

I. Intro. & Review

A. Last week we began Lesson 3 by looking at God’s essence.

1. What are the six traditional sections of Dogmatics? – Theology, Anthropology, Christology, Soteriology, Ecclesiology, Eschatology.
2. What are the five traditional sections of Theology? The essence, names, attributes, persons and works of God.
3. [What is essence]: Essence is being, what makes something what it is in distinction from everything else.

B. The Essence of God

1. Personal (rational, conscious being of activity and intelligence; has names; is masculine)
2. Spiritual (non material, invisible; may not be worshipped with images)
3. Transcendent (exalted over all creation; denied by pantheism)
4. Immanent (remaining in the creation, denied by deism)

II. The Name of God is the Revelation of Who God Is

A. This is not true of us although even with us there is some reflection of this.

1. Our names are simply *labels* which distinguish us from other people.

- a. There is no deep meaning behind our names. You have a name because your parents thought it was a nice name. Probably it went well with your surname, etc.
- b. Also *to name something suggests authority over it*: your parents gave your name; a wife takes her husband’s name (feminists dislike this practice); Adam named the animals; you name your pet dog, etc.

2. Still, our names are important.

- a. We do not like to have our name misspelled, mispronounced or forgotten. And how does a prisoner feel when he is stripped of his name and given a *number* instead? A name is one’s honor, one’s dignity, etc.
- b. When a person tells his name to someone he opens up to him and reveals to him something; you do not give your name to just anyone.

3. In the Bible names are very important. They are more than mere labels.

- a. For example, some people have their names changed by God Himself (Abraham [father of a multitude], Israel [prince with God]); others have names which are very meaningful (Elijah [My God is Jah], Methuselah [When He dies it shall be sent]; Ichabod [There is no glory]).
- b. The name of something in Scripture indicates *the very essence of something* as it is revealed to us creatures: Adam before the Fall had great insight into this and was able to name the animals in Gen. 2:19.

B. The Name of God Tells Us Who God Is

1. The name of God is not a label we attach to Him but *the name He gives Himself* and reveals to us.

- a. There is none higher than God so only God can name Himself – we have neither the authority nor the ability to name Him.
- b. God reveals His name to us so that we can have *fellowship* with Him. How would prayer and worship be possible without knowledge of God’s name? How would you call upon an unknown God?
- c. God reveals His name to us *so that we can speak about Him and to Him with reverence*. He gives us His name so that we *use* His name (Ill. If I told you my name and you continued to refer to me with “hey, you” instead of my name I would take that as an insult; *God expects us to use His names* and to do so properly and with reverence, see Ps. 111:9).

2. Because God’s name is a revelation of God, God is His Name.

- a. Thus the Bible uses God and God’s name interchangeably: Ps. 18:49, “Therefore will I give thanks unto thee, O LORD, among the heathen, and sing praises unto thy name;” Ps. 86:12 “I will praise thee, O Lord, my God, with all my heart: and I will glorify thy name for evermore.”
- b. Therefore the Bible commands a reverent use of God’s Name in the third commandment. To blaspheme the name of God is to blaspheme God; to praise the name of God is to praise God.
- c. Therefore when we call upon the name of the Lord (Rom. 10:13) we do more than simply use a label; we call upon *God who has revealed Himself*. Many call upon God but do not know Him. They do not call on His name.

- d. Jesus praying John 17:6 that He has manifested God's name means *He has revealed to them who God is* (in words, v. 8; and by His Word, v. 17). Indeed, God has exalted His Word above His name, Ps. 138:2. One who is ignorant of God does not know His name no matter how exalted His language might be.

III. The Names of God In Particular (and what they reveal about Him)

A. GOD

- 1. The name God appears in Genesis 1:1, “In the beginning God ...” and its Hebrew is El or Elohim.**
 - a. The name comes from a word which means strong or mighty and reveals that God is the *All Powerful One*.
 - b. The name El often appears with other combinations, e.g. El Shaddai.
 - c. The name God (El) appears throughout the Bible often in names and places, either as prefix or suffix, Elisha, Daniel, Bethel, Michael, etc).
- 2. When we hear the Word “God” we must think of the Almighty Creator of Heaven and earth.**
 - a. The word “God” or the term “My God” should never be on our lips as a swear word or used with a loose tongue (What does “in vain” mean in the 3rd commandment?)
 - b. We also should not use variations of the word “God” such a golly, gosh, gee, etc.

B. Lord

- 1. The name “Lord” (not all capitals) means Master or Ruler.**
 - a. The word Lord refers to a master who rules over His servants or a king who rules over his subjects or a husband who rules over (has authority) over his wife.
 - b. The Lord in the NT is very often Jesus Himself. His full title is The Lord Jesus Christ. Phil. 2:11
- 2. What do we mean when we call God or Jesus Christ “our Lord”?**
 - a. When we call God “Lord” we confess that *we belong to Him*, that we are His property, both by creation and by redemption.
 - b. When we call God “Lord” we confess that we are His servants over whom He has authority. As His servants we are those who obey Him. Luke 6:46. Much of the prattle in prayer, “O Lord” denies Him *when there is no obedience*.

C. LORD (all capitals) or JEHOVAH (YHWH, Jahweh)

- 1. This name derives from the verb “to be” and means “I AM THAT I AM” (Ex. 3:14).**
 - a. God’s being is of Himself. *He is*. He depends on none outside of Himself.
 - b. God never changes: He always is. This unchangeableness is nothing abstract: He is unchangeable in His promises, in His faithfulness to be the God of His people, and to give His people salvation.
 - c. Thus it was appropriate that God revealed Himself by this Name to Moses at the Burning Bush (Ex. 3). He has come to inform Moses that He had not forgotten His people in Egypt, that His covenant promises were still sure. *Thus Jehovah is God’s covenant name*.
- 2. Among the Jews this name was particularly sacred or holy. They feared even to pronounce this name.**
 - a. Lev. 24:11 tells of an incident when a man blasphemed THE NAME, Jehovah (compare v. 11 & 16).
 - b. The Jews became foolishly superstitious in this. They thought by protecting the consonants and vowels used in the word they could avoid blaspheming the name, but a man can blaspheme *the name* without even using the word.
 - c. The name Jehovah or Yahweh was the *Tetragrammaton* (the four letters). In the NT it is always translated Kurios, never Jehovah. The KJV indicates Jehovah by LORD with all capitals letters.
 - d. The name appears as prefixes and suffixes, Jo- and -iah, e.g., Zachariah, Josiah, Joshua, etc.
- 3. The name JEHOVAH never appears in the NT because Jesus is Jehovah salvation.**
 - a. The name Jesus means Jehovah Salvation and throughout the NT Jesus is the revelation of God as Savior and Lord. He also takes the divine name in John 8:58 (“Before Abraham was I AM”).
 - b. Jesus has the name which is above every name (Phil 2:9-10; compare Is. 45:22-23); by His name all men must be saved (Acts 4:12); in His name men pray (John 15:16), receive forgiveness of sins (Luke 24:47).
 - c. The name Jesus means Jehovah salvation. To believe in Jesus means more than believing in the five letters J-E-S-U-S, but it means to believe in the revelation of who Jesus is (the biblical idea of name), so that to believe in Jesus means that I believe that Jesus is the only perfect Savior who effectually saves. See LD 11 of the *Heidelberg Catechism*.