



Immanuel

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Zondervan, *Grand Rapids, Michigan 49530*

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Spangler, Ann.

Immanuel : praying the names of God through the christmas season /
Ann Spangler.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN-10: 0-310-27614-4 (alk. paper)

ISBN-13: 978-0-310-27614-2 (alk. paper)

1. Advent—Prayer-books and devotions. 2. Christmas—Prayer-books
and devotions. 3. God (Christianity)—Name—Prayer-books and devotions.
4. Jesus Christ—Name—Prayer-books and devotions. I. Title.

BV40.S63 2007

242'.33—dc22

2007001532

This edition printed on acid-free paper.

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Interior design by Michelle Espinoza

Printed in the United States of America

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יהוה

Lord

κύριος

The Name

The Hebrew name *Yahweh* (yah-WEH) occurs more than 6,800 times in the Old Testament. It appears in every book but Esther, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs. *Yahweh*, translated “LORD” in many Bibles, is the name that is most closely linked to God’s redeeming acts in the history of his chosen people. We know who God is because of how he has acted on behalf of his people. When you pray to *Yahweh* this Christmas season, remember that he is the same God who draws near to save you from sin’s tyranny just as he saved his people from their bondage in Egypt.

The Greek word *Kyrios*, translated “Lord” in the New Testament, could also at times be translated as “Yahweh.” As you bow your head this week in prayer before Jesus, who is the sovereign Lord, remember that you are placing your life—the worst of your disappointments, the most protracted of your struggles, the wildest of your dreams—squarely in his hands. Knowing Jesus as Lord will lead you to a deeper experience of his presence and his power.

Key Scriptures

God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”

God also said to Moses, “Say to the Israelites, ‘The LORD [Yahweh], the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob—has sent me to you.’ This is my name forever, the name by which I am to be remembered from generation to generation.” *Exodus 3:14-15*

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every
name,
that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 2:9-11

Monday

GOD REVEALS HIS NAME



The Scripture Reading

Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the desert and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. So Moses thought, “I will go over and see this strange sight – why the bush does not burn up.”

When the LORD saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, “Moses! Moses!” . . .

Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.

The LORD said, “I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them. . . .

“I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt.”

But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?”

And God said, “I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain.”

Moses said to God, “Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ Then what shall I tell them?”

God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”...

“The elders of Israel will listen to you. Then you and the elders are to go to the king of Egypt and say to him, ‘The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us. Let us take a three-day journey into the desert to offer sacrifices to the LORD our God.’ But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless a mighty hand compels him. So I will stretch out my hand and strike the Egyptians with all the wonders that I will perform among them. After that, he will let you go.”

Exodus 3:1-4, 6-8, 10-14, 18-20

Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. *Luke 2:11*

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something
to be grasped,
but made himself nothing,
taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.
And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
and became obedient to death – even death on
a cross!
Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every
name,
that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 2:5 - 11

Prayer

Lord, you are the same, yesterday, today, and forever – a God who listens to the cries of his people and who delivers us from our enemies. Thank you not only for delivering your people from bondage in Egypt but for delivering your people today from the deepest of all bondages – from our slavery to sin and death. We

know you now not only as our mighty God but as our humble Lord, the One who became like us so that we could become like you.

Understanding the Name

As the sacred, personal name of Israel's God, the Hebrew name *Yahweh* was eventually spoken aloud only by priests worshiping in the Jerusalem temple. After the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70, the name was not pronounced at all. Instead, *Adonay* was substituted for *Yahweh* whenever it appeared in the biblical text. Because of this, the correct pronunciation of this name was eventually lost, and older translations of the Bible incorrectly translated the name as *Jehovah*. Modern English editions of the Bible usually translate *Adonay* as "Lord" and *Yahweh* as "LORD."

Unfortunately, the translation "LORD," which is a title rather than a name, obscures the personal nature of this name for God. Though the meaning of *Yahweh* is disputed, the mysterious self-description in Exodus 3:14, "I AM WHO I AM," may convey the sense not only that God is self-existent but that he is always present with his people. *Yahweh* is not a God who is remote or aloof but One who is always near, intervening in history on behalf of his people. The knowledge of God's proper name implies a covenant relationship. God's covenant name is closely associated with his saving acts in Exodus. The

name *Yahweh* evokes images of God's saving power in the lives of his people.

Christianity's earliest confession of faith consisted of three short but incredibly powerful words: "Jesus is Lord!" The Greek word *Kyrios* (KU-ree-os) is used in the New Testament to refer to an owner, emperor, king, father, husband, or master. In addition to translating the Hebrew name *Yahweh*, it can also translate two Hebrew titles of God: *Adonay* and *Elohim*.

When people addressed Jesus as *Kyrios* or "Lord" in the Gospels, they were often simply showing respect to him as a rabbi or teacher, addressing him as "sir" rather than acknowledging him as God. But after his death and resurrection, the title "Lord" began to be widely used by believers.

Remember the apostle Thomas, who at first doubted accounts of Christ's resurrection? When Jesus appeared to him after his death, Thomas instinctively responded with a confession of faith: "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:28). Over time, the title *Kyrios* began to take on the characteristics of a name. As such, it clearly identified Jesus with *Yahweh*, the covenant name of God in the Hebrew Scriptures. Of the 717 passages in which *Kyrios* occurs in the New Testament, the majority are found in Luke's Gospel, the Acts of the Apostles, and Paul's writings.

Reflecting on the Name

Look at Exodus 3:1–20

- ☞ What does this passage reveal about what was in the heart of God in regard to his people?
- ☞ Moses' reluctance is not hard to understand. Describe a time when you were similarly reluctant to do something you thought God was calling you to do.
- ☞ Why do you think Moses asked God to reveal his name?

Look at Philippians 2:5–11

- ☞ How does God's idea of greatness differ from the usual definition?
- ☞ How have you experienced Jesus being Lord in your life?