

6828... and more

What is the significance of this title? Is it, perhaps, referring to a really, really big songbook?

No, though that would be a fascinating songbook! (You could sing a different song each day for over 18 years!)

At 1000 Voices this year, Tom McGowian (TBone) presented a talk with this title; the talk was centered on names. Specifically, on the names of God as found in the Old Testament.

We all readily recognize that the Bible is about God and Christ and the Holy Spirit... but, did you realize:

- While our English Bibles typically convey God's name in the Old Testament as *God*, *Jehovah*, or *LORD* (depending on the translation), there are several different (but related) Hebrew words, each focusing on specific characteristics. Examples: YHWH, Elohim, Adonai, El Shaddai, Jehovah-Jirah, and so forth.
- The Hebrew word most commonly translated as *LORD* (or *Jehovah*), YHWH, occurs 6828 times in the Old Testament. Elohim (typically translated *God*) occurs 2606 times.

So, considering only these two words, God's name is mentioned 9434 times in the Old Testament. That's a lot! But the number becomes even more astonishing when you start looking at the huge number of names (of both people and places) that are based on God's name. Here are a few examples:

- Most of the names beginning with or containing "El", such as:
 - **E**lead = God has testified
 - **E**lazar = God is helper
 - **E**lidad = God of love
 - Beth-**E**l = house of God
 - Daniel**el** = judge of God
 - Ezekiel**el** = God will strengthen
 - Gamaliel**el** = reward of God
 - Hille**el** = praising God
 - Immanuel**el** = God with us
 - Lemuel**el** = belonging to God
 - Othniel**el** = force of God

- Most of the names containing "Jah" or "Ah" (short for *Jehovah*), such as:
 - Nehemiah = consolation of God
 - Obadiah = servant of God
 - Uzziah = strength of God
 - Hezekiah = strengthened of God
 - Jedidiah = loved of God
 - Jeremiah = God will rise
 - Josiah = founded of God
 - Isaiah = God has saved
 - Zechariah = God has remembered
 - Joshua or Jehoshua = Jehovah is salvation (and, note, the name "Jesus" is the Greek transliteration of Jehoshua!)

And then there are **Joel** and **Elijah** -- with both "Jah" and "El": Jehovah is God!

And even some other words -- like Hallelujah -- are based on God's name: Praise ye Jehovah!

When you start counting the occurrences of God's name in the Old Testament, not only as obvious in our English translations, but also "hidden" within other names and miscellaneous words, the numbers are truly mind-boggling.

For example, randomly selecting a passage, 2 Kings 22:1-4:

1. *Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jedidah the daughter of Adaiah of Bozkath.*
2. *And he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD and walked in all the way of David his father, and he did not turn aside to the right or to the left.*
3. *In the eighteenth year of King Josiah, the king sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, son of Meshullam, the secretary, to the house of the LORD, saying,*
4. *"Go up to Hilkiah the high priest, that he may count the money that has been brought into the house of the LORD, which the keepers of the threshold have collected from the people.*

At first glance, it appears that LORD is mentioned three times. But then you can start seeing God's name in many other names:

- Josiah (twice) = founded of God
- Jedidiah = beloved of God
- Adaiah = God has adorned
- Azaliah = God has reserved
- Hilkiah = portion of God

These are just a few examples that point to the overwhelming presence of God in the Old Testament -- continuing into the New Testament... and continuing eternally (past, present, and future). May we ever be aware of His presence, and reflect on His holy name and His attributes.

(Note: My daily "Counting our Blessings" posts on Facebook will focus on this theme, incorporating scripture and hymns as usual, starting in January 2019, Lord willing.)

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