

The Name of God

Exodus 3:1-15

Introduction

The meaning of names has always had an attraction to me. When I looked up the name *Dale*, I found it has several possible meanings. The one I was familiar with was “**valley, small valley, from a valley.**” Another possible meaning is “**Love and happiness.**” Another is “**Gift of God.**” My favorite is “**A handsome man who gets the girl.**” Today, we don’t put too much stock in the meaning of names. A name is a handle, something to call a person, to differentiate between two people. We use a name, so we don’t have to say, “Hey, you!” In Olden Days, last names sometimes came from occupations. A blacksmith would be called “Smith.” A wheelwright would become “Wright.” In Bible times, people were given names because of their meanings. Abraham and Sarah were told to name their son *Isaac*, which means **laughter**, because Sarah laughed in disbelief when she heard the promise of a child. Mary and Joseph were told to name their Son *Jesus*, which means **Yahweh (The Lord) saves**, because He would save His people from their sins. Today, we look at the name of God, “**I Am Who I Am**”. What does God mean when He says that His name is **I Am**?

Self-sufficient

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. (Genesis 1:1). Doubters are always asking us for proof. They want us to prove that God exists. You can’t experience Him with your senses. You can’t prove His existence mathematically. How do you know He’s real? We can’t turn to the Bible for proof, because the Bible doesn’t try to prove the existence of God. It’s the Word of God and **assumes** His existence. God **is**. When God says, “*Say this to the people of Israel: ‘I Am has sent me to you’*”, the church fathers translated it as **He Who Is has sent me to you**. Descartes said, *Cogito, ergo sum* (I think, therefore, I am). Because he can think, he knows he exists. God doesn’t need a reason to say He exists. He’s **self-sufficient**. He just is. God is complete in and of Himself.

Eternal

Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God (Psalm 90:1-2). In **Daniel 7**, God is called **Ancient of Days**; in **1 Timothy**, Paul calls him **King of Ages**. There was no time when He wasn’t. Even before time, God existed. God has no beginning. There will never be a time when God ceases to exist. He’s without end. To say God is *He Who Is* also means He’s **eternal**.

Immutable

(Read **Psalm 102:25-27**). Everything else that exists has a beginning and ending. Everything else also changes throughout its entire existence. God, with no beginning or ending, never changes. He’s always the same. The technical term we learn in **Catechism** is **immutable**.

Omnipresent

(Read *Psalm 139:7-10*). God's **omnipresence** is not just about location. To say that God is *He Who Is*, means that no matter whether it's past, present or future to us, it's always **now** to God. He is present in all times. In 1517—He is. In 2019—He is. In 2058—He is. *He Who Is*, is **omnipresent**.

Creator

(Read *Psalm 33:6-9*). Everything else has a beginning. Nothing spontaneously comes into being. So, everything that has a beginning must have its beginning in something else. Since God has no beginning, He's the First Source, that is, the **Creator**. Everything finds its beginning in Him.

The Meaning for Us

To sum it up:

- When we say that God is *self-sufficient*, we affirm that we can trust Him to be **able** to meet all our needs.
- Because He is *eternal*, we know that He is **always there for us**.
- We take **comfort** in His *immutability*, knowing that because He never changes, His Word never changes.
- The fact that He is *Omnipresent* means that He is **the God of now**. He cares about us now and what's happening now.
- He is our *Creator*, which means our very **existence** is in Him.

Love and Salvation

The best thing about all this is knowing that God is love. All these great attributes are governed by love. In His love, He sent His Son to die for us. In His love, He seeks us when we are lost. In His love, He reaches out to us with the means of grace, forgiving our sins and strengthening our faith. We have our existence, life and reason for living in the God who is **He Who Is**.

*May the peace of God,
Which passes all understanding,
Keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*
