

God's Revelation of Himself in His NAMES: Yahweh – Part 1

INTRODUCTION:

- I. We began last month looking at God's revelation of Himself through His names.
- II. It is important that we come to know the meaning of these names because...
 - A. As the title indicates, His names are one of God's ways of revealing who He is.
 - B. As we address God in prayer and Bible study, as well as when we talk of Him to others, we need to be aware of what we are saying about Him in using of His names.
- III. Last time we considered the very first name of God revealed in Scripture, which is *Elohim* (Gen. 1:1 – "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.").
 - A. We saw how God presented himself as the all-powerful creator God and what that means to us.
 - B. Yet, to understand how *Elohim* is the creator of *everything* requires a greater understanding of Him and His characteristics.
 - C. The characteristic that makes God's creation of *all things* possible is revealed in His name *Jehovah*, or more correctly *Yahweh*. But why that is so will be explained shortly.
- IV. *Yahweh* (LORD) is the most popular name of God, occurring over 6,800 times in the Bible.
 - A. It was so sacred that it was *not spoken aloud by the Jews* for fear of using it in vain (Ex. 20:7 – "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.").
 - B. *Yahweh* was generally replaced in their speech by *Adonai* (Lord) or by adding the vowels for *Adonai* to JHWH and coming up with *Jehovah*.
 - C. Although we are not to be discouraged from using God's name, we need to know more about it and be more fearful of using it in a vain way!
- V. So, let's again consider more about the biblical name of God, *Yahweh*, and its meaning in order to gain greater knowledge and appreciation of who God is.

BODY:

1. God revealed His name to Moses (Exodus 3):

- A. God appeared to Moses through the burning bush at Mt. Horeb, God's mountain, and commissioned him to go to Egypt to lead Israel from bondage, but he balked (Ex. 3:1-6, 9-11).
 - i. This may seem strange because 40 years earlier, while Moses lived in Egypt as the son of Pharaoh's daughter, being highly educated, and having become a man of great words and deeds (Acts 7:20-22), **he believed being Israel's deliverer was his calling**.
 - a. He even killed an Egyptian who was mistreating an Israelite, thinking it was the time!
 - b. Yet, the next day when Moses interacted with some Israelites he learned that deed was known and they rejected him as their deliverer, seeing him as just an angry violent man.
 - c. And, with Pharaoh desiring to kill Moses as a traitor, Moses had to flee to Midian.
 - ii. In one day, Moses fell from being a prince in Egypt to being a fugitive fleeing to Midian where he would then be **humbled to tend sheep for 40 years** without the riches, position of power, pleasures of his privileged Egyptian upbringing!
 - iii. This was why Moses balked. His self-confidence had now become self-doubt. HE could not do this (3:11).
 - a. God didn't save Moses from Pharaoh's wrath just to save *him*—just for *Moses' sake*.
 - b. God saved him that he might advance God's glory and save God's people so that His covenant with their forefathers might be fulfilled and Israel could worship Him.
 - c. But God was only going to do that through a man who would lead His people from bondage based on knowledge of **God** and **faith in God's strength**, not his own!
 - d. Now, when all the human qualifications were gone, Moses' time to deliver had come!
- B. At this point God does something quite amazing in answering Moses. God reveals His personal name (3:12-15).
 - i. God begins by promising *to be with* Moses and says that Moses' and Israel's worship at that very mountain would prove His presence was with Him (3:12).

- a. What God said was that Moses had to have faith enough to obey to receive God’s sign—assurance confirmed after obedience.
- b. This promise of a sign explains Moses’ insistence to Pharaoh that Israel keep the feast of the LORD, *Yahweh*, in the desert (Ex. 5:1).
- ii. When Moses then asked for God’s name to tell Israel, God tells Moses, “I AM WHO I AM,” or simply “I AM,” and that this is His name forever (3:13-15).
 - a. God’s name singled Him out from all others saying, “this is **who I am.**”
 - i. It is like how our names single us out from others. I am Rodney Bryan Pitts. When you hear those *sounds*, you know they are talking about me.
 - ii. But God did not distinguish Himself by the sound of His name, but by its meaning, which held great significant for Israel and does so for those who know it today.
 - b. For, here God presented Himself as “the **existing One,**” or “the One who **IS.**”
 - i. Here God connected His eternal, infinite being with His name! He is GOD IS—GOD WHO ABSOLUTELY IS!
 - ii. It is hard for us to grasp the full meaning and implications of such a name because we think in terms of the past, present, and future!
 - iii. Yet, *Yahweh*, or “I AM WHO I AM” shows us that a true perception of Him is that He simply **IS**—no past or future—**He always IS.**
 - iv. Every time we praise Jehovah/*Yahweh*, or *Yah*, for short, as we do when we sing, “**Hallelujah,**” we are praising Him because GOD IS.
 - c. Think about that and wonder about that because we need to have wonder about our God—He is wondrous!

2. The meaning of the revelation of *Yahweh* for Israel:

- A. In Ex. 3:6, 15 where God described Himself as “*the God of their fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*” this was intended to provide great assurance to Israel.
 - i. We may miss this because we apply this to how it shows Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were still alive, that they still existed in the spirit world, seeing Jesus used it this way (Mt. 22:32).
 - ii. But I don’t think that is the emphasis here. Here God was presenting the significance of His “I AM” qualities, how He **IS**, and thus **IS** the God of these men, which implied...
 - a. That His covenant made with Abraham that would significantly affect Israel’s future had not died with them, seeing *Yahweh* continued to be their God.
 - b. That because God IS, not was or will be, those covenant promises were *ever real to God in the present*—they would not fade!
 - c. Israel could rest assured that the fulfillment of these promise had come, that deliverance was happening, and that its blessing were beginning to flow, all because **God IS.**
 - iii. This is how we should think of God when His name *Yahweh*/*Jehovah* is spoken!
 - a. We should think that **God IS**, that **God is NOW.**
 - b. All that God has done, is doing, and ever will do is simply NOW for Him.
 - c. Thus, for *Yahweh* His promises are never old, past, or fading, but forever real and powerful NOW.
 - d. So, like Israel in Egypt, we can rest assured that our hope in the promises of *Yahweh*, the forever NOW God, is not in vain, but forever real, true, powerful!
- B. Just as *Elohim* is the side of God who created the heavens and the earth, *Yahweh* is the side of God that Israel would learn *relates to His creation personally.*
 - i. We see this hinted at here in God’s description of Himself as *the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob* (Ex. 3:6, 15), saying He was *their* God, that these men *knew* Him, and He *knew* them.
 - a. That God knows us and we can know God is a very important characteristic of *Yahweh.*
 - b. Too many believe in the Creator God, *Elohim*, but do not know *Him*, the *I AM!*
 - c. God desires that we know His name and what that means to our lives, that He will truly be OUR God, and we HIS people.
 - ii. We see this personal interaction associated with Moses’ recording of the creation account itself (Gen. 1-2).

- a. As we have said before, it was *Elohim*, or the all-powerful Creator God, who made all things (Gen. 1:1 – “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”).
 - b. Yet, most amazingly, we find that when time came for God to interact with His creation, the Holy Spirit used *Yahweh* instead (Gen. 2:15-18 – “Then the **LORD** God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. ¹⁶ And the **LORD** God commanded the man, saying, “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” ¹⁸ And the **LORD** God said, “It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him... ²¹ And the **Lord** God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. ²² Then the rib which the **LORD** God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man.”)
- iii. We see it in the Exodus narrative where *Yahweh* is shown to be the God that interacts in the lives and history of Israel!
- a. From that time in Egypt on, God would forever be known as *Yahweh* who *came to Israel’s aid*, who *redeemed* them from Egyptian bondage (Deut. 7:7-8 – “The Lord did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; ⁸ but because the Lord loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the **LORD** [*Yahweh*] has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.”).
 - b. God’s redemption became the basis of Israel’s obedience (Deut. 24:17-18 – “You shall not pervert justice due the stranger or the fatherless, nor take a widow’s garment as a pledge. ¹⁸ But you shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt, and the **LORD** your God redeemed you from there; therefore I command you to do this thing.”).
- iv. We should know *Yahweh* from this same viewpoint, as God who has personally touched our lives, saving us from sin and leading us to trust and obey Him (2 Pet. 1:2-9 – “**Grace and peace** be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, ³ as **His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness**, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, ⁴ by which **have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises**, that through these you may **be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption** that is in the world through lust. ⁵ But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, ⁶ to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, ⁷ to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. ⁸ For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and **has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.**”).
- a. Here God says to us, “Look at all the things I have done for you.”
 - b. He then says, “So, this is what I expect you to do. And if you don’t, you are acting like you have forgotten all I have done for you!”

CONCLUSION:

- I. So, our God is *Yahweh*, the great I AM, the self-existing, eternal God who always IS.
- II. Thus, all who will seek Him out in His word, who will know Him, His nature, and His will, and trust Him as their God can live and die with assurance that His promises of forgiveness, constant care, and eternal life for the faithful are not in vain.
- III. Will you know God, will you seek Him out, with you trust Him and the Son of His grace who He sent to die for you that you might, based upon your faith and willingness to faithfully obey him in this life have forgiveness of your sins and hope of eternal life after this life is over?
- IV. Will you come in F-R-C-Bp-LF?