

## More Than Just a Name: YAHWEH

This morning, we are going to begin a new series which I hope will help you draw closer to God, your Heavenly Father, to Jesus, your Savior and Friend, and to the Holy Spirit, your guidance counselor for life. Have you ever heard someone speak about keeping their good name, or they say, they need to restore their name? Most of the younger crowd will not know what I'm referring to because it's considered something of an ancient concept today. But, in Biblical times, a person was the embodiment of their name. The Hebrew names found throughout the OT referred to a person's character, their nature, or their reputation. Many of them also placed great significance on the familial aspect as well. Unfortunately, this practice of naming our children is no longer common. Especially, here in the US.

Before we dig into the meat of today's message, I thought it would be interesting to share some name meanings with you. Don't worry, I'm not going to pick on you too much. So, when people refer to the "meaning of a name", they are referring to the etymology, or the original literal meaning. Let me begin with my name. **Brian** is a masculine name that originates from Old Irish and either means "*high hill*" or "*mighty and powerful*". I prefer the latter. **Shannon** is another Old Irish name which can be feminine or masculine and means "*wise or river*". **Sylvia** is a feminine name originating from Latin and means "*spirit of the wood*". **Jacky** was one of the most interesting names I investigated. Its origin can be traced back to Jacob, which in the OT can be found in the story of Jacob and Esau. Jacky means "*supplanter*". We could spend all our time together sharing name etymologies, so I'll move on, but I wanted to give you an idea of the premise for our new series: **More Than Just a Name.**

In similar fashion, God's name(s) represent His character as displayed through His behaviors and actions recorded for us in His Word. When you think of the name "GOD", hopefully you equate His name with "*greatness*". After all, the Bible uses over 300 different names when referencing God. And each one of them reveals aspects of His character, draws people to their knees in honor and praise for Him, and demonstrates the power and might of His perfect reputation. Through His Word, we can see His name in many different forms which work to invite people into a dynamic and intimate relationship with Him. All His names reveal to us what kind of God He truly is. Have you ever wondered why God uses so many names to reveal Himself to us? I know I have. I can only think that it's His way of teaching us that He is different and that 1 name is not enough to adequately define who He is.

Since there are so many, I would never be able to share all of them with you this morning, so let's look at just a few. What I want you to see as we go through this is that God's name is so much more than just a name. In fact, I want to begin with Revelation, because you'll find a reference to His greatness. **Read Revelation 4:8.** You know when we call God Holy, it means that not only is He different, but that nothing can compare with Him. He is distinct, unique, one of a kind. He is God and we are not. He is "Almighty", as in all-powerful, all-knowing, all-present. That's the God I'm referring to.

To carry this further, Revelation in three places calls God, the Alpha, and the Omega. These references are up on the screen. Let's read them. **Revelation 1:8, Revelation 21:6, and Revelation 22:13.** These are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. In other words, God exists as the A and the Z, as well as every letter in-between. When we call on the name of God, we are calling Him our everything. Is He your everything today? If not, I want you to know that He has what will quench your thirst. *"To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment."* (21:6b)

Did you know the formal name "Jehovah", was given to Moses in a unique way? I want to share this story with you this morning because it's filled with impressive insight into who God truly is. Look with me beginning with Exodus 2, verse 23. **Read Exodus 2:23-3:16.**

I felt it important to begin in chapter 2 because the last verse reveals the heart of God. I want you to know this morning that God hears you, He remembers you, He sees you, and He notices you. When I think about these things, I cannot help but be encouraged in knowing that God really does know me and is concerned about me, even when I may be just as messed up as the Israelites were. Just as enslaved as they were. But God never forgot them, and He'll never forget you! Amen!

Do you know how I mentioned the greatness of God earlier? Look at 3:8, God reveals more about Himself when He says, *"I have come down to deliver them out of the hands of the Egyptians."* God stands as our rescuer too! He is our Jehovah Jireh, the One who provides! Then in verse 12, He says to Moses, *"I will be with you."* Do you know that the adopted children of God are promised a constant companion? God will always be there with you. He is your Jehovah Shammah, the One who is near!

Each of these verses provide context for us as to the etymology behind God's divine name. Then He gives his two-part formal name in response to Moses' question: *"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 shall I say to them?"* (3:13).

First, God says, **"I AM WHO I AM"** (3:14). These words may be the most difficult to translate and then explain in the entire Bible. These words come from the original form of the Hebrew verb "to be." God's name - **"I AM WHO I AM"** - speaks of His essence, His being. It means that **God just IS!**

In the second part of the revelation in verse 15, God moves from the first person **"I AM,"** to the third person **"He is."** The Hebrew is **Yahweh**, translated "The LORD." Notice what God says, *"Say this to the people of Israel: '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, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations."* (3:15)

You'll find several designations for God's name in the Bible, but here is the only one name - **Yahweh**. Did you notice that even in the ESV, which is a very modern English Bible, it is recorded with all capital letters? They are conveying to us that this name is abundant with meaning. God's name is not simple; it is filled with grandeur! God's name is not miniscule; it is great! God is revealed as One who cannot be fully comprehended in a singular word.

Just think also of this story, the bush is a symbol which speaks to His ability to exist, even though He is not truly visible. Then consider the fire, which symbolizes His holiness. From these two symbols comes the word of his name, **YAHWEH**, a complete symbol of his dynamic presence - **"I AM WHO I AM."**

It's more than just a name... Everything is in that name: reality, eternity, life, magnificence, glory, and it all can be had when you have a genuine relationship to the living God. To know the names of God is to know God as revealed in His Word. My hope is that you will take all these things into consideration and that you will not leave here today without embracing God and accepting what He's offering. Will you let Him be your rescuer? Will you let Him be present in your life? Will you let Him draw near?