

Who Is God?

Long Beach Alliance Church • June 20th, 2010 • Pastor Chris Hankford

**God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM”;
and He said, “Thus you shall say to the
sons of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”**

~Exodus 3:14 (NASB)

1) Burning Questions Of Identity

- A) While speaking to Moses from the burning bush, God tells Moses he is being sent back to Egypt to appear before Pharaoh and to free God’s people (Exodus 3:10).
- B) However, Moses objects to God’s plan asking, “Who am I?” God promises Moses that His presence will assure success (3:12). Moses’ response is highly skeptical, even imagining that the choice for going to Egypt is optional (3:13).
- C) Assuming the Israelites are going to be highly critical of the burning bush story, Moses reasons that the Israelites will ask for some sort of authenticating sign that he is truly from God. So Moses asks God for His calling card, His identity, His personal name (3:13).
- D) God’s response jerks Moses from any further skepticism about God’s essence. “I AM WHO I AM,” God says (3:14). God uses a present tense verb to describe His essential self-existence, eternal independence, and singular ultimate authority over every dependent created thing.

- E) Technically speaking, “I AM WHO I AM” is not a name at all, but is the meaning* behind God’s personal name (3:15), to be remembered forever by all people. God answered Moses’ question with a definition first, and His name secondly, in order to emphasize “what’s in His name.”
- F) God’s name is “LORD,” the English rendering of Yahweh (yhwh/יהוה) in our English Bibles. While this is God’s personal name, it is also has significance as the designation of God’s fame, His character, His reputation.
- G) Yahweh then, at its essential core has the meaning of active presence. Yahweh Is. It may have seemed at times that God was absent to the Israelites in Egypt. But God says, “Yahweh Is.” In all generations and with all people, Yahweh Is, and His presence is about to become a startling reality for all of Israel, Egypt, and the world.

2) A Vision Of Yahweh’s Provision

- A) Note that God tells Moses to go to Israel’s elders and tell them that “Yahweh is concerned about you...” (3:16). Moses comes with a vision of promise (3:17), and the instruction to approach Pharaoh with Israel’s elders (don’t be a Lone Ranger), as a team (3:18).
- B) God prepares Moses for Pharaoh’s rejection (3:19), and gives a promise that God’s might (His hand) will free the Israelites from Egypt (3:20), and provide (3:21) wealth from a defeated and crippled Egypt (3:22), provided by the hands of Israel’s most vulnerable group, her women.

* אֲנִי אֲנִי אֲנִי אֲנִי “I AM that I AM,” replies God. The verbs are first person common qal Imperfects of the verb הָיָה “to be,” connoting continuing, unfinished action: “I am being that I am being,” or “I am the Is-ing One,” that is, “the One Who Always Is.” Not conceptual being, being in the abstract, but active being, is the intent of this reply. It is a reply that suggests that it is inappropriate to refer to God as “was” or as “will be,” for the reality of this active existence can be suggested only by the present: “is” or “is-ing,” “Always Is,” or “Am.” WBC/Exodus ©1987, pg. 39, by John I. Durham.