

# I. OLD TESTAMENT

Christians believe in One God revealed in Three Persons. In this section, we shall study the importance, nature and extent of God's Trinitarian revelation of Himself and His names as found in the Old Testament.

## SECTION OBJECTIVES

Read these objectives to learn what you should be able to do when you have completed this section.

1. Describe the Trinity,
2. State the importance of God's revelation about Himself,
3. Describe the extent of Trinitarian revelation in the Old Testament,
4. Give several names of God in the Old Testament used to imply the Trinity, and
5. Relate the names of God to the study of the Trinity.

## VOCABULARY

Study these words to enhance your learning success in this section.

Adonai	foreshadow	monotheism
codify	genitive	trinitarian
Elohim (El)	kyrios	Trinity
etymology	Messianic	Yahweh

Note: All vocabulary words in this LIFE PAC appear in boldface print the first time they are used. If you are unsure of the meaning when you are reading, study the definitions given.

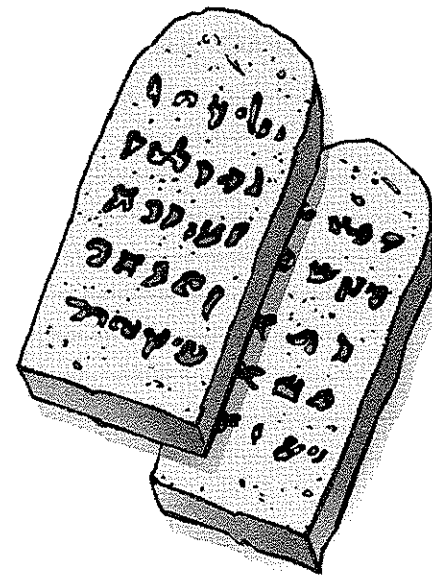
## REVELATION

As Christians, we look to the Bible as the source of God's revelation about Himself. God revealed Himself in the Old Testament as the one, only, living and personal God who loves and has an ongoing relationship with His people. Since Christians believe the Bible is the source of God's revelation, we look to the Old Testament to see how God slowly but surely began to prepare man for the knowledge of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit: the **Trinity**. The Trinity is basic to our faith and is a point of unity among Christians.

**Necessity.** The Trinity had to be revealed by God Himself in order to be true. In the Old Testament, the foundation and preparation for this belief was established. By firmly establishing **monotheism**, God prepared His people to receive the message of Jesus Christ regarding His nature and identity.

In the Old Testament, God was in constant touch with His people, guiding them by His law to love and to serve Him and each other. They were encouraged to rely on God in all circumstances. Their belief in *one* God set them apart from the pagans, for their neighbors believed in many gods.

The Israelites believed in One God who revealed himself to them through the Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; through Moses and the Prophets. The Hebrews knew the One, True God, exclusively by His revelation, for they had no other way to learn about Him.



"I WILL BE YOUR GOD; YOU WILL BE MY PEOPLE."

**Old Testament.** The complete, sudden revelation of the Trinity to the Jewish nation would have been confusing, for the identification with the one God was just being **codified**. The Old Testament clearly distinguishes between the God of Israel, other "gods" and man. However, the individual persons of the Trinity are only foreshadowed in the Hebrew text.

The understanding of a personal, living God,

who has a relationship with man, is a vital theme of the Old Testament, for it prepares us to understand the relationships within the Trinity. Although the Old Testament does not fully explain the Trinity, it gives us the words used to distinguish and foreshadow the three Persons. By studying the way God speaks of Himself in the Old Testament, we lay the foundation for the trinitarian understanding of His identity.



## Complete these statements.

- 1.1 The revelation of One God in Three Persons is called \_\_\_\_\_.
- 1.2 The Old Testament brings out the difference between God and other a. \_\_\_\_\_ and between God and b. \_\_\_\_\_.
- 1.3 A sudden, complete explanation of the Trinity would have \_\_\_\_\_ the Jewish nation.
- 1.4 God had to prepare His people to receive the explanation of the Trinity which would come through \_\_\_\_\_.
- 1.5 To learn God's true nature, man needs \_\_\_\_\_.
- 1.6 The Trinity refers to God as a. \_\_\_\_\_, b. \_\_\_\_\_, and c. \_\_\_\_\_.
- 1.7 The Trinity is \_\_\_\_\_ to our faith.
- 1.8 The Trinity is a point of \_\_\_\_\_ among Christians.
- 1.9 The Jewish nation believed in God as the \_\_\_\_\_, personal and living God.
- 1.10 The Old Testament gives us the \_\_\_\_\_ for the Trinity.



## Answer this question in a paragraph.

- 1.11 Why is revelation important in the study of the Trinity?

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## Do this activity.

- 1.12 Attend a regular service of your local church. Note all references to the Father, Son, and/or Spirit in the sermon, prayers, songs etc. Summarize your findings on a separate sheet. Include the frequency, nature and importance of each reference. Report to your teacher when complete.

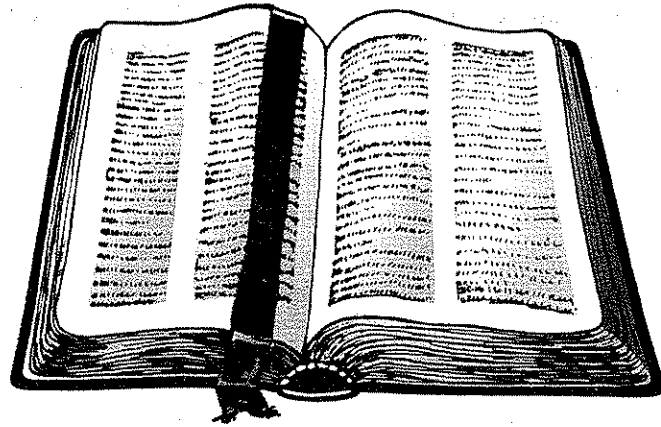


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## NAMES OF GOD

The names of God in the Old Testament allows us to identify Him personally, preparing us for the notion of more than one Person within the



Godhead.

**Elohim (El).** This name is used 2,550 times in the Old Testament. *El* in Hebrew refers to a divine being and is used in the Old Testament to suggest a supreme god. *Elohim* is a plural noun (Genesis 1:1). When Elohim is seen in the light of Christian revelation, we can recognize this name as an early reference to God in multiple Persons. Elohim refers to God and indicates His majesty and power not only over man, but other false "gods" as well.

Israel used the names *El* and *Elohim*, in combination with defining **genitives** to designate Him as their specific God. Examples can be found in Genesis: *El Bethel* (Genesis 35:7); *El of your fathers* (Genesis 49:25); *El of eternity* (Genesis 21:33); *El the Elohim of Israel* (Genesis 33:20) and in Psalms: *El of Jacob* (Psalm 146:5), and *El of Israel* (Psalm 68:35).

The **etymology** of *El Elohim* is uncertain, but the meaning is generally understood as power.

**YHWH (Yahweh).** The most important name for God in the Old Testament is *YHWH*, usually written as "*Yahweh*," the personal name God revealed to Moses in the Burning Bush (Exodus 3:13-15). Various meanings of the name *YHWH* are "I Am Who I Am" or "I Will Be Who I Will Be." The Hebrew word *Yahweh* is translated as LORD (notice all capitals) in most Old Testament English translations. The etymology of *Yahweh* is disputed, most scholars think the name may be derived from the Hebrew verb *hawah*, meaning *to be*. The name characterizes God as a set-apart, eternal Creator who was God of Israel alone; the God of Moses, who personally revealed Himself through the covenant

and as One who can keep His covenants. This title occurs about 6,800 times in the Scriptures.

*Yahweh* as a *Father* is seen strongly in the Old Testament as Father of Israel, the Father of His people. The title *Father* expresses a loving relationship between God and His people and encourages a loving obedience from them. God takes care of His people, offering them forgiveness and compassion when they are rebellious. Hebrew personal names illustrate that God is considered a Father: *Joab*, for example, means *Yahweh is Father*; *Abeil* or *Eliab* means *El is Father*; *Abitub* means *my father is goodness*; *Abiezer* means, *my father my help*; and *Absalom* means, *my father is peace*. Besides naming God as *Father*, these names also illustrate His fatherly characteristics.

**Adonai.** The title *Lord* was used to indicate the kingship of *Yahweh*. *Adonai* is a form of the Hebrew word *adon* which is used to address *Yahweh* to distinguish His kingship from that of an earthly lord as is expressed in the Hebrew form *adoni*.

Because of the Israelites' increasing desire to hallow or sanctify God's name, *Yahweh*, and avoid misusing it, the title *Adonai* was pronounced in its place when reading the Scriptures. The Hebrew *Adonai* means "My Great Lord." (The English word *Jehovah* is a translation of God's name during the late Middle Ages which attempted to combine of the consonants *YHWH* and the vowels of *Adonai*, *a-o-a*, to form a hybrid word.) In the Greek translation of the Old Testament (called the Septuagint), the Greek term **kyrios** appears as a translation of the name *Yahweh*. Like *Adonai*, this Greek word also means "Lord." The use of *kyrios* in reference to Jesus in early Christian writings clearly identifies Him as God, the *Yahweh* and *Adonai* of the Old Testament (Acts 11:20-21).

The title *Adonai* establishes God as the Lord of His people. As Lord, He has a right to expect obedience from His servants. As servants, His people have a right to expect provision from their Lord. This same concept is seen in the New Testament with the title *Kyrios*.

**Significance.** In the Old Testament, God is revealed as One Divine Being, unique to Israel. *Yahweh* stands out as the one true *Elohim*, *Adonai* and divine Lord. Wisdom belongs to *Yahweh* alone. His Word is powerful and creative, giving life to all. The use of these terms were valuable to preparing

the people of God for the full revelation of the Trinity, because these names are also used for the Messiah. In the New Testament, Jesus is called the *Son* and the *Word of God*.

Though *Son of God* is used in the Old Testament, it is not used as a **Messianic** title. It

was first used of heavenly beings, then to the special relationship between Israel's king (II Samuel 7:14-16) and God and to His acceptance of the individual Israelite.

*Spirit* has wide use in the Old Testament as breath, wind, principle of life, and Creator of all life.



Read Psalm 2 and 22.



Answer the following questions with complete sentences.

- 1.13 What are the names of God in the Old Testament listed in this LIFEPAK?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 1.14 Why are the names of God important in studying the Trinity?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 1.15 What is the meaning of *El, Elohim*? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 1.16 What was unique about Israel's use of the term *El*?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 1.17 Why is the use of the name *Yahweh* significant? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 1.18 What is the derivation of the name *Yahweh*? What does this meaning reveal about God?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 1.19 What does the title *Father* tell us about God? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 1.20 What is one indication that the Israelites saw *Yahweh* as a *Father*?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 1.21 What is the meaning of *Adonai*? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

