

Sermon Notes

Exodus 3:13-14
"The Name of God"
March 22, 2020

Introduction

- 1) Historically, many turn to God, or a god, in their lives.
 - a) To find true assurance, comfort and hope one has to turn to the true God.
 - b) Besides getting God right, the more you understand and trust in God's character and attributes the more assurance, comfort and hope one will have.
 - c) Just like trusting in a beloved friend or spouse, who you have known for years, is vastly better than trusting in a stranger, or even worse, a make believe friend.
 - d) Mature Christians put their hope in God's character and nature instead of the world.
 - i) For example: Your best friend, who isn't a Christian, dies and you really wish/hope they will be in heaven.
 - ii) The foolish choice is to hope in man, either yourself or your friend, by thinking they are in heaven because they were nice to you. (Note the focus on man.)
 - iii) Instead the mature Christian rests in the character of God, who is holy, just, and good. That God will do what is right according to His standards.
- 2) To have this mature faith, one must know more about God.
- 3) And just like the first thing you learn about a person is their name, so too knowing and understanding God's name is a good place to start to ponder and know God.

The Name of God

- 1) Did you know God has a personal name?
- 2) Moses asked God directly what His name *is*. (Not "was" but "is" – More about that later.)
 - a) In Exodus 3 God spoke to Moses in a burning bush and called Him Ex 3:2-4
to go to Egypt to liberate the enslaved Israelites. Ex 3:7-10
 - b) Moses is at first hesitant asking "*who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh.*" Ex 3:11
 - c) Though God promises that He will certainly be with him, Moses then asks, Ex 3:12
"Behold, I am going to the sons of Israel, and I will say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you.' Now they may say to me, 'What is His name?' What shall I say to them?" – Ex 3:13
 - d) God answers: "*I AM WHO I AM*"; and He said, "*Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'*" – Ex 3:14
- 3) God's name is "*I AM*".
 - a) In Hebrew it is: יהוה
 - i) To spell it in English, it is: YHWH.
 - ii) It is called the "*Tetragrammaton.*" (Meaning: "Consisting of four letters.")
 - iii) There are no vowels in ancient Hebrew.
 - iv) YHWH is considered unpronounceable.
 - v) Though "Jehovah" and "Yahweh" are later attempts to pronounce it.

- b) By ancient Jewish tradition (going back to before Christ's incarnation) the word "Adonai" ("my Lord") was substituted when YHWH appeared in the text.
- i) In most modern Bibles YHWH is translated as "LORD" in all capitals.
 - ii) For example in Exodus 4:10a – *"Then Moses said to the LORD (YHWH), 'Please, Lord (Adonai) . . .'"*
 - iii) It gets a bit interesting when the "I AM" is called Adonai. For example, Ps 68:20 – *"God ("el" a generic term for "God" or "god") is to us a God of deliverances; And to GOD ("YHWH") the Lord ("Adonai") belong escapes from death."*
- 4) God's name is beautiful. "I AM" is mysterious and profound.
- 5) Yet it is also clear, powerful and all encompassing.
- a) As Calvin wrote, *"This is very plain, that God attributes to Himself alone divine glory, because He is self-existent and therefore eternal; and thus gives being and existence to every creature. Nor does he predicate of Himself anything common, or shared by others; but he claims for Himself eternity as peculiar to God alone, in order that He may be honored according to His dignity . . . Wherefore, in order rightly to apprehend the one God, we must first know, that all things in heaven and earth derive at His will their essence, or subsistence from One, who only truly is. From this Being all power is derived; because, if God sustains all things by His excellency, He governs them also at His will."*
 - b) This is hope, because in the end there is just God. In reality we are the optional extras, not the Almighty. He needs nothing, because He has all life unto Himself because He is a timeless complete being, the great and only "I AM."
- 6) Salvation of course from God too, found in His Son, the incarnate Word of God, Jesus Christ.
- 7) Christ stated that He is the "I Am" the . . .
- "Christ, the Son of the Blessed One"* – Mark 14:61-62
 - "Son of God"* – Luke 22:70
 - "(living) bread of life"* – John 6:35,48,51
 - "light of the world"* – John 8:12,18
 - "gate/door"* – John 10:7,9
 - "good shepherd"* – John 10:11,14
 - "resurrection and the life"* – John 11:25
 - "way, and the truth, and the life"* – John 14:6
 - "(true) vine"* – John 15:1,5
 - "Alpha and the Omega", "first and the last"* – Rev 1:8,17; 22:16
- 8) Besides teaching that Christ is the Savior and Lord, His "I AM" statements show that He is God.
- a) In John 8 our Lord responds to His detractors by stating, *"Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I Am."* – John 8:58
 - b) "Father" Abraham (the earthly founder of Israel) lived some 2,200 years before Jesus.
 - c) Not only does the Lord Jesus claim to have existed before Abraham, but that Christ has always existed and that He is God, the "I Am!", though different from God the Father.
 - d) There is no doubt that Jesus is claiming to be God, since we read in John 10:30-33 His fellow countrymen try to stone Him for that very claim.
- 9) This is a great comfort! Because there is full assurance in Christ because He is God!
- 10) *"And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved."* – Acts 4:12