah 3: 6-10

“Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.” Proverbs 14: 34.

The proverb quoted above is an apt description of the nation of Judah, during the time of Jeremiah. They should have been a people who *“walk O LORD, in the light of Your countenance. In Your Name they rejoice all day long, and in Your righteousness they are exalted.”* Psalm 89:14-16.

Over one hundred years before, the northern nation of Israel had been taken into captivity by the Assyrians. Their fate was a clear warning to the southern kingdom of Judah, whose blatant idolatry and defiant attitude towards Jehovah was bringing them ever closer to His righteous judgment.

The people’s behaviour mirrored their attitude towards the LORD and His commandments; they refused to rejoice in His Name, they had long ago stopped obeying His Word.

a. Jehovah Jireh - **THEY HAD NO TIME** for the One Who had redeemed them from slavery in Egypt and provided them with all that they would need in the land of Israel, *“I brought you into a bountiful country to eat its fruit and goodness,”* Jeremiah 2: 4-8.

b. Jehovah Rophe - the prophet Isaiah had described the nation’s pitiful spiritual state as a body full of wounds and bruises and putrefying sores. But unaware of their true condition the rebellious people **FELT NO NEED** for the One who would heal them, *“...they have not been closed or bound up or soothed with ointment,”* Isaiah 1: 2-6.

c. Jehovah Nissi - in the throes of their own foreign policies, the Judean kings **WOULD NOT LISTEN** to the One who alone could bring them victory, *“Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help...but who do not look to the Holy One of Israel nor seek the LORD!”* Isaiah 31: 1.

d. Jehovah M’Kaddesh - the people **REFUSED TO BE SET APART** to Jehovah, intermarrying with the local people and being drawn into the worship of foreign gods, *“...but they mingled with the Gentiles...and served their gods,”* Psalm 106: 34-40.

e. Jehovah Shalom - the nation **PREFERRED TO LISTEN TO FALSE PROPHETS** and their lies. All hope of peace was gone, for Jehovah had removed His peace from the people and left them to take the consequences of their idolatry, *“...saying ‘Peace, peace!’ When there is no peace,”* Jeremiah 6: 13-14, 16: 5-6.

This then was the state of the people - corrupt, unrighteous, through and through. Separated from the Righteous One by their habitual sin and constant idolatry, the very concept as well as the practice of righteousness “stands afar off,” Isaiah 59:14. It was time for the LORD to remind them of His righteousness and the power of the One whose name is Jehovah-Tsidkenu.

4. Jehovah-Tsidkenu - the LORD our Righteousness

a. The source of righteousness Psalm 89: 11-18

“Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; mercy and truth go before your face.”

The book of psalms is full of references to the righteousness of God. They are not hymns of theory and possibility; they constantly reflect the *experience* of believers who rejoiced in Jehovah-Tsidkenu and in many other aspects of His character. But more than that, the psalms reflect their *knowledge and appreciation* of all that the LORD had done in the past, ‘they realise in the present, what they have inherited from the past.’ God was known to them, in a personal way and they could rejoice in the assurance that a righteous God would always do right - He would judge righteously, He would lead them in paths of righteousness - because of **HIS NAME’S SAKE**. This must give confidence to everyone who looks to the LORD for guidance - surrounded as we are by falling standards in society and the multitude of directions given by unrighteous men. No wonder the psalms are full of praise and thankfulness to the LORD as well as requests for His guidance and help: -

“Lead me, O LORD in your righteousness...make your way straight before my face” Psalm 5: 8.

“O continue your loving kindness to those who know you, and your righteousness to the upright in heart” Psalm 36: 10.

“According to your Name, O God, so is your praise in all the earth; your right hand is full of righteousness” Psalm 48: 10.

“One generation shall praise your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts...they shall utter the memory of your great goodness and shall sing of your righteousness” Psalm 145: 4-7.

b. The King of righteousness Jeremiah 23:1-8, 31:31-34.

“Behold...I will raise to David, a Branch of Righteousness.”

The LORD’S anger and sorrow at the failure of the shepherds of Israel - kings, prophets and priests - to care for His people, was to result in 70 years exile in Babylon for the nation of Judah. But alongside His judgment was this promise of mercy. A King, of the House of David, would reign over a restored nation in wisdom and righteousness, bringing life and prosperity to the people. At the same time, Jehovah would make a new covenant with His people - writing His law in their minds and hearts - *“for they all shall know me...for I will forgive their iniquity and their sin I will remember no more.”*

This is a Messianic prophecy and is yet to be fulfilled. It looks forward to the day when the Lord Jesus Christ will save and deliver His people from their enemies and enable them to live as they always should have done, as a blessing to the Gentile nations, Zechariah 8: 7-8, 13-17.

c. The city of righteousness Jeremiah 33: 14-18

“Thus says the LORD, ‘I will return to Zion and dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. Jerusalem shall be called the City of Truth...and I will be their God in truth and righteousness,’” Zechariah 8: 1-5.

Both Jeremiah and Zechariah look forward to the day when Messiah will return and set up His throne in the centre of Jerusalem. In that day the city will reflect all the moral glories of her King and be known by His Name. *“And this is the name by which she will be called, The LORD our Righteousness.”*

5. The Lord Jesus Christ

“...and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God, by faith” Philippians 3: 9.

a. His righteousness before God Hebrews 1: 8-9

Paul knew that *“there is none righteous, no not one...”* Romans 3: 10. Many of his contemporaries (himself included) tried to prove their own righteousness before God, by keeping the law to the highest standard possible. But only one Man has ever and could ever live up to God’s perfect standard; only one Man could ever be called ‘the Holy One and the Just (Righteous)’; only one Man’s righteousness was a perfect, true representation of Jehovah-Tsidkenu - and that Man is the Lord Jesus Christ, Acts 3:14, Hebrews 1: 1-4.

i. His righteousness was declared in His life, *“You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased,”* Luke 3:21.

ii. It was spoken of in His death, *“So when the centurion saw what had happened, he glorified God, saying, “Certainly this was a righteous Man,”* Luke 23:47.

It was confirmed by His resurrection and ascension, *“...His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. This Jesus, God has raised up...being exalted to the right hand of God...”* Acts 2:31-33.

b. Our righteousness in Him 2 Corinthians 5: 17-21

When the Lord Jesus Christ was crucified, God was in fact, judging sin and punishing His Son, in place of us. Because of this, we can by faith, receive forgiveness for our sins and more than that - we are now righteous in God’s sight. This righteousness is not through our own feeble attempts at ‘being good’ for we can never attain to God’s perfect standard, but because God sees us now in Christ and therefore as righteous as Him. We have become, as Paul explains it, *“the righteousness of God, in Him,”* v21.

In his first letter to the Corinthians Paul reminds them that *“...of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God - and righteousness and sanctification and redemption - that, as it is written, ‘He who glories, let Him glory in the LORD.’”* 1 Corinthians 1: 30-31, Jeremiah 9: 23-24.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the source and provider of all that we are and have as Christians. We have been redeemed by His precious blood and set apart in righteousness to God - lives must be changed. Paul never minces his words - he tells the Roman believers that now, having been set free from sin, they have become ‘slaves of righteousness’ which leaves them in no doubt as to the manner of their lives, Romans 6:18-23.

“..that, as it is written, ‘He who glories, let him glory in the LORD.’” Finally, it is significant that Paul uses the term ‘the LORD, i.e. Jehovah,’ in his quotation from Jeremiah. The verses in the Old Testament end – *“‘I am the LORD, exercising loving kindness, judgment and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight,’ saith the LORD”* By using this term, Paul is applying the title and thus the attributes of Jehovah to the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ the Righteous – our Righteousness – our own Jehovah Tsidkenu.

JEHOVAH TSIDKENU - THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS
EXAM 10

(Use EXAM FORM A on the website menu)

Choose the correct answer.

1. According to Psalm 119, God's righteousness is
 - a. tender
 - b. fearful
 - c. everlasting
 - d. powerful

2. The Pharisees needed to be loving towards their neighbours as well as righteous. An illustration of this is found in the parable of
 - a. the lost sheep
 - b. the prodigal son
 - c. the good Samaritan
 - d. the rich farmer

3. Who were appointed to see that God's rules for private and public life were observed?
 - a. Priests in the temple courts
 - b. King and nobles at the palace
 - c. Judges and officers at the city gates
 - d. Prophets of God in the city squares

4. According to the Book of Proverbs a nation is exalted by
 - a. power
 - b. righteousness
 - c. wisdom
 - d. prosperity

5. Describing the state of unrighteous Judah, Isaiah said that "righteousness stands afar off /or at a distance", what does he say about "truth"?
 - a. it has fallen/stumbled in the street
 - b. it has escaped/been driven from the city
 - c. it has been destroyed/is nowhere to be found
 - d. it has hidden its face from the people

6. The Psalms tell us that the people who wrote them
 - a. could only hope that God would act righteously
 - b. were quite sure that the righteous God would always act righteously
 - c. wanted God's guidance but were not sure how to get it
 - d. were disappointed in their experience of God

7. When the Messiah reigns in Jerusalem, the name of the city will be
 - a. The LORD our Peace
 - b. The LORD our Victory
 - c. The LORD our Righteousness
 - d. The LORD our Shepherd

8. The writer to the Hebrews describes the Lord Jesus Christ as
 - a. the brightness of God's glory
 - b. the express image of His person
 - c. upholding all things by the word of His power
 - d. all of the above

9. "Certainly this was a righteous man". Who said these words?
 - a. A disciple at the cross
 - b. The thief on the cross
 - c. A ruler passing by the cross
 - d. A centurion near the cross

10. Having been set free from sin, we serve a new master and are now slaves/servants of
 - a. the law
 - b. righteousness
 - c. obedience
 - d. holiness

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

Are you righteous enough to go to heaven?

LESSON 11. JEHOVAH ROHI - THE LORD MY SHEPHERD

1. Introduction Psalm 23

"The LORD is my Shepherd" Psalm 23:1

This lovely psalm, so well known and relevant to all life's experiences, has as its theme the shepherd care of Jehovah.

It is an intensely personal psalm, written by David, later king of Israel - a man who knew the LORD and who had himself been a shepherd. He transformed his own experience of caring for the flock into a poem of beauty and simplicity which has become one of the most famous hymns of assurance and thanksgiving to the LORD, the Shepherd of Israel.

Perhaps no other psalm has brought such comfort and encouragement to generations of God's people. It is a psalm which draws on the events of the past to give strength for the present and confidence for the future. The psalmist is apart with his LORD, reflecting on life. Line by line, we are able to echo his words - meditating on our own joys and sorrows, hopes and fears, while at the same time giving thanks for all that the LORD has done for us. This is a psalm which deals in a particular way for the whole person - spirit, soul and body - each part being upheld and cared for by the LORD.

The hymn writer wrote 'Join all the glorious names of wisdom, love and power' and in this Shepherd psalm, the names of Jehovah are linked together. We may tend to think of the attributes of Jehovah as separate qualities and virtues - imagining perhaps that some are more important than others. But in the mighty God, no attribute is more pronounced or important than another and all merge into a one perfect whole. He never changes, no shadows can spoil any aspect of His Name, He is absolutely trustworthy, He is *"the Father of lights with whom*

there is no variation or shadow of turning,” James 1:17. Psalm 23 gives us a glimpse of the perfect balance of His nature, the glory of His Person.

Jehovah Rohi - Shepherd Care
The Lord is my Shepherd

Jehovah Jireh - Provision
I shall not want

Jehovah Shalom - Peace
*He makes me to lie down in green pastures,
He leads me beside the still waters*

Jehovah Rophe - Healing
He restores my soul

Jehovah Tsidkenu - Righteousness
He leads me in paths of righteousness for His Name's sake

Jehovah Shammah - His Presence
Jehovah Nissi - His Strength and Victory
*Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil, for you are with me,
Your rod and Your staff they comfort me*

El-Shaddai - Nourishment and support, all sufficiency
You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies My cup runs over

Jehovah M'Kaddesh - Sanctification *You anoint my head with oil*

Jehovah - Personal relationship
*Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life;
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.*

Throughout the psalm the relationship of Master (Adonai) and servant is tangible, while overall is the eternal God, Elohim - the great Creator and Sustainer of all things.

The 23rd Psalm brings together so many of Jehovah's glorious Names, placed within the setting of perhaps the most familiar Name. It is theology par excellence and yet it has an appeal to all because it can be understood and experienced by all - the care and keeping of the Shepherd, His friendship and provision, His eternal presence. The imagery and language span the generations and through the Spirit of God its timeless message can deal with every need of the 21st century just as it met the needs of the people in David's time.

2. The responsibility of the Shepherd

“...you are My flock, the flock of My pasture...’ says the Lord GOD,” Ezekiel 34:31.

a. The Hebrew word, ro'eh, has as its primary meaning, 'to tend, to pasture a flock',
*“David...returned from Saul to feed - to **pasture** his father's sheep at Bethlehem” 1 Sam 17: 15.*

b. God used the word to describe the nature of David's reign over His people, "...you shall shepherd My people Israel, and be ruler over Israel" 2 Samuel 5: 2. The LORD Himself had always been a shepherd to His people. He had led them out of slavery in Egypt and in the wilderness He had exercised authority and control over Israel, while at the same time caring for them. Their wellbeing was always His responsibility and this pattern of true leadership was for every ruler to follow, prophet, priest or king. They were to govern, teach and nurture His people in His Name - "Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, You who lead Joseph like a flock," Psalm 80:1.

It was a pattern of care wholly familiar to David - a man whose daily occupation had been a total commitment to his sheep. Previously he had been accountable for the flock to his earthly father, Jesse, but for the nation, it would be to his heavenly Father, "...You O LORD, are our Father; Our Redeemer, from everlasting is Your name." Isaiah 63: 16. The evidence that David kept to the pattern is recorded in Psalm 78: 70-72, "He also chose David His servant...to shepherd Jacob His people...so he shepherded them according to the integrity of his heart..."

3. The relationship between the shepherd and his sheep Ezekiel 34.

"I will fear no evil; for you are with me: your rod and your staff they comfort me." Psalm 23: 4

Ro'eh can also be applied in the context of friendship, of close association and companionship; "So the LORD spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to a **friend**," Exodus 33: 11.

The word 'ro'eh' has both a physical and a spiritual aspect. Good shepherding involves hard physical work and includes the added dimension of a right attitude toward the sheep. Each animal must be of value to the shepherd - he will search for the lost, carry the weak, walk according to the needs of the ewes and the lambs, cp. Isaiah 40:11. This is no work for a hired man; sheep need their own shepherd. They need the company and care of a man who is their friend as well as their protector.

Ezekiel 34 reminds us of our own accountability as spiritual shepherds in the church, cp v.1-10. Not all have the responsibility of leading the people of God but there are many opportunities for shepherd care through the quiet association of friendship, often a means of encouragement and comfort, guidance and spiritual growth.

The special connection between the sheep and the shepherd finds its highest expression in the relationship between the nation of Israel and Jehovah. The LORD enumerates the failures of Israel's shepherds in graphic detail. Kings, priests and prophets - those who should have been caring for His people - were shown to be not only irresponsible, but positively evil, 34:1-4. In many respects, they were the cause of Israel and Judah's exile and dispersion and God holds them accountable for their actions. They will be judged because of the callous way they treated His people, "Behold, I am against the shepherds and I will require my flock at their hand..." v. 10. The eternal and faithful Shepherd, Jehovah Himself, will do all that is necessary for the restoration of Israel, finally putting them in the care of His Shepherd, the coming Messiah, "My Servant David. He shall feed them and be their Shepherd," v.11-16, 22-24.

His actions are a true echo of Psalm 23 and have not yet been realised in the measure described here. The complete fulfilment waits for the day when the Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah, Son of David will reign in the land of Israel, establishing His covenant of peace and blessing to the nation and to the world, v23-26, cp. Jeremiah 23:1-6.

4. The shepherd's presence with his sheep Exodus 29: 38-46
"And I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever," Psalm 23: 6

From the commencement of the LORD's relationship with Israel He had lived amongst His people. His presence with them was clearly illustrated by the tabernacle, that great 'Tent of Meeting' which was pitched in the centre of the Israelite camp. God had consecrated the tabernacle as His dwelling place; it was where He wanted to be. "I will dwell among the children of Israel and will be their God," Exodus 29:45.

As a shepherd He needed to be on hand, to guide and feed His people; they in turn needed to be aware of His presence and willingness to help them. "Give ear O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock; you who dwell between the cherubim, shine forth! Before Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, stir up your strength and come and save us!" Psalm 80: 1-2. The tribes were encouraged to call upon their God, to recognise His character and rely on His power. Just as Jacob, Moses and David, and many other individuals, had done in the past.

a. JACOB Genesis 48:15. Even before the nation of Israel had been formed, the father of the twelve tribes - Jacob, a shepherd himself - looked back on God's shepherd care which had continued throughout his life, "...God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has fed (ro'eh) me all my life long to this day."

b. MOSES Exodus 3: 1-4. Moses had practised the skills of a shepherd for forty years in preparation for his great task of leading the children of Israel out of slavery, through the wilderness and on to the borders of the Promised Land. At the end of his life, he acknowledged publicly the daily care of the Shepherd of Israel for His people. "For the LORD your God has blessed you in all the work of your hand. He knows your trudging through this great wilderness. These forty years the LORD your God has been with you; you have lacked nothing," Deuteronomy 2:7.

c. DAVID Psalm 23: 6. David in faith, could look forward as well as back, confident of God's eternal provision. He knew that shepherd care is an on-going discipline. The needs of the flock will vary - day by day, month by month, year on year - but the care of the flock is always the same, marked by a commitment to each individual sheep. David rejoiced that whatever the situation the LORD was with him. The goodness and mercy of Jehovah Rohi was present all the days of his life and would finally take him into heaven itself.

5. The Lord Jesus Christ - the Good Shepherd

"Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, against the Man who is My companion," says the LORD of Hosts. "Strike the Shepherd and the sheep will be scattered..." Zechariah 13: 7, cp. Matthew 26: 31-32.

a. The Shepherd who laid down His life John 10:1-13

Reading Psalm 23 in the light of all that we know of the Lord Jesus Christ, we can see how perfectly He fulfils every aspect of the shepherd's responsibility towards His flock. In John 10 He takes us to the final act of commitment, "...the good shepherd gives His life for the sheep." Normally the phrase would imply that a good shepherd would be prepared to give his life for his sheep, but for the Lord Jesus Christ the phrase means just what it says - His would be a deliberate sacrifice, v18. The Lord was in control of every situation - when Judas betrayed Him

and the Jews came to arrest Him, *"...all this was done that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled,"* Matthew 26: 56. And in reading Isaiah 53, one of the greatest of the prophets, we are given a glimpse of what it cost the Good Shepherd - He would become the Man of sorrows, despised and rejected by His own flock and finally *"smitten by God and afflicted, bruised for our iniquities."*

b. The Shepherd who knows His sheep John 10:14-30

The Lord Jesus Christ speaks of knowing His sheep and being known by them, cp. v4. The sheep respond in obedience to the shepherd's voice because their relationship to Him is based on their knowledge of Him - just as the Son, the Good Shepherd, responds in obedience to His Father, trusting His will because He knows the Father, v14-15. *"For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of Him who sent me,"* John 6:38.

Again, the Lord makes it clear to His listeners that His sacrifice was deliberate - He laid down His life in order that He might take it again. Resurrection was always in view - without resurrection there could be no redemption, no eternal life, v. 17-18. For the sheep - those who belong to the Lord and who are known by Him - there is nothing to fear. Behind the security of the Good Shepherd's care is the power and presence of the Father - the One who ultimately has the care of the flock, v28-29, cp. *"...your life is hidden with Christ in God,"* Colossians 3:3.

c. The Shepherd - accountable to the Father John 17: 1-26

"I pray for them...for those whom You have given me, for they are yours...now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to you, Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom you have given Me, that they may be one, as We are," John 17: 9-11.

The Lord had made it clear to the Jews that He was the Good Shepherd - the One Who alone was able to lead men to the true knowledge of God, which is eternal life, John 10: 28-29, *"And this is life eternal, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent,"* John 17:3. As a good shepherd, every individual disciple - He called them 'my sheep' - was precious to Him and He held Himself accountable to His Father for their safety and their future. His absolute commitment is illustrated by His prayer for the disciples - as well as all who would eventually become part of His flock, *"I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word,"* v. 20.

The Lord knew that the disciples were in danger because of their association with Him - He was about to give His life for the sheep and ultimately leave them. But although the Lord never mentions either the sheep or the shepherd, as in chapter 10, within the scope of the prayer in chapter 17 the shepherd's voice can be heard, the shepherd's heart discerned, the shepherd's care observed. He has watched over His flock during His lifetime, now He gives them into the care of the Father. The Lord asks Him to:-

- i. protect His disciples from the evil which is in the world, v. 11, v. 15
- ii. set them apart from the world for future service, v. 16-18.
- iii. bring them to Himself *"that they may behold My glory"* v. 24.

At the time of the Lord's birth, when the wise men came looking for the King of the Jews, they were directed to the prophecy from Micah 5: 2, which spoke of a ruler coming out of Bethlehem, *"...who will shepherd My people Israel."* And throughout the gospels and the

epistles we follow the Good Shepherd, the Great Shepherd and the Chief Shepherd, Hebrews 13:20, 1 Peter 2:25, 5:4. Finally, in the book of Revelation we read “for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters,” Revelation 7: 17. The Lord’s concern for His flock will never be exhausted; His love for them will never cease. His care and keeping will extend in eternity to the very throne of God.

JEHOVAH ROHI - THE LORD MY SHEPHERD

EXAM 11

(Use EXAM FORM A on the website menu)

Choose the correct answer.

1. Psalm 23 brings together many of Jehovah’s names. El-Shaddai is found in
 - a. verse 1
 - b. verse 6
 - c. verse 5
 - d. verse 3

2. The pattern of leadership for the prophet, priest or king was established by God as
 - a. the soldier
 - b. the statesman
 - c. the teacher
 - d. the shepherd

3. Good shepherding requires the
 - a. right surroundings for the sheep
 - b. right attitude towards the sheep
 - c. right training for the shepherd
 - d. right reward for the shepherd

4. Shepherd care can be given in the local church through
 - a. encouragement
 - b. guidance
 - c. comfort
 - d. all of the above

5. In Ezekiel 34 we discover that the shepherds (rulers) in Israel
 - a. strengthened the weak
 - b. fed themselves instead of the flock
 - c. ruled the people with mercy and love
 - d. failed to look out for those who had wandered away

6. Jehovah was also known as
 - a. the Shepherd of Judah
 - b. the Shepherd of Israel
 - c. the Shepherd of Jacob
 - d. the Shepherd of Ephraim

7. In which book do we read the words, “I will strike the shepherd”?
 - a. Matthew
 - b. Jeremiah
 - c. Zechariah
 - d. John

8. Sheep respond to the shepherd because they
 - a. know him
 - b. recognise his voice
 - c. trust him
 - d. all of the above

9. As the Good Shepherd, Jesus was accountable to
 - a. His Father
 - b. the Holy Spirit
 - c. the church
 - d. the nation of Israel

10. In the Lord’s final prayer for His disciples, He asked His Father for
 - a. their protection
 - b. their presence with Him in heaven
 - c. their sanctification
 - d. all of the above

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

Which of the Names of Jehovah, as seen in Psalm 23, is most special to you and why?

LESSON 12. JEHOVAH SHAMMAH - THE LORD IS THERE

1. The nation’s privilege

a. The presence of Jehovah Exodus 33: 12-17

“My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest,”

Exodus 33:14

From the beginning of their history as a nation, when God delivered the children of Israel out of slavery in Egypt, He had promised that His presence would go with them. This was a sign of His favour and would mark Israel out as unique amongst the nations. It was always a visible presence. During Israel’s time in the wilderness, a cloud by day and fire by night above the tabernacle was a permanent feature – Jehovah’s presence could be seen by all the people and served both to guide them and give them a sense of security, Exodus 40: 34-38. Later on in Israel’s history, Solomon built the temple at Jerusalem and at its dedication, the LORD again showed His approval by filling the building with His presence and glory, 2 Chronicles 7: 1-3.

However, the presence of Jehovah amongst His people was conditional. Jehovah Tsidkenu, the God of righteousness, could only live amongst a *righteous* people. Israel had a special relationship with Jehovah and had been given the law, the priesthood, the prophets - and much more - everything in fact that would enable them to live in a way which would bring honour to the LORD’s Name and character before the gentile nations, cp. Romans 9:4. But

they failed, choosing death and evil instead of life and good, with its inevitable result, Deuteronomy 30: 15-20.

b. The departure of Jehovah

Ezekiel 10:18, 11:23 2 Chronicles 36:15-21.

“Then the glory of the LORD departed from the threshold of the temple and stood over the cherubim,” Ezekiel 10: 18.

As a consequence of failing to appreciate their privileges and fulfil their responsibilities, the Jews were removed out of their homeland, Deuteronomy 30: 17-18. Israel, the northern kingdom, had already been taken into exile by the Assyrians. Judah, the southern kingdom, ignored this catastrophe and the warnings of her own prophets. Eventually about one hundred years later, because of her habitual disobedience and idolatry Judah suffered a similar fate and was exiled to Babylon.

Ezekiel was a priest - taken into exile before the final fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple. His name means ‘God strengthens’ and at the commencement of his demanding ministry God gave him the promise that He had done exactly that. *“Behold, I have made your face strong against their faces...they are a rebellious house,”* Ezekiel 2: 5-10. In Babylon, Ezekiel had the unenviable task of telling the people why they had been taken from their country. God spoke to him through visions and parables, symbols and prophecies. One of the most heartbreaking visions was the sight of the LORD, the God of Israel, leaving the confines of His temple and ultimately the city itself. Jehovah was no longer there.

2. The nation’s sorrow Psalm 137

“How shall we sing the LORD’s song in a foreign land...” Psalm 137:4

This then was the lowest point for God’s people - exiled to Babylon, bereft of everything which spoke of the LORD. No wonder they wept; no wonder they looked back and longed for Zion (Jerusalem). In a land so different and so far from their own, they finally realised what they had forfeited because of their disobedience and rejection of God.

Neither the great rivers of Euphrates and Tigris nor the splendour of Babylon could compare with Jerusalem, *“the city of the great king, beautiful in elevation, the joy of the whole earth,”* Psalm 48: 1-2. Regret, remorse and thoughts of revenge filled their thoughts as they remembered the terrible events of the siege and defence of the city. Away from everything which gave them an identity as the people of God and with no hope of ever returning to Jerusalem, the people gave way to their sorrow.

3. The nation’s sin Jeremiah 18: 15-17

“My people have forgotten Me days without number,” Jeremiah 2:32

In Babylon, the people were gripped by the shameful thought of forgetting Jerusalem; yet they had committed a far worse sin when they were living in the peace and security of their own country. Jehovah, speaking to Jeremiah about Jerusalem, said *“...Because My people have forgotten Me, they have burned incense to worthless idols...I will scatter them as with an east wind before the enemy,”* Jeremiah 2: 32, 18: 15-17.

Jehovah did not willingly abandon His people. He waited for them to repent; He came to them time and again, speaking through His prophets, warning, pleading and threatening. *“For I*

earnestly exhorted your fathers in the day I brought them up out of the land of Egypt, until this day, rising early and exhorting, saying 'Obey My voice,' yet they did not obey..." Jeremiah 11: 7-8. And then, unable to bear the sights and sounds of a people given over to the worship of idols, He said, *"I have poured out My indignation on them; I have consumed them with the fire of My wrath; and I have recompensed their deeds on their own heads,"* Ezekiel 22: 31.

God brought His charge against the people and pronounced them guilty. Jehovah could remain with them no longer; His righteous Name had been violated by the sins of His own people. It seems that God Himself could hardly believe the extent of Judah's desecration of the temple. *"Son of man, do you see what they are doing, the great abominations that the house of Israel commits here, to make me go far away from my sanctuary? Now turn again, you will see greater abominations,"* Ezekiel 8: 6. It was time for God to leave the temple and the city.

4. The nation's hope Ezekiel 40: 1-5, 43: 1-12.

All the way around (Zion) shall be eighteen thousand cubits; and the name of the city from that day shall be: Jehovah Shammah - The LORD is there. Ezekiel 48: 35.

Fourteen years after the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem and twenty-five years after the first Jews had gone into captivity, Ezekiel was given further strange and compelling visions. He had all but discharged his responsibilities to the Jews in Babylon - sparing no details in the saga of the nation's unfaithfulness and behaviour. Clear-cut, emphatic in judgment, Ezekiel had made it plain that the Jews had no one but themselves to blame for their loss and exile.

But the LORD never leaves His people without hope. No doubt a new generation had grown up in Babylon - they, with their parents, needed to be reminded of God's love for His people. He is faithful to His covenant and promises, always looking for His people to repent, always showing them His plans for the future, always looking for the time when *"...I will dwell in their midst forever. Son of man, describe the temple to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities, and let them measure the pattern..."* Ezekiel 43: 9-10. Ezekiel was given a comprehensive survey of a new temple, the organisation of the temple services, the division of the land between the tribes and the scale of the new Jerusalem, chapters 40 – 48. And the crucial point in the vision was the return of the LORD to His sanctuary, *'...the glory of the LORD filled the temple...and He said, "This is the place of My throne... where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever"'* 43: 5,7.

The final proof that this was all from the heart of the God of Israel for the blessing of His people, was the name to be given to Jerusalem - Jehovah Shammah, the LORD is there. Jehovah had left the temple and the city because of the sins of the nation, but He would return, affirming His love and forgiveness for a people restored and a city rebuilt. *'...and they shall call you the City of the LORD, Zion of the Holy One of Israel,'* Isaiah 60:14.

That this was never actually fulfilled when Judah returned to the land under Ezra and Nehemiah, points on to a still future restoration of both nation and temple in Israel - when the Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah, will reign in Jerusalem over His universal kingdom for a thousand years, Zechariah 14:16, Revelation 20: 6. Some see this prophecy as having a second interpretation - after the millennial reign of the Messiah there will be a new heaven and a new earth, a new Jerusalem coming out of heaven, Revelation 21: 1-3.

God has always looked to live amongst His people; it will be no different in the new creation, *'Behold the tabernacle of God is with men and He will dwell with them...'* Jehovah Shammah, the LORD is there.

5. The Lord Jesus Christ

a. Living amongst His people John 1: 1-18

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, John 1: 14.

Jehovah, the God of Israel, lived in the midst of the tribes in the wilderness- making His presence known to the Israelites by the cloud over the tabernacle. In the same way, the apostle John speaks of the Word, the Son of God, dwelling (literally, 'pitching His tent') amongst His own people. Day by day, as John lived alongside the Lord - seeing His works, hearing His words, beholding His glory - the apostle discovered the reality of God become Man, the Word made flesh. *'That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life...'* 1 John 1: 1-3. This was no cursory glance of a stranger; John had the opportunity to observe at first hand the Lord Jesus Christ. His conclusion was that the Son of God was amongst them: -

i. revealing God's grace - His free and unmerited favour towards men in salvation, *'For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son...'* John 3:16,

ii revealing God's truth - the Lord was God's final word to mankind, there will be no further revelation, *'Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me,"'* John 14:6.

b. Living within the believer John 14:15-24, 17:20-26

'To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory,' Colossians 1:27.

Although the Lord Jesus had to return to the Father after His resurrection, He was careful to assure His disciples that He would not abandon them. *"And I will pray the Father and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever..."* John 14:17. That Helper or Comforter is the Holy Spirit. Just as the presence of Jehovah amongst His people gave Israel a unique privilege (and responsibility) so it is with Christians today. The presence of the Holy Spirit enables us to have a unique relationship with the Father; through Him we can discover for ourselves the joy of Jehovah Shammah - having the Lord in our hearts and minds, directing our wills and guiding our lives.

Paul sums up the wonder of this fact in his letter to the Colossians, *'Christ in you, the hope of glory.'* There will be a future glory, a future blessing; the Lord had prayed for His disciples before He left them, *"Father, I desire that they...may be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory..."* John 17:24. His longing, His plan for His disciples and for all those who love Him, is that they might be with Him and enjoy His presence for ever. And Christ in us, through the Holy Spirit, is the promise, the pledge that one day the Lord's request will be fulfilled, *'...we know that when He is revealed. we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is, And everyone who has **this hope in Him** purifies himself, just as He is pure,'* 1 John 3: 2-3.

As always, with privilege comes responsibility and Paul reminds the Corinthian believers of the sanctity of the **body** as well as the mind, *'Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit **who is in you**, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's,'* 1 Corinthians 6: 19-20. The Lord, through His Spirit, is within us and our body becomes a sacred place through His presence. He will never leave us or forsake us, but we can grieve the Spirit by

our behaviour when we ignore or neglect our commitment to preserve and protect the purity of our physical as well as our spiritual condition. We can and often do, limit the power of His Presence in our lives.

c. Living in the midst of the Church 1 Corinthians 3: 5-17 Ephesians 2: 19-22

Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? 1 Corinthians 3:16.

Paul has been developing the idea of building - in the spiritual sense. He reminds the Corinthian believers that they are responsible for the quality of work which they put into this spiritual structure, which is the church, the temple of God. The lesson still applies - we are all fellow workers with God and there will be a day when our work will be tested as to its standard and durability.

In the previous study, the temple (1 Corinthians 6:19) referred to the individual believer, whereas in this passage the temple refers to the church as a whole. Paul uses the word 'naos' for temple in **both** instances, denoting the inner sanctuary and not merely the temple precincts. The use of this particular word emphasises the fact that as individuals and as the church we *are* the dwelling place of God, through His Spirit. Such is the sanctity of the church - the place of the presence of God - that should anyone, by works, words or even attitude do anything which destroys the unity and witness of the church, they will be punished, v17.

'For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.' In the light of these searching words we may need to view the church, whether local or world wide, from a fresh perspective. It is holy, set apart to God and of infinite value to Him - His own Son *'loved the church and gave Himself for her,'* Ephesians 5:25. He is our Jehovah Shammah and will always be there, in the midst of His people. May we do our part to share in His work to bring glory to God *'in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.'* Ephesians 3: 21.

JEHOVAH SHAMMAH - THE LORD IS THERE

EXAM 12

(Use EXAM FORM A on the website menu)

Choose the correct answer.

1. The presence of Jehovah gave the Israelites a sense of
 - a. pride
 - b. fear
 - c. security
 - d. joy

2. Because of the nation's disobedience, Judah was exiled to
 - a. Assyria
 - b. Babylon
 - c. Egypt
 - d. Persia

3. Ezekiel's most heart-breaking vision was
 - a. the destruction of the temple
 - b. God leaving the temple and the city
 - c. the people being led away as captives
 - d. the enemy rejoicing over Jerusalem

4. In Psalm 137 the people were filled with
 - a. regret
 - b. remorse
 - c. revenge
 - d. all of the above

5. Jehovah spoke with sadness to Jeremiah and said "My people have
 - a. despised Me"
 - b. forgotten Me"
 - c. ignored Me"
 - d. disobeyed Me"

6. God is faithful to His promises. He gave Ezekiel the vision of
 - a. a new temple
 - b. the land divided between the tribes
 - c. a new Jerusalem
 - d. all of the above

7. The crucial part of the vision was
 - a. the return of the people to the city
 - b. the return of the priests to the temple
 - c. the return of the king to the palace
 - d. the return of Jehovah to His sanctuary

8. Jesus declared Himself to be 'the way, the truth and the life' in
 - a. John 6:14
 - b. 1 John 1:3
 - c. John 3:16
 - d. John 14:6

9. Jesus lives in the believer through the Holy Spirit; therefore our physical bodies are
 - a. eternal
 - b. of no value
 - c. holy
 - d. of no consequence

10. The word 'naos' which Paul uses to describe the church and the Christian means
 - a. inner sanctuary
 - b. the main building
 - c. temple precincts
 - d. inner courtyard

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

What effect should it have on your life, knowing "that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit Who is in you"? 1 Corinthians 6:19