

GOD IS ...YAHWEH

Exodus 3:13-15 ¹³ 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?” ¹⁴ 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.’” ¹⁵ God also said to Moses, “Say to the Israelites, ‘The Lord, 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 you shall call me from generation to generation.

ILL.: A man who changed his middle name to Mark ‘I Love Spam’ Benson is getting married in the world’s only Spam museum in America.

The father-of-two was told that on April 25 he will be the first person to be married in the Spam Museum in Minnesota. The soon-to-be Mrs Anne ‘I Love Spam’ Benson said: “He saw on the news last year that the museum had just been revamped and he just said ‘we are going there’.

An Iowa man who had his name legally changed to Beezow Doo-doo Zopittybop-bop-bop is facing five years in prison after an arrest on drug possession

A 36-year-old woman has been fighting red tape for over TWO years to get approval of her new name. But now she finally has the seal of approval to call herself – Abcdefg Hijklmn Opqrst Uvwxyz. Ms Uvwxyz – or Abcdefg to her friends – has a habit of regularly changing her name, with her previous name change resulting in her being called Ladyzunga Cyborg.

The teacher, who lives in the Colombian capital Bogota, said she has always had the need to constantly "redefine" herself.

Of course, God reveals himself through names. However, God is faithful, and His character does not change. The Lord says that this is His name forever.

Rightfully, Moses sensed he needed credentials before the people of Israel. Before, he thought he had the credentials because he was a prince of Egypt. 40 years of tending sheep took away his sense of self-reliance.

When God revealed Himself to humanity in the days of the patriarchs it was often associated with a newly revealed name or title for God.

- Abraham, in the encounter with Melchizedek called on God Most High **(Genesis 14:22)**
- Abraham later encountered Almighty God **(Genesis 17:1)**
- Abraham came to know the LORD as Everlasting God **(Genesis 21:33)**, and The-LORD-Will-Provide **(Genesis 22:14)**
- Hagar encountered You-Are-the-God-Who-Sees **(Genesis 16:13)**
- Jacob met El Bethel **(Genesis 35:7)**.

Now, when Moses comes to the elders of Israel with a "new message" from God, it is logical to think they would ask, "What name did He reveal Himself to you under? What new revelation from God do you have?"

God's covenant name is almost always translated LORD (all caps) in the English Bible. A name of the Hebrew God, represented in Hebrew by the tetragrammaton ("four letters") יהוה (Yod Heh Vav Heh), which was transliterated into Roman script as Y H W H. ... The name may have originally been derived from the old Semitic root הוה (hawah) meaning "to be" or "to become".

The name would be pronounced something like “Yahweh,” and is built on the word for “I am.” The pronunciation Jehovah was unknown until 1520.

How did this name come to be pronounced Jehovah? The pious Jews of later years did not want to pronounce the name of God out of reverence, so they left the vowels out of His name and simply said the word Lord (adonai) instead. If the vowels of the word adonai are put over the consonants for YHWH, you can get the name "Jehovah." All this came about much later; in the days of Bible, the name might have been pronounced Yah-weh or Yah-veh.

ILL. Companies have names for many reasons.

Pepsi: Oddly enough, it gets its name from the digestive enzyme pepsin and was originally was marketed as a healthy drink that would aid in digestion.

7-Eleven: It was renamed from “U-Tote’m” in 1946 to reflect their newly extended hours, 7:00 am until 11:00 pm. Although most are now open 24/7, they stuck with the name.

God revealed His name to Moses for a specific reason. So every time we hear the word Yahweh, or every time you see LORD in the English Bible, you should think: this is a proper name (like Peter or John) built out of the word for “I am” and reminding us each time that God absolutely is.

The name I AM has within it the idea of aseity - that God is completely independent; that He relies on nothing for life or existence (**Isaiah 40:28-29; John 5:26**). God doesn't need anybody or anything - life is in Himself. God created all other life, but God has always existed and is contingent upon no one.

On the other hand, we all need help.

ILL. In 18th century England they started running out of places to bury people. Consequently, people would dig up coffins and take the bones to a 'bone-house' and reuse the grave. When reopening these coffins, 1 out of 25 coffins were found to have scratch marks on the inside and they realized they had been burying people alive. So the clergy decreed that they should tie a string on the wrist of the corpse, lead it through the coffin and up through the ground and tie it to a bell. Someone would have to sit out in the graveyard all night (the 'graveyard shift') to listen for the bell.

Thus, someone could be 'saved by the bell'. Also they could be considered a 'dead ringer.'

Also, inherent in the idea behind the name I AM is the sense that God is "the becoming one"; God becomes whatever is lacking in our time of need. The name I AM invites us to fill in the blank to meet our need - when we are in darkness, Jesus says I am the light; when we are hungry, He says I am the bread of life, when we are defenseless, He says I am the Good Shepherd. God is the becoming one, becoming what we need.

What does it mean to us that God is the ever-existent God? It means that God is always in control and we need not fear. It is as if someone tells us to do something. When we are afraid he says, "Don't worry. I will be there with you. I will be there even before you. I will continue to be there even after you have left."

When we face difficult times, remember that our God is the First and the Last. The God who has always existed. The God who is always in control of everything around us.

The God who never changes

“I am that I am” also speaks about His unchanging character. It is all in present tense. There is nothing about Him that has become past tense. We can say of ourselves, “I was an alcoholic but not anymore” or “I used to be more fervent for the Lord.” We use the past tense to describe a state that has changed. But God’s name Yahweh emphasizes the present tense of God. The God who never changes.

Numbers 23:19 (NIV) God is not human, that he should lie, not a human being, that he should change his mind.

Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?

Heb 13:8 NIV Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

What does it mean to us that God never changes? It means that we can count on God. If God has helped us in our past problems, we can be confident that this God will help us in our present and future problems.

I AM: This is a divine title that Jesus took upon Himself often, clearly identifying Himself with the voice from the burning bush.

John 8:24 I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am he, you will indeed die in your sins.”

John 8:28 So Jesus said, “When you have lifted up[a] the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me.

John 8:58 “Very truly I tell you,” Jesus answered, “before Abraham was born, I am!”

John 13:19 “I am telling you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe that I am who I am.

John 18:4-6 ⁴ Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him, went out and asked them, "Who is it you want?" ⁵ "Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "I am he," Jesus said. (And Judas the traitor was standing there with them.)
⁶ When Jesus said, "I am he," they drew back and fell to the ground.

With the eternal presence of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; we do not need to fear anything in this life.

ILL. Black Bart was a professional thief whose very name struck fear as he terrorized the Wells Fargo stage line. From San Francisco to New York, his name became synonymous with the danger of the frontier. Between 1875 and 1883 he robbed 29 different stagecoach crews. Amazingly, Bart did it all without firing a shot. Because a hood hid his face, no victim ever saw his face. He never took a hostage and was never trailed by a sheriff. Instead, Black Bart used fear to paralyze his victims. His sinister presence was enough to overwhelm the toughest stagecoach guard.

Fear can paralyze us and we sometimes fear possibilities that will never come to pass. Moses feared that he would not succeed as a leader, but Yahweh would lead and support Moses. The same God who walked with Moses is with us today. Immanuel, God with Us.

ILL. During World War II, a military governor met with General George Patton in Sicily. When he praised Patton highly for his courage and bravery, the general replied, "Sir, I am not a brave man. . . The truth is, I am an utter craven coward. I have never been within the sound of gunshot or in sight of battle in my whole life that I wasn't so scared that I had sweat in the palms of my hands." Years later, when Patton's autobiography was published, it

contained this significant statement by the general: "I learned very early in my life never to take counsel of my fears."

I want to close with a few questions for us to consider.

- Do we take counsel of the unchanging God or of our fears?
- In times of trouble do we have faith in God?
- Do we recognize that God is unchanging in His mercy, grace, and compassion?
- Do we spend time thinking deeply about God's character and nature?
- When God calls on us, do we answer?