

## The LORD Of Hosts

Edit 11/01/17

There are almost 7000 references to the LORD [YHWH] in the Old Testament. Of those, about 260 are to the LORD of hosts. The LORD of hosts is described in 1 Samuel 4:4 as appearing above the ark, dwelling between the cherubim. There it states **“So the people went to Shiloh, that they might bring from there the ark of the covenant of the LORD of hosts, who dwells between the cherubim”** (also Exodus 25:21-22; 2 Samuel 6:2; Isaiah 37:16). The LORD of hosts is a specific reference to God the Father and, knowing that, is necessary for understanding many passages of scripture. One in particular is **“And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came up against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles”** (Zechariah 14:16).

It is God the Father, the LORD of hosts, who is worshipped at the temple. That concept is reinforced in Psalm 84. The psalmist refers to the **“LORD of hosts”** three times but it also refers to Him as **“the LORD”**, **“the living God”**, **“My King and my God”**, **“God in Zion”**, **“LORD God of hosts”**, **“God of Jacob”**; **“God”**, and **“the LORD God”**. At the same time the tabernacle is referred to as His house and the courts as His courts and the altars as His altars. Men who make a pilgrimage to appear before Him in Zion are strengthened and blessed and the psalmist writes **“O LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer; Give ear, O God of Jacob!”** (verse 8).

The above passage is consistent with Jesus’ reference to the temple in His day as His Father’s house (Matthew 21:12-13; Luke 2:46-49; John 2:16). Jesus also taught men to pray to the Father for forgiveness and it would be the Father who would respond (Matthew 6:5-15). That is reinforced in the parable Christ told of the Pharisee and the tax collector who both went up to the temple to pray (Luke 18:9-14). When the tax collector cried out **“God, be merciful to me a sinner!”** he was crying out to God, not to Jesus.

The God of Israel was the LORD of hosts. David, in confronting Goliath, said that he had **“defied the armies of the living God”** (1 Samuel 17:36) and then David said **“You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel”** (verse 45; also Isaiah 37:16; 54:5). The One whom David confronted Goliath in the name of, was the LORD of hosts. He is the One who will bring to pass the prophesies regarding Jesus Christ (Isaiah 9:6-7; Zechariah 6:11-12; 13:7). One prophesy states **“Thus says the LORD of hosts...For behold, I am bringing forth My Servant the BRANCH”** (Zechariah 3:7-8). Jesus Christ did not bring forth Himself. He was sent by the Father (John 1:14; 6:38; 16:28).

The Holy of Holies of the temple portrayed the throne room of God in heaven. When Jesus died, the veil cutting off access to it was rent in two (Matthew 27:50-51). It is the LORD of hosts who was worshipped at the tabernacle and then later at the temple (1 Samuel 1:3; Zechariah 8:20-22; 14:16-21). It was the house of the LORD of hosts (Haggai 1:7-9; Zechariah 1:16; 8:1-9) and where the LORD God placed His name (1 Kings 5:2-5; 6:11-13; 8:6-13,17-21,27-53; 9:1-3; 1 Chronicles 28:1-6,10-12; 29:1,16; 2 Chronicles 2:1,4-6; 3:1).

The references **“the LORD of hosts”** (1 Samuel 1:3) and **“the LORD God of hosts”** (Amos 4:12-13) and

**“the Lord GOD of hosts”** (Amos 9:5) all refer to God the Father. Amos 9:6 states **“The LORD is His name”**. Amos also showed that the LORD, the LORD of hosts, was the God of Israel. His record in chapter 4 states **“you have not returned to Me, Says the LORD. Therefore thus will I do to you, O Israel; And because I will do this to you, Prepare to meet your God, O Israel! For behold, He who forms the mountains, And creates the wind, Who declares to man what His thought is, And makes the morning darkness, Who treads the high places of the earth—The LORD God of hosts is His name”** (verses 11-13).

Jacob’s name was changed to Israel so the God of Jacob is the God of Israel. When the Jews confronted Peter in Acts 3 regarding who healed the lame man, he responded to them in language they were accustomed to by stating **“The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate”** (verse 13). When Paul in his defense before Felix, the governor of Judah, stated **“I worship the God of my fathers”** (Acts 24:14), he was saying that he worshipped the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Clearly, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is the Father.

Finally, going back to the record of Amos, he shows further that all of these various titles refer to God the Father. **“Therefore the LORD God of hosts, the Lord, says this: There shall be wailing in all streets, And they shall say in all the highways, Alas! Alas! They shall call the farmer to mourning, And skillful lamenters to wailing. In all vineyards there shall be wailing, For I will pass through you, Says the LORD. Woe to you who desire the day of the LORD! For what good is the day of the LORD to you? It will be darkness and not light...I will send you into captivity beyond Damascus, Says the LORD, whose name is the God of hosts”** (5:16-18,27).

The name, the LORD of hosts, in all its forms, always refers to God the Father.