

January 24, 2010 – NAMES OF GOD, YHWH (part two)

Last Sunday, we began a new series of worship reflections called “Names of God.” Our intent for the next several weeks, God willing, is that our corporate worship will be guided by an investigation of some of the different Biblical “names” for God.

By the way, if you missed last Sunday’s worship reflections, you can watch that online anytime at our church’s website. (www.gladevillechurch.org)

Last week we saw that, in the Bible, a person’s name is often meant to tell us something important *about* that person.

And this same principle is true of God – His different Biblical **names** reveal different aspects of His character, His beauty, His greatness.

I hope you will find that each name is actually an invitation to worship. Each name is an invitation to draw near and know God in *your own* life as a manifestation of this particular truth about God, this particular “name.”

Last week, we began by looking at the most personal and most frequently used name for God in all of scripture – YHWH.

We learned that, whenever you see the word LORD printed like this in your Bible (in all capital letters), it’s telling you that this is a translation of the Hebrew word YHWH, God’s name.

We saw that this name of God - YHWH - appears in scripture over 6000 times! And we looked at just a few of those verses, focusing primarily on Exodus chapter 3, where Moses says to God:

Exodus 3:13-15

"If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ what should I tell them?"

God said to Moses, "**I AM WHO I AM.**"

And He said, "Say to the people of Israel, '**I AM** has sent me to you.'"

God also said to Moses, "Say to the people of Israel, '**YHWH**, the God of your fathers... has sent me to you.’ This is My **name** forever..."

There are a number of implications in these verses concerning the name of YHWH.

For one thing, we can see God using “YHWH” and “I Am” interchangeably here.

In addition, it turns out that the word “YHWH” is actually built from the Hebrew word for “I Am,” which is a verb – an action word – that means “to be, happen, exist.”

What all this says is that YHWH *means* “to be.”
YHWH means “I exist. I AM!”

“This is my name forever,” God says. “I am revealing myself to you as YHWH: the great I AM, the One Who Always Is. I Am ultimate existence. I AM WHO I AM.”

YHWH is totally *self-determining*!

He is Who He is! – *completely unconstrained* by anyone or anything!
There is no influence *outside* of God that *explains* how he came to be Who He is. Whether or not I *agree*, whether or not I *understand* it... God says “I AM.”

With YHWH, you just stand face to face with absolute reality and realize that He simply is Who He is.
And not temporarily. Not just for a few years. But forever and ever.

That’s another wonderful implication of this name, “YHWH.”
It tells me that God is never gonna change. (and that’s a *good* thing!)
In Malachi chapter 3, God says:

Malachi 3:6

“For I Am YHWH, I do not change.”

Now *people... that’s* a whole different matter, isn’t it?

People change all the time, they change their minds for all sorts of reasons – because of outside influences or unforeseen circumstances or simply weakness of character.

There’s been a lot of this in the news lately – people changing their minds.
And it’s bothered me, in kind of a nagging way.

I’m a University of Tennessee football fan, so Lane Kiffin’s sudden departure was a bummer. After all his big talk and all his promises, it was pretty disappointing to see him abandon that team after only one year.

But it’s not just him. You had the whole Urban Meyer thing (the coach at Florida), where one day he publically announces (on national TV!) that he’s retiring from football because of his health and “my daughter gets her daddy back,” and the next day suddenly he’s changed his mind. (spirited practice. back this fall!)

And there's this Jay Leno thing that's been going on at NBC – he retires from the Tonight Show; no, wait, now he's gonna go back to the Tonight Show. Oh, did we promise that show to Conan O'Brien? Well, sorry about that...
(maybe we'll move the Tonight Show, that's been on at the same time for 50 years!)

And for several *years* now we've had the whole Brett Favre saga where, every offseason, he retires in a tearful press conference, and then un-retires for a season, and then retires again, and then un-retires again.

And I'm kinda like, “feel free to make a big huge public decision and stick to it!... Somebody! Anybody!...”

So much waffling and indecisiveness.
Nobody seems to stand firm or stand for anything.

I've seen a lot of that in the business world. One quarter, THIS is the big emphasis. Next quarter, forget about that, now THIS is the big emphasis. You see lots of very short-term thinking. It's gotten to where promises and even contracts don't seem to mean very much.

And I've recently found myself feeling kinda discouraged and a little bit unsettled by all this. I've caught myself looking around and thinking, “Wow, who can you really count on anymore?”

And what I've finally realized is - that I've been looking for something from *people* that I'm only gonna truly find in God.

YHWH is the One I can count on. He does not change. He is Who He is!

YHWH is the One who is dependable and steadfast and faithful.

The Bible says:

Deuteronomy 7:9

Know that the LORD (YHWH) your God is *God*, the **faithful** God who **keeps** His covenant of **steadfast** love for a thousand generations...

Psalms 25:10

All the paths of YHWH are **steadfast** love and **faithfulness**...

Psalms 100:5

For YHWH is good; His **steadfast love endures forever**, and His **faithfulness** to all generations.

YHWH. He is Who He is. Unchanging and steadfast and faithful.

And, finally, one more implication of the name YHWH is that this faithful God, the great I AM, has drawn near to us in the person of Jesus Christ.

Now, you might wonder where we get “Jesus” out of this.
But the name of YHWH is literally imbedded in the name of Jesus.

Jesus’ name in Hebrew is Yeshua.

Yeshua is composed of 2 Hebrew root words:

Yasha (which means salvation), and – you guessed it! - YHWH.

Yasha and YHWH are the 2 root words that combine to form Jesus’ name – Yeshua.

So Jesus’ name literally means “YHWH is salvation.” Stunningly appropriate.

In fact, since YHWH is roughly equivalent to “I AM,”

you could even say that Jesus’ name means “I AM salvation!”

But the *construction* of Jesus’ name is not His *only* connection to “I AM.”

Not by a long shot.

It’s very interesting to search through the gospels for all the “I Am” statements that Jesus makes. (There are over 50 of them in the gospel of John alone!)

Some of these “I Am” statements seem fairly benign, while others seem (at least to me) to be packed with meaning and majesty! Statements like:

John 6:48

“I Am the bread of life.”

John 14:6

“I Am the way, and the truth, and the life...”

John 14:11

“I Am in the Father and the Father is in Me.”

John 10:9

“I Am the door...”

John 8:12

“I Am the Light of the world...”

John 11:25

“I Am the resurrection and the life...”

John 8:58

“I assure you, before Abraham was born, I Am.”

(The Jewish leaders tried to *stone* Him for *that* “I Am” statement.)

Mark 14:61-62

The high priest asked Him, “Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?”
And Jesus said, “I Am.”

Revelation 22:16

“I Am the Root and the Descendant of David, and the Bright Morning Star.”

Revelation 1:18

“Behold, I Am alive forevermore...”

Revelation 22:13

“I Am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”

“I AM.” And He still *is*! The Bible says that:

Hebrews 13:8

Jesus Christ *is* the same yesterday and today and forever.

So Jesus is still speaking “I AM” today, into my life and your life!

So when I’m looking around asking, “Who can I really count on? Is anybody gonna actually keep their promises and be steadfast and faithful?” Jesus answers: “**I AM.**”

When we ask: Who is actually able to give me some reliable direction for my life?
 (“**I AM,**” Jesus says.)

Who is able to help me with the mess I’m in? (**I AM**)

I’m not strong enough, I’m not smart enough, I’m not adequate to deal with my
circumstances. (**I AM**)

Who’s gonna teach me how to be a good parent? (**I AM**)

Who’s gonna show me how to love my spouse? (**I AM**)

Nobody’s even listening to me! (**I AM**)

Who's gonna tell me the truth? **(I AM)**

I'm not sure what to do next... **(I AM)**

Who's able to set me free from my addictions? **(I AM)**

Is anybody ever going to really, truly love me? **(I AM)**

I always have been, I AM, and I always will be.

I AM the Alpha and the Omega.

I AM the same - yesterday, today, and forever.

I AM.

PRAYER:

Jesus... Yeshua...

You are the way and the truth and the life.

Truly, YHWH is salvation.

You are steadfast and faithful.

You are our only hope.

You are at the center of everything.

You are the great I AM – who was and is and is to come.

It always *has been*, and it always *will be* all about YOU...