

Series: Great Questions – week 3

CDOBC – beginning on 10/18/09

Title: “Who is God?”

Exodus 3:13-15 ~ November 1, 2009

OBJECTIVE: To help us know the true nature/person of God and His love for us.

Announcements

- Welcome / guests – communication cards
- November concerts at CDOBC – see insert
- Baptism – 11/8
- RHOF 11/15
- Annual mtg – Today after 2nd service
- ACSTO scholarship info
- Operation Christmas Child
- Prayer Gathering – tonight @ 6 p.m. – room #1
- Philippine relief – Thank you! Approx. \$2,000.00 given last Sunday!

Opening Prayer

Exodus 3:13

“Moses said to God, 'Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?''

The question before us today is Moses’ question to God: “What is His name?” “What shall I tell them?”

Moses was being called upon by God to do a mighty work on behalf of God. A couple of things are noteworthy for us to understand in this passage.

- The Hebrew people (later named Israel) had been in slavery / bondage for approx. 400 years. They were suffering terribly under the oppression of the Egyptians.
- We know that the generations after Joseph prospered greatly (400 years earlier). The Egyptians began to fear the Hebrews because their population had increased so much. Then, **Exodus 1:8-10** tells us:

“Then a new king, who did not know about Joseph, came to power in Egypt. "Look," he said to his people, "the Israelites have become

much too numerous for us. Come, we must deal shrewdly with them or they will become even more numerous and, if war breaks out, will join our enemies, fight against us and leave the country.”

- Nothing is really stated about the spiritual life of the Hebrew people during this period of slavery and suffering. It’s an argument from silence, but we might infer that their suffering and pain had caused them to be cynical of God and His promises to their ancestors Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph.
- Moses was about eighty years old at this time, and he was a fugitive in Egypt – wanted for the murder of an Egyptian guard (Ex. 2:12).

(Connect this to modern thought & life – suffering and thinking God is unable or unwilling to help / becoming cynical of God in the midst of suffering / thinking God can’t use us because of our past or our abilities)

So – the question before us today is really, *‘Who is God’* – *‘What is His name’* – especially in the context of great suffering and an uncertain future.

Psalm 9:9-10

“The LORD is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. Those who know your name will trust in you, for you, LORD, have never forsaken those who seek you.”

In difficult times, times of great sorrow and suffering, people don’t need a useless god – they don’t need or want a god who is limited to symbolism or ‘feel-good’ phraseology. They don’t need or want a god who is transcendent above them and disconnected and unconcerned about their plight in life.

They need a god who is useful – a god who can make a difference in their life and in their world. They need and want a god who is more than symbolic – they hunger for a god who is real and whose words can be trusted and promises can be relied on. They need and want a god who is not only above all things, but also

intimately aware of and involved with the minute details of their life.

How about you – what kind of God do you seek after? If you are a believer, do you know the God whom you worship and follow?

Exodus 3:14-15 (God's answer to Moses' question – and our question this morning)
“God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”

EX 3:15 God also said to Moses, “Say to the Israelites, ‘The LORD, the 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, the name by which I am to be remembered from generation to generation.”

God gives Moses three answers to his question.

“I AM WHO I AM” – vs. 14

“I AM” has sent me to you – vs. 14

Answer #3 is found in vs. 15 – “The LORD (Yahweh), the God of your fathers...”

“I AM WHO I AM” – In our English translation, this doesn't sound much like a name – it sounds more like a description. But, in the Hebrew this is the most personal name of God. Yahweh. It occurs 6,828 times in the Hebrew O.T.

In our English Bibles, whenever the Hebrew has this name in the text, it's translated with LORD – in all capital letters.

This name of God – Yahweh – is so sacred to the Jewish people, that they would never say it out loud – but they would substitute *Adonai* – which means Lord. Our English Bibles have carried on this tradition and to help us know when Yahweh was actually the Hebrew word and not *Adonai*, LORD is spelled with all capitals – to let us know the Hebrew name of God is Yahweh.

But what does Yahweh mean? What does it tell us about God?

When our first child was born – we talked about his name. We decided on Brian Christian – Brian means *strong* – so through our naming of our son, our deepest desire for him is found in his name – that he would grow up to be a strong Christian.

We can learn a lot about God through His name – His name has great meaning!

God exists by Himself.

His eternal existence:

“I AM WHO I AM” – in the present tense – God has always been – there is no past tense with the person of God. There is no future state of God either – He is. God is the creator of time – which means He is above time and outside of time – unaffected by the limitations and constraints of time. God is eternal – He existed in eternity past – He exists today – He exists tomorrow and into eternity future.

This is an amazing truth to try and digest in our finite minds.

His self-existence:

Another aspect of His name is that He not only exists – has always existed and will always exist – but that He exists in and of Himself. God is not the product of some other being that created Him. He is not the effect of some other cause outside of Himself. In fact, He doesn’t need anything outside of Himself – He exists in absolute perfection without any help from anyone else. His existence is lacking in nothing – He needs nothing from anyone or anything to make Him complete.

You are the way you are – you are the person you are – because of the genetic data you received from your parents – because of the physical environment you have lived in – because of the thousands of events and experiences you have encountered in life – because of the influence of your parents

and other people in your life – because of the influence and call of God on your life. But why is God the way He is? He is the way He is because He is the source of all reality. He is His own cause – there is no reality outside of God – no reality apart from God.

His powerful existence:

Since God exists eternally – since He exists of His own nature without any needs outside of Himself and is the effect of no cause, then we also know that His power is above all other sources of power – His power is absolute. He is Almighty God! He is not only powerful, He is power!

Isaiah 40:28

“The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom.”

God never grows tired – He never is too worn out to act on your behalf!

What are the implications of these truths? The fact that God exists – and that He is totally self-existing – He is omnipotent / all powerful? Do your actions and attitudes reflect these truths?

God does not change.

Since He is self-existing and is subject to no cause – and is absolute and eternal in His power, perfection, and all His other attributes, there is no need for Him to change. He cannot improve from His absolute perfections – so the only change He could have would be a change for the worse – but since He is God and is perfect in holiness and righteousness, He does not and cannot change!

Malachi 3:6

“I the LORD do not change. So you, O descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed.”

God's immutability (unchanging nature and character) should encourage us – He is and always will be faithful.
Illus – John Talmadge's suicide – he lost hope in God

God is not subject to human ideas about Him.

Many people over the centuries have tried to define God to their own liking. They have tried to make God out to be a loving God, but without judgment or holy standards. Others have tried to identify God as a harsh and angry judge – with no mercy, grace, or love toward a sinful humanity. Some modern day re-shaping of God has tried to teach that God is changing and learning as He goes through time – this is called “Open Theism”.

But God is above our attempted definitions and re-definitions. His existence and His reality is not a subjective experience left up to each individual to define for themselves. He is an objective fact. “I AM WHO I AM” is not up for debate! He is God – and He is not changed when humanity tries to change Him into something more to their liking!

We must obey Him.

When we begin to understand the person of God due to His self-revelation in His proper name – Yahweh / I AM WHO I AM – then the logical person – the rational person – the thinking person is left with only one logical, rational, and reasoned choice – to obey what God says. Why would you, after understanding His real existence, self-existence and power, His immutability (unchanging nature) – not obey Him? It's simply illogical to disobey Him and try to live life apart from Him.

Jesus is Yahweh.

Jesus said in **John 8:56-59**

“Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad.”

“You are not yet fifty years old,” the Jews said to him, “and you have seen Abraham!”

“I tell you the truth,” Jesus answered, “before Abraham was born, I am!”

At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds.

The reason the religious leaders picked up stone to kill Jesus was – and they understood this very clearly – without any doubts – Jesus had just claimed to be the God of Israel – the I AM of Exodus 3:14-15. He just took the personal name of God – Yahweh – and applied it to Himself.

This is the Jesus – Yahweh Himself who took upon Himself the humiliation and suffering of the cross – so that He could rescue us by paying the price for our sins – the sins of His creatures. Jesus did this for us because only God could pay the price for the sins of the world.

Application

God *exists* by Himself. – eternally, self-sufficient, and powerfully

We are comforted by God’s attention to our needs...

Our true value and self-image...

God does not change.

We can trust Him – He is trustworthy

God is not subject to human ideas about Him.

Our ideas of God must be sourced in His self-revelation – the Bible

We must obey Him.

A sovereign, all-powerful God deserves our obedience

Jesus is Yahweh.

God gave His life – took your sin upon Himself – so He could rescue you from sin's bondage.

He not only took your sin upon Himself, but He wants to give you rest – lead you to Heaven – the Promised Land!

Close in prayer / salvation – transition to communion