

Title: Our God, Jehovah/Yahweh – Exodus 3:1-15

Aim: Explore the meaning of God's name, Jehovah/Yahweh.

Intro: Last week, seeking to corresponding w/our theme for this year – pursuing the kingdom, we began a Scriptural search to answer that question: “Who is the God of the kingdom? We found that the Bible begins immediately – from the beginning – to answer that important question. Genesis 1:1 tells us ***“In the beginning God.”*** That word translated “God” is “Elohim,” a plural intensive word that “looks plural but refers to a singular entity.” That name for God “describes a supreme being, strong & mighty” – God, the true God; God, very God. That plural intensive name points to the identity of God as Trinity – Father, Son, & Holy Spirit – 3 in 1. There is no other God but Him. And, our God/Elohim is Creator of all – ***“In the beginning God/Elohim created the heavens & the earth.”*** This week we continue our pursuit of the answer to our question, who is the God of the kingdom? We don't have to look very far in Scripture to discover another revealing an answer, declaring who God is. In Genesis 2:4 we read, ***“These are the generations of the heavens & the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth & the heavens.”*** Moses then goes on to expand upon the creation of man/woman (Adam & Eve). Note the name God – Elohim; God, very God, is used w/an addition which expands our understanding of God. The name “LORD God” is literally “Jehovah Elohim” (English) or “Yahweh Elohim” (Hebrew). Consider some foundational thoughts about this name of God before we delve further into what it means. 1) Jehovah/Yahweh is used over 7,000 times in just over 6,000 verses of Scripture. It is the most used name for God found in the Bible – by far. 2) In some, even most English translations you'll find the name in all capitals – LORD, referring to the divine name. 3) According to “GotQuestions.org,” the Hebrew word Yahweh is “based on the consonants, YHWH. In ancient Hebrew, the

vowels were not formerly written. Jehovah is the same name based on the Latin equivalents of the Hebrew letters, JHVH, which became the English translation of the Latin form of the Hebrew name. So, Jehovah & Yahweh are the English & Hebrew pronunciations of God's name." 4) OT Jews, & most pious Jews today did not/do not speak the name (Yahweh), & would/will only spell it w/out the vowels. Obviously, we find this name for God throughout the OT, but it is most prominent in Exodus 3:1-15. I) **You are probably familiar w/the history of Moses** to this point. He was hidden at birth because of Pharaoh's edict to kill (let die) all the Hebrew baby boys – Pharaoh thought the Hebrews were becoming too many & might become too powerful. When Moses became too big (or noisy) to hide in their camp, his mother put him in a basket covered w/pitch & put him afloat on the Nile river, hidden among reeds, hoping he would be found & spared. Pharaoh's daughter came to the river to bathe & did just that – took him to be her own child. So, Moses was raised in Pharaoh's household, becoming a prince in Egypt. He learned that he was born a Hebrew & as he grew older, he worked toward liberating his people. He killed an Egyptian who was beating a Hebrew man, & when that was discovered, he fled to the land of Midian, where he met his wife & worked for his father-in-law, Jethro. We read that he "was willing to dwell w/the man." He gave up on the idea of rescuing his people. That's where we find Moses as we come to Exodus 3. [READ 1-15] II) **The Setting** – Commentator Robert Jamieson wrote that the "Mt of God" – called Horeb here, is a mountainous district in which Sinai is situated & of which it is a part." It's important to note that for later, when God told Moses he was to "serve God on this mountain" – vs12 – that would be Mt. Sinai. As Moses led his father-in-law's sheep to the west side of the mountain, he saw something which caught his absolute attention. He saw a bush on fire, but not being burned up. According to Jamieson, the burning bush was not out of the

ordinary. Any spark of lightening or friction could easily ignite this “wild acacia or thorn bush, w/which that desert abounds.” Moses reported that “the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of the bush.” The miracle was not that the bush was aflame, but that it was not consumed, & it was a messenger from God. The word “angel” simply means “messenger.” We’ll see that God Himself was present in the fire. Jamieson wrote, the burning bush “is generally supposed to have been emblematic of the Israelites condition in Egypt – oppressed by a grinding servitude & a bloody persecution, & yet in spite of the cruel policy that was bent on annihilating them, they continued as numerous & thriving as ever. The reason was God in the midst of them.” Moses turned to see the burning but unconsumed bush more closely, & then God spoke to him from out of the bush. “Moses! Moses! Take your shoes off Moses! This is holy ground.” Then God identified Himself as ***“The God (Elohim) of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, & the God of Jacob.”*** He was/is the God of covenant, who, as commentator David Gudzik wrote, “hadn’t forgotten & would not neglect” His covenant w/His people. He told Moses that He had seen His people’s affliction & heard their cries. He would deliver them & would use Moses to do so! Moses, in essence said, “who me?” “Who am I to go to Pharoah & demand he set the children of Israel?” Then God answered, “Not to worry, Moses. I will be w/you.” In all of life it doesn’t matter who we are, but who God is. Then Moses asked, “Well, if I go to the people of Israel, even if I say, ‘the God of your fathers sent me,’ what if they ask me your name? Who should I say sent me?” Now we come to III) **The Name**.- God answered, ***“I Am Who I Am”*** – “haya ‘amar haya.” “Haya” is the Hebrew verb meaning “to be.” Then God told Moses, ***“Say this to the people of Israel: ‘I AM has sent me to you...The LORD (Yahweh), the God (Elohim) of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, & the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.’***

This is My name forever...” Gudzik points out that the name Yahweh/Jehovah would not have been previously unknown. It is found 160 times in Genesis. Interestingly, Moses’ mother’s name was Jochabed – Yahweh is my glory. God was calling them back to the faith of the patriarchs.” Again, from GotQuestions.org, “That tetragrammaton – the technical term for those 4 letters, YHWH, based on the Hebrew word for being, can be translated, ‘I am who I am’ or ‘I will be who I will be’ or ‘I am the One who is.’” Yahweh/Jehovah is the existing One. God/Jehovah simply is. There was never a time He didn’t exist, nor a time when He will cease to be. He is eternal & unchanging. F.B. Meyer wrote, “There is no past or future tense in the divine vocabulary. When God appears to employ them (past/future tense), it is by way of accommodation to our limited horizons.” Also, as Gudzik wrote, Jehovah “has no equal.” Meyer again wrote, “There is no equivalent for God but God. If you place God on 1 side of your symbol of equation (=), there’s nothing to put on the other (side) but Himself.” Also, He is self-existing & self-sufficient. He is completely independent. Again, Gudzik wrote that “He relies on nothing for life or existence. He doesn’t need anyone nor anything. Life is in Himself.” All others – you/I - are dependent on Him for life & breath & existence. He is dependent on no one. No wonder thought it scandalous the Jewish leaders & blasphemy when Jesus said in John 8:58, “***Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.***” They picked up stones to throw at Him, but He escaped their midst. They understood what He was saying when He said. “I Am.” Elsewhere He said, “***I & the Father are One***” (John 10:30). He was declaring that He was Jehovah in the flesh. The same Jehovah God who used Moses to deliver the Israelites from Egypt & take them to the Promised Land - & be sure, it was God who delivered them, not Moses – that same God took on flesh & dwelt among mankind, that He might deliver us from slavery to sin & make us His

children & part of His eternal kingdom. All who believe in Jesus as Savior/Lord are saved & become part of His covenant family. The same God who met Moses on the mountain & spoke to Him out of the burning bush – this same Jehovah God that was, still is. He hasn't changed. He who was there then is here now. We still depend on Him for life & breath & all things. Be sure that if you trust in Him, He is for you & will be w/you. Jehovah/Yahweh – LORD God – He is our God (**the God of the kingdom**)