

YHWH – The Unchanging God

For many years the patriarchs and God's people had known of God's Name YHWH (cf. Gen. 4:26, 14:22, 15:1, 25:21-22, 28:13, 49:18). So, in and of itself, this was not a new revelation, but then with the advent of Moses God then gave them further revelation as to the deeper meaning of the Name.

The Name YHWH is found 6,828 times in the Old Testament. It is the name most often used for God. It is the most significant Name for God in the OT in that it is the personal proper Name for God. This is the **ONLY** personal Name for God that in a sense belongs to Him alone. By that I mean that the Name YHWH is unique to the God of Israel and is not applied to any foreign deity.

YHWH was considered to be the most sacred Name for God by the Jews.

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Exodus 20:7 (NKJV)

7 "You shall not take the name of the Lord [YHWH] your God in vain, for the Lord [YHWH] will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.

For fear of using the Name YHWH in vain, the Jews refused to even pronounce the word YHWH, instead substituting another name for God (*Adonai*) in its place.

YHWH is also called God's covenant Name! It is the Name forever associated with and identified with the Abrahamic Covenant (cf. Gen. 15:7, 18).

The name YHWH is based on the Hebrew verb "to be". But now, add to the nuance of His eternity the idea that He is the **UNCHANGING** God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He is unchanging in His existence, but He is also unchanging in His faithful character - He is unchanging in His covenant relationship with Israel.

Exodus 3:13–15 (NKJV)

13 Then Moses said to God, "Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they say to me, 'What is His name?' what shall I say to them?"

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.’

The “God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob” is the language of covenant because it was to these three in particular that God reiterated the eternal Abrahamic Covenant. So, YHWH is also God’s PERSONAL, RELATIONAL, COVENANT Name!

Here God links His Name I AM/YHWH with covenant relationship, which is why YHWH is said to be “God’s Covenant Name”. It signifies God is UNCHANGING in His relationship with Israel.

This Name reveals the true essential nature of God that has always been and will be the same forever. It speaks of His UNCHANGING CHARACTER. What defines the very being of God is COVENANT FAITHFULNESS. God is forever FAITHFUL to His relationship commitments! Thus, the very UNCHANGING NATURE of God is seen in this Name YHWH (cf. Num. 23:19).

So, what kind of a God is YHWH?

- Eternal
- Unchanging
- Covenantal/Faithful

1) God is eternal and unchanging in both His existence and in terms of His character.

2) God is in an eternal and unchanging covenant relationship with Israel.

One can no more change the eternal CHARACTER of God than they can change God’s unchanging covenant relationship with Israel.

So, Moses in effect said, “The people are going to wonder where you have been for the past 275 years – what kind of a God are You?” God’s reply was, “Tell them that I AM the eternal God of covenant relationship. I AM forever dependable and faithful in this covenant relationship.”

Malachi 3:6 (NKJV)

6 “For I am the Lord, I do not change; Therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob.

After more than 1,000 years of UNFAITHFULNESS on the part of Israel, God in Malachi 3:6 says: “I haven’t changed!” It is for this reason that Israel continues and is not consumed. God is forever faithful. That is Who He is!

God then drives the point home in Exodus 3:15 by saying: ***“This is My name forever, and this is My memorial to all generations.”*** Nothing has changed in terms of Who God is or His covenant relationship with Israel.

God is LOCKED in to a covenant relationship with Israel FOREVER as seen in the Abrahamic Covenant made with Abraham (cf. (cf. Gen. 12:1-3, 7; 13:14-17; 15:1-21; 17:1-19; 18:18; 22:15-18), and reiterated to Isaac (cf. 26:3-5), and then reiterated to Jacob (cf. 28:13-15; 35:9-12; 48:3-4).

God’s very Name indicates ETERNAL, UNCHANGING FAITHFULNESS! Thus, YHWH is God’s eternal covenant Name.