



The Nature of God—His Name

by: Steven J. Wallace

“Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel, And his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: ‘I am the First and I am the Last; Besides Me there is no God’ (Is. 44:6).¹

The nature of God is a most intriguing study and one that is worth our time and is rewarding to our commitment, love and reverence of the Most High. If we are going to draw near to God, we need to know who He is that we seek to be close to (Jas. 4:8).

Man has a tendency to try to reduce things to his own liking and perhaps at other times, he complicates things to his own justification. He tries to reduce the Bible to some handout creed or confession. He tries to reduce Christian living to one day a week and even then further reduce his worship to an expressed and hurried service. If a study goes beyond a defined time limit he feels compelled to bark and groan. Some have also tried to reduce Jesus to “Just a man like you and me” rather than the Lord of Glory (1 Cor. 2:8). While such is not the scope of this article, it should strike us that none of us know any man like you and me whose birth, death, burial and resurrection were prophesied; who when he lived and died actually fulfilled the ancient Holy Script, who claimed to not be of this world and proved it by ascending into the heavens, etc. He who lived and was crucified is our Lord of Glory. Man’s quest to reduce Jesus to just a man should not be very surprising as man has even tried to reduce God to an animal or something fashioned by man’s imagination. “Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man’s

devising” (Acts 17:29; cf. Ex. 32). Perhaps we do this because we are not comfortable or find it difficult to comprehend the Biblical portrait. For whatever reason, when we complicate what God has made simple, or reduce what God has not, we sin. Contentment and safety are in the confines of what is written, not in the halls of man’s imagination.

Isaiah speaks of the nature of God in 44:6. In this article, let us focus on the name of God. In subsequent articles we will continue to look at the other things pertaining to God as mentioned in this inspired text.

Jehovah

Thus says the LORD... We do well to take up the nature of God by studying the name of the One we worship. He is the “LORD.” Yet, the word “lord” doesn’t describe what is meant by the Hebrew. “Lord” is not a *translation* of the word, but rather a *substitution* that came to pass by a Jewish tradition that held the name of Jehovah to be so sacred that it was dangerous to even utter lest the one upon pronouncing it would perhaps blaspheme. This was falsely asserted by misusing passages like Leviticus 24:16. It seems that our translators, in wanting to keep with the conscience of these Jews, followed suit by translating the word for “Jehovah” (Yahweh) almost universally into “LORD” (using all capitals to distinguish it from the appellation “lord”). “Lord,” even in all capitals, is a title, however, not a name like “Jehovah.”

Who Is Jehovah?

“Hear, O Israel, Jehovah our God is one Jehovah” (Deut. 6:4, YLT). Jehovah, our God is one Jehovah. He is not one person, but one *united* Jehovah. This concept is seen in other things. One day is composed of evening and morning (Gen. 1:5). It is one day with two parts. Marriage consists of

¹ All verses are from the New King James Version.

two persons who become "one" flesh (Gen. 2:24). Likewise, Jehovah is not one person but three.

The Father is Jehovah.

This is seen in the fact that Jehovah refers to Jesus as My Son. "I declare concerning a statute: Jehovah said unto me, 'My Son Thou art, I to-day have brought thee forth' (YLT). This is obviously the Father doing the speaking, "For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased'" (2 Pet. 1:17).

The Son is Jehovah.

Isaiah spoke of one crying in the wilderness and preparing the way for Jehovah (Is. 40:3). This was fulfilled by the ministry of John the Baptist. He was asked if he was the Christ

or Elijah and he responded, "I am 'The voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Make straight the way of the LORD,"" as the prophet Isaiah said" (Jn. 1:23). In preparing the way for Jehovah, John was preparing the way for Christ as he told the Pharisees in John 1:26-30:

"John answered them, saying, 'I baptize with water, but there stands One among you whom you do not know. It is He who, coming after me, is preferred before me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose.' These things were done in Bethabara beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing. The next

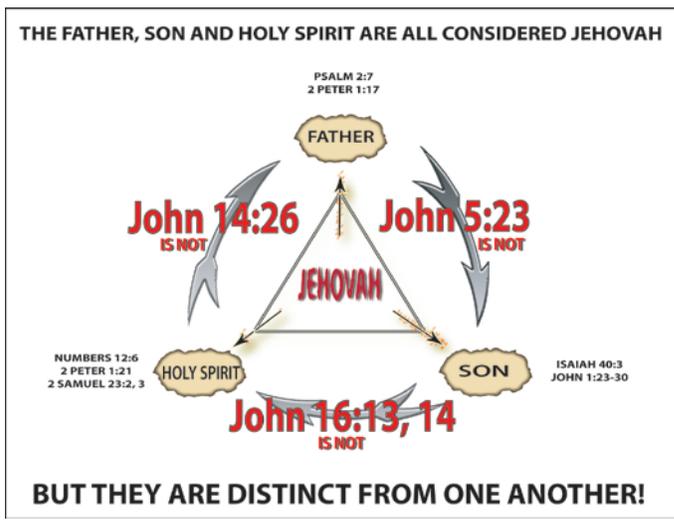
day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, 'Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is He of whom I said, "After me comes a Man who is preferred before me, for He was before me.'"

The Holy Spirit is Jehovah.

Moses wrote in Numbers 12:6, "Then He said, 'Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, I, the LORD [Jehovah, sjw], make Myself known to him in a vision; I speak to him in a dream." Who speaks to the prophet? Moses reveals that Jehovah does. In the New Testament, Peter tells us

exactly which person of the Godhead speaks to prophets, "for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet. 1:21). Further it can be seen by David's

own words in 2 Samuel 23:2, 3, "The Spirit of the LORD spoke by me, and His word was on my tongue. The God of Israel said, The Rock of Israel spoke to me: 'He who rules over men must be just, Ruling in the fear of God.'" The Spirit of the Jehovah is the God of Israel. He spoke by David and to David (cf. Mk. 13:11). If we grant that the "God of Israel" and the "Rock of Israel" refer to the Father and the Son in this verse respectively, then the deity of the Spirit still remains. We find that the Holy Spirit is on an equal par with the other two as He, the Spirit of Jehovah, is mentioned along with them in unison as with many other passages of scripture (Lk. 1:35; 3:21, 22; Jn.



14:26; Rom. 15:30; Eph. 4:4-6; 2 Cor. 13:14; etc.). He shares in all that is considered “God” as Peter called Him God in Acts 5:3, 4. We could align a similar argument from Hebrews 3:7-12:

“Therefore, as the **Holy Spirit says**: ‘Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, In the day of trial in the wilderness, Where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, And saw My works forty years. Therefore I was angry with that generation, And said, “They always go astray in their heart, And they have not known My ways.” So I swore in My wrath, “They shall not enter My rest.”’ Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from **the living God**” (Heb. 3:7-12, emp.).

Note carefully that the “Holy Spirit says” and then the exhortation that follows against departing from the “living God.” The Holy Spirit is the living God! Not only is this seen here but when we compare the original Old Testament reference in Psalm 95:6-11 we read that it is Jehovah who is speaking.

The forceful conclusion is that all three are deserving of being recognized as Jehovah for “...And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the LORD [Jehovah, sjw] shall be saved...” (Joel 2:32). This passage was quoted in Acts 2:21 and is fulfilled in each of us when we are baptized in the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:38). Hence Ananias asked Paul, “And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, **calling on the name of the Lord**” (Acts 22:16, emp. mine). Yet, when we are baptized it is by the authority of all three (Matt. 28:19). We call on all three when we are baptized and all three are Jehovah.

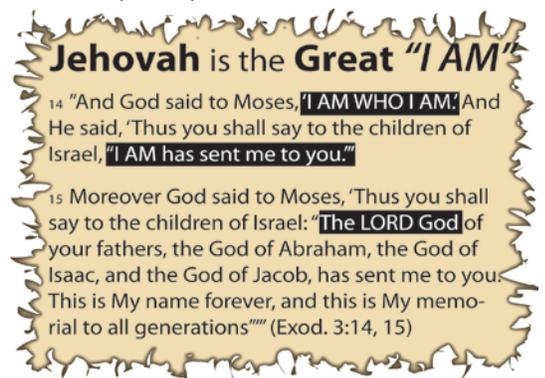
Revealing His Name

Our God first revealed this name to Moses, “And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the LORD: And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them” (Ex. 6:2, 3, KJV). We should ask ourselves, “What does *Jehovah* mean and why was it significant that He revealed this word to Moses at this time?”

Jehovah means “The Existing One.” He is not one who “came into existence,” or one who will “go out of existence,” but one who *always exists*. Since He is the creator of time, He has existed before time began (see, Gen. 1:1; 1 Tim. 1:2). Significantly, Jehovah told Moses in Exodus 3:14, 15:

“¹⁴ And God said to Moses, ‘I AM WHO I AM.’ And He said, ‘Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, “I AM has sent me to you.”’ ¹⁵ Moreover God said to Moses, ‘Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: “The LORD 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 this is My memorial to all generations”’” (KJV)

Note carefully how “I AM WHO I AM” in verse 14 corresponds exactly with the name Jehovah (LORD) in verse 15. The Lord not



only tells us His name, but He defines it for us.

Now why is this signify-cant? Why reveal this name at the time of Moses? Several things come into play, but basically all revolve around God keeping His covenant with His people. Israel had been kept in bondage and hundreds of years of silence from heaven have transpired. Would Israel remain in Egypt forever or would the Lord keep His word to Abraham?

“...Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions” (Gen. 15:13, 14).

In Exodus, the prophecy given to Abraham is being fulfilled; consequently, God is sending Moses to be Israel’s deliverer with the power of the name Jehovah. It is significant, that following what God said, “And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them” in Exodus 6:3, that there is a series that follow with three statements of “I have” and another series following with seven statements of “I will”

in reference to God’s promise and covenant (see Ex. 6:4-8).

The first series starts and ends with referencing the covenant and the last series is sandwiched between two repeat phrases “I am the Jehovah.” The point is clear; Jehovah keeps His promises with as much confidence and guarantee as He continues to exist. We should reverence Him as the “I AM” for with that quality our God surpasses all things here on earth. He is not the “I was,” nor the “I might be,” nor the “I aspire to be,” but the “I Am Who I Am.” He is permanent when other things are moved, and He is constant when other things swerve.

Application

How we should strive to be like Him and seek to emulate His steadfast nature as best as we can in our Christian walk, “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor. 15:58).

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The Nature of the Name “Jehovah”
Exodus 6:2-8

“And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them”
(Exodus 6:3, KJV)

constancy, permanence, dependable

“I HAVE” <small>Exodus 6:4, 5</small>	“I WILL” <small>Exodus 6:6-8</small>
<p style="text-align: center;">●●●●●</p> <p>I have also established My covenant I have also heard the groaning I have remembered My covenant</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">●●●●●</p> <p><i>I am the LORD</i> I will bring you out from under their burdens I will rid you out of their bondage I will redeem you I will take you to Me for a people I will be to you a God I will bring you in unto the land I will give it you for a heritage <i>I am the LORD</i></p>