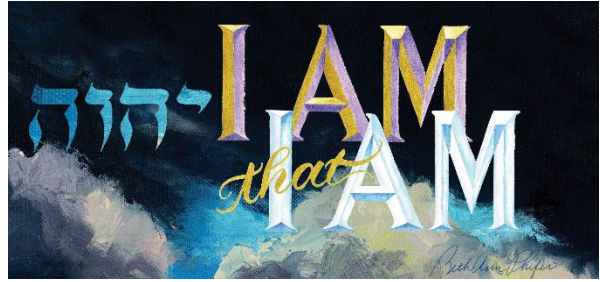




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writings by Beth Ann Phifer



## His Name

Why is it so important?

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People in the Bible have called God by many names that express the aspect of His character they experienced. They are beautiful names and are the reason I created *The Hebrew Names of God Collection* of art cards. God's three most used names in Scripture are Yahweh, Adonai, and Elohim. The translators of my Bible (NASB) use the uppercase **GOD** and **LORD** to designate His Name *Yahweh*. They use the lowercase **Lord** to designate *Adonai* and the lowercase **God** to designate *Elohim*. I love this tool because it informs me of the aspect of His character the author is expressing. Today, I want to focus on His Name *Yahweh*.

In about 1400 BC when Moses was pasturing his father-in-law's flock in the land of Midian, God called him from the midst of a blazing, fiery bush and set him apart to deliver His people from their oppression at the hands of Pharaoh in Egypt. Moses asked God what His name was just in case the people would ask him. God said, "יהוה" meaning "I AM WHO I AM." (Exodus 3:14)

The Hebrew letters that compose this Name are (from right to left) *Yod Hay Wav Hah* or YHWH, spoken as *Yahweh*. No one knows exactly how to pronounce this ancient Name. Many Jews believe the Name is too holy to mention. Others take their best shot and say YAH'-way because God said, "This is My Name forever, My memorial Name to all generations." A few friends of mine call Him Yah for short because their relationship with Him has become so personal.

So, why did He say His eternal, unchanging Name was important? I would like to propose three reasons:

1. **The Name יהוה differentiated Him from the false gods** that the surrounding people groups worshipped and attempted to appease. His character would be shown to be completely different, set apart – not a god they could earn points to please, but the One True Master and Creator of the heavens and the earth Who desired to love and rescue the people He created.
2. **The Name יהוה reminded His people of His character of love and faithfulness.** The phrase *I AM WHO I AM* is derived from a verb meaning *to be*; it is a continuing action. He is *The One who has always existed and who always will be*. His Name promised Moses and the Israelites "*I am He who will continually be with you.*"

*Yahweh* also means that He would be known by His actions toward them. Throughout Scripture, He reminds His people of His past goodness. His very Name would be that reminder. For example, in Psalm 18:1 – "I love You, O LORD my strength" – King David is exalting *Yahweh*, the same One Who brought them out of the land of Egypt, through the Red Sea, performed wonders for them in the wilderness, and brought them to the promised land.

3. **The Name יהוה reminded His people of His personal nature.** He has His own Name. The One True Sovereign of the Universe is personal, relational, intimately acquainted with the details of our lives, and desiring of our return loyalty and love.

**יהוה**, The Great I AM's character of love and faithfulness was fully expressed in Yeshua (Jesus) the Messiah. Yeshua was the incarnation of the One True God and ever lives at the right hand of the Father. Although our finite minds cannot grasp this mystery, it reveals His relational character.

At this time of year when the celebration of Yeshua's birth surrounds us, I am struck by the contrast of the Great, High and Holy One and His choice to condescend to meet us where we are. He came first in the womb of a young woman, and then He was born in a stable and laid in an animal trough full of hay for a bed. The Apostle Paul wrote:

Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus who, as He already existed in the form of God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage but emptied Himself by taking the form of a bond-servant and being born in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death: death on a cross. For this reason also God highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 2:5-11

Yeshua gravitated toward the receptive hearts who were most often the lowest outcasts of Jewish society. The prophet Isaiah praises this One for His gracious love:

For this is what the high and exalted One  
Who lives forever, whose name is Holy, says:  
"I dwell in a high and holy place,  
And also with the contrite and lowly of spirit  
In order to revive the spirit of the lowly  
And to revive the heart of the contrite.

Isaiah 57:15

The author of the book of Hebrews tells us:

For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses but One who has been tempted in all things just as we are, yet without sin. Therefore, let us approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace for help at the time of our need.

Hebrews 4:15-16



We praise You for Your love and faithfulness.  
Thank You for saving us, transforming our lives,  
and being with us forever!  
We exalt Your beautiful, holy Name!