

“HOPE Has a Name” – I AM

Proverbs 18:10 says, “the name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous run into it and they are saved.”

- Over the last several weeks at TSC we've been looking at the names that God gave to the Messiah, names that indicated the kind of Savior he would be to us.
- The **passage we studied was from Isaiah** who, writing 700 years before Jesus, prophesied that this Messiah would be called Immanuel, (God with us), Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace.

These are the names of salvation.

- These are the names that the righteous run into and are saved.
- These are the names that give us the victory that belongs to Jesus.

This evening I want to address THE NAME THAT IS BEHIND all the other names. It's the name that God gave to Moses at the burning bush when Moses asked God, directly, what his name was.

Moses was in a time of great personal distress and uncertainty.

- His career had fallen apart;
 - he had made a lot of really bad decisions
- he had lost his family;
 - He felt alone; lost; hopeless;
 - Consumed by regret and self-doubt.
- And he had a lot of questions about where God had been while all of this was happening.

That day at the burning bush, God didn't answer most of Moses's questions. He simply told Moses to trust him; that he had an assignment for him, a plan for his life to bless him and use him.

But Moses objected. He said, “Lord, no. I have made too many mistakes. I'm too messed up; I'm too far gone.”

To which **God responded by simply saying**, “My name is I am.”

- In English, we write that as **Jehovah**.
- It's a name that God will use of himself some 6519 times in the OT alone.

The irony is that it is not a name *per se*; it is a verb.

But it becomes the most common name by which God relates to broken and needy people throughout the Bible; people like Moses.

For Moses, it meant that whatever he was not in the face of this assignment—because of his sinfulness and brokenness—God would be for him and through him.

Moses said: “God, I can't do what you ask, because I am not... Eloquent enough. Smart enough. Righteous enough.”

- God said, “But I didn't choose you because you were any of those things.
- I am enough of those things for the both of us.”
- **I AM, and my “am-ness,” overcomes your “not-ness.”**

Throughout Israel's history, God would invoke this ‘I AM’ name whenever Israel was in a time of great need, and attach to it whatever they lacked; whatever he would supply for them in himself:

- For example, in **Exodus**, when the people of Israel were wounded and sick because of their sin, God revealed himself as **Jehovah Rapha** (literally, **I AM your healer**)
- In **Leviticus**, when Moses laid out the law—the great description of how to walk uprightly with God, the people said, “Who could ever live this way?” God answered with **Jehovah Mekoddishkem** (**I AM your Sanctifier**, I am the God who enables you to walk with me)
- When **Jeremiah** was discouraged by Israel's persistent inability to walk faithfully before God, and said, “How can we survive? We

are so sinful!" God said **Jehovah Tsidkenu** (I AM your righteousness)

- In **Ezekiel's** day, when the people of Israel felt scared and alone and besieged by enemies all around, God said **Jehovah Shammah** (I AM the God who is ever present)
- When **David** felt lost and confused, with no friends left in the world, he called God **Jehovah Raah** (The Lord my I AM your Shepherd)
- To **Abraham**, who faced an impossible circumstance with no seeming way out, God said **Jehovah Jireh** (I AM your Provider)
- And to **Isaiah**, who wasn't sure how he would survive another day, God said **Jehovah Sabaoth** (I AM your Defender the God who fights for you)

For all that Israel needed, for all that they lacked, for all that they could never be in themselves, God was the great I AM.

But here's the question—*How is God that for us today?*

You and I often find ourselves in positions of great need, just like they did—overwhelmed by our sinfulness or our inabilities; **full of doubts, insecurities and fears.**

2000 years ago, the Scriptures tell us **the great I AM was born as a baby:**

- The Eternal, all-sufficient I AM entered the world as a helpless child.
- He **did that so he could live the life** that we were supposed to live, and die the death we had been condemned to die.
- You see, only by doing that could he take away our sinfulness and restore us to God.

Around TSC we say that you can summarize the gospel in 4 words: **Jesus in my place.**

- Jesus died in our place: God had said that the soul that sins shall die. We are sinners, and that curse had to be carried out.

- You see, when it comes to our sinfulness, you and I don't know the half of it. We think of ourselves as good people who are confused and make mistakes.
- Ephesians says that we are dead in our trespasses and sins, incapable of bridging the gap between us and God, and unable to live a life that is truly pleasing to God.
- So, the I AM became one of us, so that he could do it for us. He grew up as one of us, living the life we were supposed to live, and then, on the cross, died the death we had been condemned to die.
- **Jesus In My Place.**

And so, in Jesus, God is...

- **Jehovah Rapha... our healer**—because in the cross, he bore our griefs and carried our sorrows; he was wounded of our transgression and bruised for our iniquities... and by his stripes we are healed
- Jesus is our **Jehovah Tskidenu: God our righteousness**—because God made him who knew no sin to be sin for us, so that we could become the righteousness of God in him.
 - (Righteousness is not something we have to work up before God; it's something given to us in God.)
- Jesus is now my **Jehovah Mekoddishkem, the God who sanctifies me**, who promises, Jude says, to finish what he began in me and present me faultless before his presence with great joy,
- Jesus is my **Jehovah Shammah... the God who promises never leave me or forsake me**, who tells me that he carries me in the palm of his hand and says that no one can ever pluck me out of that hand.
- Jesus is my **Jehovah Raah, the Lord my Shepherd**—the Good Shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep and walks with me through the valley of the shadow of death so that I fear no evil.
- Jesus is my **Jehovah Jireh, my provider** – who makes a way where there is no way, so that I declare with Paul that I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me, for my God supplies all my need according to his riches in Christ Jesus.

- And Jesus is my ***Jehovah Sabaoth, the God who never, ever stops fighting for me***—who has declared that nothing can separate me from his love: not height nor depth, nor principality nor power, nor things above nor things below, nor things in the past nor things to come; nor anything in all creation, can separate me from the love of God that is Christ Jesus.

For all that I need, all that I lack, all that I could never be in myself, Jesus is the great I AM.

In the Gospel of John, Jesus very clearly takes the name “I AM” to himself¹ and then, throughout the Gospel, applies that name to our greatest areas of brokenness and need:

- To those who **hunger, he says**, (John 6:35) “I am the bread of life.”
- To those who **thirst, he says**, (7:38–39) “let him come to me and drink, for *I am* the living water.”
- To those in **darkness**, Jesus declares, (John 8:12) “I am the light.”
- To those who **need a fresh start**, (John 10:9) he says, “I am the door.”
- To those who feel **abandoned**, (John 10:11) “I am the Good Shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep.”
- To those who feel **lost (John 14)**, “I am the way.”
- To those **confused**, “I am the truth.”
- To those **afraid of** death, “I am the life.”

Jesus is the Great I AM. You bring into this place all kinds of insecurities, doubts and fears. You say,

- “Who could possibly be smart enough to figure this all out?” He says, **I am.**
- “How am I supposed to know which way to go?” **I am.**
- “I’m not sure who is really on my side.” **I am.**

¹ John 1:14, 18; 8:58

² This is adapted from my sermon on Exodus 3, “I AM,” in the series “The Name,” and this section was, as I noted in that sermon, adapted from Louie Giglio’s sermon “I am not but I know I am.”

- “Nobody is listening to me.” **I am.**
- “My marriage is crashing and I do not know where to turn.” **I am.**
- “I’m 50 years old and I feel like I am starting all over.” **I am.**
- “Everybody thinks I can’t do it.” **I am.**
- “What if I fail again?” **I am.**
- “I’ve made so many mistakes.” **I am.**
- “I have given all I can give and it is not enough.” **I am.**
- “I can’t hold on.” **I am.**
- “I am tired.” **I am.**
- “I quit.” **I am.**
- “I need a fix or a hit, or a pour or a drink.” **I am.**
- “I feel alone.” **I am.**
- “I need a fresh start.” **I am.**
- “I just need somebody to hold me.” **I am.”²**

For **all that you aren’t**, for all that you need, for all that you fear, for all that you crave, for literally all that you ever cannot be, he is the great **I AM**.

Hope has a name, and his name is JESUS.

So, I have only 2 things to say:

1. **To those of you who don’t have a personal relationship with Jesus: Jesus wants to be these things to you**, but you have to receive him. John 1:12 says, “But to as many as received him, to them gave he the power to become the children of God, even to those who believe on his name.”
 - Believe on his name means take these names for yourself.
 - You see, **Jesus is all of these things**, but he won’t be them to you until you receive him.

- A friend of mine says that you can tell if someone is a Christian simply by what name they call Jesus.
 - Think of it like this: I can tell a lot about your relationship with me by what you call me. Gree-ar/ Dr. Greear/ J. Dizzle/ There are 4 people who call me “Daddy.” 1 calls me “Megaman.”
 - What do you call Jesus? Is he your Redeemer, your restorer; your Everlasting Father; your righteousness, your hope of heaven?
 - (I am not asking if you believe those things are true of Jesus in some way, but have you claimed them for your own?)
 - ***But to as many as received him, to them he gave the power to become the children of God, even to those who believe on his name. John 1:12***
2. Secondly, to those of you who already are believers, I say: You have accepted his great name for yourself; are you living in the fullness of that name?
- The 3rd commandment tells us not to take the Lord’s name in vain... This was always taught to me as “Don’t use God’s name as an exclamation: Do not say, Oh my God, or Jesus Christ” or something like that. And that is true.
 - But this was not just a command on how to use God’s name; it is a command about how to take God’s name.³
 - Think of like this:
 - In time past, there was a beautiful girl named Veronica Marie McPeters, and on the greatest day of her life she became a Greear. When she took my name, she became part of me. One with me. All that was mine became hers. (It wasn’t that much.)
 - When you became a Christian, you took the name of God to yourself, the name, I am. That means the properties of the “I am” became yours.
- What he is, you now have. The Apostle Peter says you became a participant in the divine nature; Paul says an inheritor of the divine promises; all the promises of God are yes in Christ Jesus.
 - That means when you, like Moses, say no to God, or cower before an assignment, because you think, “I am not _____,” you are taking his name in vain, because even though you not, he is, and you are now one with him.
 - When you say, “I am so stupid. I am a loser. I am such a terrible mom.”
 - GOD SAYS: “But I am not any of those things! And if I am in you, you are not either.
 - What I am, you are. Stop taking my name in vain.”
- You say,
- “But ah, God, I am so dysfunctional.” He says, “Yet I am so complete.”
 - You say, “I am so deficient.” And he says, “But I am so sufficient.”
 - You say, “I am so doubtful.” He says, “But I am so faithful.”
 - You say, “I am so sinful.” He says, “But I am so graceful.”
 - You say, I am so weak.” He says, “But I am so strong.”
- Whatever you’re not... Whatever you need... Whatever you lack; Whatever you did not get from your parents or your teachers or your coach or your boss... Whatever you are not getting from someone else, I AM!*
- When the doubters and haters in your life say to you, “Who do you think you are?” You say, I don’t think I am anything... but I know the GREAT I Am!
 - And own hearts whisper, You are not... we shout back, You are right. But he is, and I am in him.
 - Christ in me, the hope of glory. The promise of eternal life. The power for living.

³ Steven Furtick, message on Exodus 3 preached at Elevation Church. Much of the below is adapted from his use of it.

The victory belongs to Jesus, the victory belongs to him.

Who will stand against the Lord? No one can, no one will.

Christ in you, the hope of glory; in him, we are more than overcomers... GREATER is he...

Bow for Prayer:

1. **Have you received him?**
 - a. Salvation is **found by believing** on the name of Jesus for yourself. **Can you say,** “Jesus, I receive you as MY savior and MY Lord?”
 - b. If so, pray this...
 - c. Raise hands.
2. **To believers: Are you standing in him?** Are you going into this Christmas season with the knowledge that his great name belongs to you; that he is in you, and you are in him?

