

Names of God - I AM who I AM

“Exodus 3: 1-15”

In our current sermon series we are learning about the names of God as revealed through the Bible. The many Names of God are like a mosaic. When you look at all of them you get a better picture of who God is. Today we look at “I AM who I AM” as revealed by God himself to Moses in **Exodus 3: 1-15**.

Moses's Calling

In the Lord's encounter with Moses at the burning bush. We see a man who initially is curious then transitions to fear/awe when confronted with a Holy God. God hears the cries of His people (Ex. 2:23-25), God appoints Moses to lead Israel out of Egypt. Moses resists this assignment but continues to speak with God. In this dialog, Moses ask God a practical question, perhaps sensing he needs to know more about God or needs an angle to wiggle out of the assignment. Moses' posing as the Israelites asks.

“What is his name? Then what should I tell them?”

¹⁴ God replied to Moses, “**I am who I am**. Say this to the people of Israel: **I am** has sent me to you.”

Exodus 3:14

אהיה אשר אהיה 'ehyeh 'ăšer 'ehyeh I AM who I AM
אהיה - I AM

The original personal name for God is spelled. “YHWH” four-Hebrew letters, yud-hey-vav-hey (יהוה, I AM). This Tetragrammaton¹ YHWH, has a root meaning “to be”, Some have understood the meaning to be “He-Who-Is” or “He who brings being into being”. Other biblical scholars have brought forward interpretations such as.

I will exist because I will exist : I exist because I exist : I will be who I will be : I am that which exists : I am that I am
For the purposes of this sermon I will use “I am who I am”

What would Moses expectation be for a name of god?

It seems reasonable to think from his education, as an Egyptian prince, he would know of the gods of Egypt, like RA, the sun god for example. He probably learned about the God of Abraham as a Hebrew and regional deities like the Canaanites' Baal or Moabite's Molech while living with Jethro in the land of Midian. These god's operated regionally or in nations and were associated with nature, i.e. Sun/Moon, natural processes like death, fertility/maternity, and growing crops. God gives a very different name with no boundaries/limits. Moses must have been astonished to hear, I AM!

How do you or I relate to “I AM”?

Like the name HOLY, HOLY, HOLY, It is very difficult. I AM and HOLY, HOLY, HOLY are closely related as 'core' traits of God. Our finite minds cannot associate anything from the natural world with this concept. Unlike anything in our existence, God does not result from something else, force, or thing. I owe my existence to my mother and father and all of their ancestors. My car exists because Honda manufactured it. Your iPhone or iPad exists because Apple designed, built and tested it. The Cosmos owes its existence to God who through whatever means and processes God saw fit, to create it. God makes it clear, that, “I AM” is not someone new. YHWH is the one who spoke to the patriarchs. He is the God of history and all that is to come!

¹⁵ God also said to Moses, “Say this to the people of Israel: *Yahweh, the God of your ancestors—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob—has sent me to you. **This is my eternal name, my name to remember for all generations.***”

Exodus 3:15

Do other parts of scripture resonant and support attributes to the name “I AM”?

I AM exists before creation	Gen 1:1 “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ... ” Psalm 90:2 “Before the mountains were born, before you gave birth to the earth and the world, from beginning to end, you are God. Isaiah 40 - has many verses that attempt to capture God, here are a few.
I AM is immense, in wisdom, knowledge and has boundless energy	12 “Who else has held the oceans in his hand? Who has measured off the heavens with his fingers?... 13 Who is able to advise the Spirit of the Lord?* Who knows enough to give him advice or teach him?” 18 “To whom can you compare God? What image can you find to resemble him?” 28 “ The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of all the earth. He never grows weak or weary. No one can measure the depths of his understanding.”
I AM contains and sustains life	John 5:26 “ For as the Father has life in himself , so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself.” Job 34:14-15 “If God were to take back his spirit and withdraw his breath, all life would cease, and humanity would turn again to dust. ”

I AM exists in a different way.	Acts 7:48-50 “Yet the Most High does not dwell in houses made by hands, as the prophet says, s “ ‘Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me, says the Lord, or what is the place of my rest? Did not my hand make all these things?’ ”
I AM does not change	Jam 1:17 “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. ”
I AM wills things into existence	Rev 4:11 “Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created. ”

I AM is immense, exists before time/creation, is infinite in wisdom and knowledge, does not change, will's things into creation, is dependent on nothing, nothing can be improved upon, added or taken away from I AM.

“... What makes God different from people, from the stars, from earthquakes, and from any other creaturely thing is that God—and God alone—has aseity²; **He alone exists by His own power. No one made Him or caused Him. He exists in and of Himself.** This is a quality that no creature shares. People are not self-existent; neither are cars or stars. Only God has the concept of self-existence.”

The Self-Existent God, RC Sproul

Jesus's bold claim “I AM”!

In [John 8:48-59](#) Jesus makes a remarkable statement during in one of the most intense dialogs between the Pharisees and Jesus.

⁵⁸ “You are not yet fifty years old,” they said to him, “and you have seen Abraham!” **“Very truly I tell you,”** Jesus answered, **“before Abraham was born, I am!”** At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds.

John 8: 48-59

In this familiar and contentious passage, the Pharisee's were horrified by this blasphemous statement. How can a mere person lay claim that he is “the Name”. Jesus makes a bold and emphatic statement. Saying ‘YHWH’, the most holy name of God to the Pharisees! Jesus is saying he is God! These verses are a goldmine for many other spiritual truths but we will stick with a focus on I AM.

We have the benefit of being on this side of the cross and resurrection. From the Apostles Creed, **He was conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of the virgin, Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into Hades. On the third day He rose again from the dead, ascended into Heaven, and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.** For those of you that know this Jesus, you have access to the unapproachable and most Holy I AM! Let me switch topics for a moment.

What I'm learning by watching my granddaughters.

My two precious toddler grand daughters, Malia and Colette, aka Coco remind me every week what it looks like to develop and grow up. They engage with the world around them with endless curiosity, persistence, and energy. At this stage in their young lives you observe a **large part of learning is caught and not taught, by being together.** They will be attentive for short time try to learn something you are showing them intentionally, like drawing/coloring, putting blocks together, etc. but at this stage it is mostly the other.

In the Gospel of Matthew 18: 3 Jesus said,

³ *I tell you the truth, unless you turn from your sins and become like little children, you will never get into the Kingdom of Heaven.*

Matt 18: 3

What is it about children that Jesus is saying is vital for entering into the Kingdom of Heaven?

Why does Jesus say “... and become like little children...” as the primary perspective to understand how to get into the Kingdom of Heaven? Jesus was always teaching his disciples about the Kingdom of Heaven/God often using the world around him and everyday events as ‘his lesson plan’. My sense is that young children are intrigued about the world around them, the very nature of the way a young child seeks to learn, instinctually trying to copy what they see the adult doing/saying, and how they both ask for help and show independence. Babies and toddlers cry, sleep, must be fed, changed, comforted, and cared for. When they are content and feel safe. They are learning sponges. **Does “I AM” smile when he sees us like a child learning about and being in the Kingdom of Heaven?**

In the Gospel of John 5:19-20, Jesus describes the very tight relationship the Son has with the Father. Does the pattern look familiar?

¹⁹ *So Jesus explained, “I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself. **He does only what he sees the Father doing. Whatever the Father does, the Son also does.** For the Father loves the Son and shows him everything he is doing. In fact, the Father will show him how to do even greater works than healing this man. Then you will truly be astonished.*

John 5:19-20

You can know the self-existing one. He is Jesus. How? Jesus says approach my world like a child. Be as curious, as intentional, attentive and persistent as a child when it comes to learning and entering my world. The Kingdom of Heaven/God. Do what you see Jesus doing in the gospels. Love and live like Jesus in your own journey with I AM.

Be like a child, and as you grow your questions will become deeper and more intimate. Out of Love the Father wants to teach you and me about life in the Kingdom of Heaven. **For the Father loves the Son and shows him everything he is doing.**

Definitions

¹Tetragrammaton - Greek word for meaning four letters ² aseity [uh-see-i-tee, ey-see-] noun Metaphysics, existence originating from and having no source other than itself