

# Theological and Practical Aspects of the Tetragrammaton

אֲנִי יְהוָה הוּא שְׁמִי

“I am the LORD, that is my name” Isaiah 42:8a

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## Introduction

Psalm 9:11 Sing to Yahweh, who dwells in Zion;

Declare among the peoples His deeds. NAB (adapted).

זָמְרוּ לַיהוָה יֵשֵׁב צִיּוֹן הַגִּידוּ בְּעַמִּים עֲלִילוֹתָיו:

We as God’s people, and especially as pastors, are to sing the praises of the LORD. In order to sing those praises three things are required. 1. a voice, 2. a melody, and 3. words. As God has gifted each of us with a voice number 1 is a given. But with what melody and words are we to praise our God?

That is an interesting question, for by self-definition in Job 38-41 Yahweh states that in his actions, ways and the reasoning for his behavior—he is a hidden God. Concerning this matter John Schaller wrote:

Someone once said, “Among all sciences with which mankind occupies itself, theology is that study which by its nature can actually satisfy a person the least....”

*The God fearing pastor or teacher must consider it a priceless privilege to be called for no other purpose than to occupy himself completely with this wisdom. But among all the sciences men study there is none in which the true scholar realizes so soon and so often how limited his powers of understanding are as in Christian theology rightly taught (Wauwatosia Theology, II, pp. 172-3, emphasis added).*

As this is the work of a theologian it is fitting that we explore what can be known about our “hidden God” and we do that by studying what he has revealed to us about himself.

*A New Concordance to the Hebrew Bible* lists some 6,639+ occurrences of יהוה in the MT (pp. 440-448) (*BibleWorks for Windows* lists 6,828). Yahweh has revealed himself to humanity in a mind-boggling number of times and ways. A God who reveals himself over 6,600 times is not to be known quickly. So in the time allotted (I hope) we will begin taking a *very* limited look at the significance of the ‘Name’ and then at the qualities Yahweh himself has revealed to us. Prayerfully this study will help each of us to understand and appreciate our God better.

## Theological and practical aspects of the Tetragrammaton

### A. Observations on ‘The Name’ and the 2<sup>nd</sup> commandment

#### B. Biblical Scholars

#### C. Yahweh himself

יהוה (in translation it is common for this name to be rendered ‘the LORD’), according to the Talmud, pesachim 50 a, is not to be pronounced. That is why in Jewish circles when the name יהוה appears in readings the term אֲדֹנָי, ‘Adonai,’ is generally substituted—out of respect for ‘the Name’ (Stern, p. 7). Jehovah or Yehovah then comes from combining the letters YHWH with the vowels from ‘Adonai.’ It is generally felt among biblical scholars, although there is no firm evidence of this, that the “Name’s” pronunciation is related to the אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה of Exodus 3:14, and therefore the name יהוה is thought to have been pronounced “Yahweh.”

Personally it is my feeling that Jewish hesitancy in using ‘the Name,’ or by ‘protecting’ it by such devices as “G-d” or “L-rd” or “יה,” is as misguided, well intentioned though it may be, as the excessive scruples observant Jews had and have about the “Sabbath.” As Yahweh has revealed his name 6,600+ times he himself shows that he is not inclined for mankind not to know him or to use his name. Rather by his own abundant use of his name he shows that he desires *to be known*. Indeed this is one of the reasons why Yahweh acted in the lives and the history of his people so “you/they will know that I am Yahweh” (x 79 in 79 verses). He desires to be known and he desires his name to be used, but only as is appropriate. This desire is seen in the LORD’s giving of the Aaronic Benediction “ ‘Thus you shall bless the sons of Israel. You shall say to them: The LORD bless you and keep you. The LORD make His face shine on you, And be gracious to you; The LORD lift up His countenance on you, And give you peace.’ So *they shall invoke* My name on the sons of Israel, and I will bless them” (Num. 6:23b-27 NAB, emphasis added).

To “praise the LORD,” as the Psalms say over and over, requires us to know who he is. To know who he is we should have a working definition of his name. What is the significance of the name יהוה? Professor Lawrenz defined יהוה as “The God of free and faithful grace.” The first listing in the *A New Concordance to the Hebrew Old Testament* defines יהוה as “The name of the Creator of the universe (שֵׁם בּוֹרֵא הָעוֹלָם)” (p. 440). *Strong’s Concordance* uses, “The Existing One.” In an article entitled “Bethsaida Rediscovered” its authors state, “Yahweh is the personal name of the Israelite God” (p. 54). The NIV Bible translators express his sovereignty by using the term “Sovereign LORD” 297 in 288 verses to translate אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה (*Quick Verse* for Windows, NIV, p. ix). *Today’s Light Bible* speaks of him as “the Savior-God” (p. 84). Each of these presents a facet of Yahweh, but, again, who is he?

Keil in his commentary on Genesis defines the name Yahweh by contrasting it with Elohim:

The two names (Yahweh and Elohim) may be distinguished thus: Elohim, the plural of אֱלֹהִים ... is an infinitive noun from אָלַהּ to fear, and signifies awe, fear, then the object of fear, the highest Being to be feared.... The plural is not used for the abstract, in the sense of divinity, but to express the notion of God in the fulness and multiplicity of divine powers. It is employed both in a numerical, and also in an intensive sense, so that Elohim is applied to the (many) gods of the heathen as well as to the one true God, in whom the highest and absolute fulness of the divine essence is contained. In this intensive sense Elohim depicts the one true God as the infinitely great and exalted One ... According to its derivation, however, it is object rather than subject, so that in the plural form the concrete unity of the personal God falls back behind the wealth of divine potencies which His being contains (vol. 1, pp. 45-46)

....

The name Jehovah, on the other hand, was originally a proper noun, and according to the explanation given by God himself to Moses (Ex. 3:14-15), was formed from the imperfect of the verb הוּהוּ = הִיָּה. God calls himself אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה, then more briefly אֶהְיֶה, and then again by changing the first person into the third, יִהְיֶה.

....

If we seek for the meaning of יִהְיֶה, the expression אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה, in Ex. 3:14 is ... (to be rendered as the Vulgate gives it) *ego sum qui sum*, "I am that who I am." "The repetition of if the verb in the same form, and connected only by the relative, signifies that the being or act of the subject expressed in the verb is determined only by the subject itself (Hofmann).... the Divine Being is not a resting, or so to speak, a dead being, but is essentially living, displaying itself as living, working upon creation and moving in the world; the formation of יִהְיֶה from the imperfect precludes the idea of abstract existence (For in names formed from the third person imperfect, the imperfect is not a future, but an aorist. According to the fundamental signification of the imperfect, names so formed point out a person as distinguished by a frequently or constantly manifested quality, in other words, they express a distinctive characteristic.), *and points to a Divine Being as moving, pervading history, and manifesting Himself in the world ... He is the self-determining one, the name JEHOVAH, ... "includes both the absolute independence of God in his historical movements," and "the absolute constancy of God or the fact that in everything, in both words and deeds, He is essentially in harmony with Himself, remaining always consistent* (Oehler). The "I am who I am," therefore, is the absolute I, the absolute personality, moving with unlimited freedom, and in distinction to Elohim (the Being to be feared), He is the personal God in His historical manifestation, in which the fulness of the Divine Being unfolds *itself to the world* (emphasis added). This movement of the person God in history, however, has reference to the realization of the great purpose of the creation, (that is to say), the salvation of man. Jehovah, therefore, is the God

of the history of salvation. This is not shown by the etymology of the name, but in its historical expansion (vol. 1, pp. 46-47).

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Vriezen agrees with this powerfully as he contrasts Canaanite-Phoenician religion with that of the religion of Yahweh:

The very being of God was wholly different in kind from the force of nature, which was glorified in the person of Baal, and disclosed itself through a specific *cycle* of the rising and shining, of declining and rising again as happened with the passing of the seasons of the year. *With Yahweh nothing of this is so much as hinted at.* He is the living God, not a dying and rising one; the God of the here and now, of the onward march of history, who by word and action wields control over the world (of men) (p. 42, emphases added).

... the religious belief in the Canaanite-Phoenician world especially is rooted in and fundamentally conditioned by natural and vegetative phenomena; but that is not true of Israel's religion. There life is governed neither by the caprice with which the elements (rain, wind, drought) sport with the earth (arable land, mountains, desert) nor by the sexual potentialities of man and animal (which magic art may use to further fecundity and growth), but *by a divine will*, operating in various ways, through the mind and spirit, the word spoken, the governance of history, the blessing conferred, or through natural channels such as rain, storm and sunshine,

This contrast is not to be taken lightly; for historically speaking, it is the factor that more than anything else governs the religion of Israel.

....

The Israelite world view is governed not by the recurring cycle of the year, the beginning of which represents, as it were, the world's own coming into existence, but by *a kind of thinking moulded by important events in the march of history, by the saving acts of God.*

....

*Here we touch on one of the most central elements in Israel's religious outlook on the world Because Israel came to know Yahweh through his liberating actions in history, she knew that her being and her continued existence derived from and depended on God's acts in history. Her religious ideas, therefore, were so oriented as to be neither naturalistic or cyclical, but teleological and grounded in history.*

... belief in the God who is at work in history involves a kind of thinking that is at bottom teleological. God's activity has an end in view; *his actions are directional*

*and their goal is his kingdom...* The whole idea of life as a cyclical process was broken through, making way for a knowledge that a new world was coming - a kingdom of God, which would bring an end to injustice of the present structures of human society and lead on to a world in which justice prevailed.

*... History is not a cycle, but a line painting into the future toward a goal appointed by God, or better still, a path by which at God's behest and under his instructions man is traveling to a new world Life in the world acquired a goal, pointing beyond itself. It is a vision with not only a national aspect but, . . . , a universal one: (the prophets) know, that is, that all peoples (sic) are to have apart in the community of which Israel is the vehicle, Jerusalem the symbol and Yahweh the salvation (pp. 72-7) (emphases added).*

Based on the above I would suggest that a good *working* summary definition of Yahweh, then, would be “The existing and directional God.”

Yahweh is directional and his longing and plan for us are also directional. What does this mean for us practically? Just the other day (1 Feb. 2000) I heard a radio public service announcement that told teens that their lives did not have to be an empty and meaningless existence going nowhere. It told that they did not have to get lost in a tangle of drugs, alcohol, etc. That message from Boys' Town Hotline to lost teens caught the gist of so many people's lives—aimless, meaningless, purposeless—whether that state was found in the highest boardrooms among supposed “movers and shakers” or the alcoholic sleeping in the streets. Theirs is the theology of the world, “you go through the motions of life, and then you die.” Theirs is the existence of a hamster on its wheel—very busy, very active, but going nowhere and achieving nothing. But that is not exactly accurate either, is it? They are achieving something—ever inciting the wrath of God, and there is a destination for such ‘hamsters’—hell. That is where we too once were:

NAB Ephesians 4:17 So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no *longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind*, 18 being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; 19 and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness. 20 But you did not learn Christ in this way, 21 if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, 22 that, *in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self; which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit* (emphasis added).

NAB 1 Peter 1:18 knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold *from your futile way of life* inherited from your forefathers (emphasis added).

That's where we were, but now we have meaning and purpose—a direction. *There truly is a goal to be reached.* Life is not just “Eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow you die.” “Gaining the whole world” is not the aim and end of life. As Paul said:

NAB Philippians 3:8 More than that, *I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord*, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, 9 and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from *the Law*, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which *comes* from God on the basis of faith, 10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; 11 in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. 12 Not that I have already obtained *it* or have already become perfect, *but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus*. 13 *Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus* (emphasis added).

Abraham is an example of this:

For (Abraham) was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.... 13 All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. 14 For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own. 15 And indeed if they had been thinking of that *country* from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 But as it is, they desire a better *country*, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them. (NAB Hebrews 11:10, 13-16)

NAB 1 Peter 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 *to obtain* an inheritance *which is* imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Another of the practical aspects of knowing Yahweh is that we believe and live in this understanding of Yahweh's directional-ism, not just thinking of the end of life, but day by day. As we see the sin, chaos and confusion and meaninglessness surrounding us, as we see plans in ministry and life falter and crumble, as events around us seem meaningless and random, what a blessing to know that while *that's what it seems like*. The seeming and the reality are two different things. "We walk by faith, not by sight" becomes for us not just nice sounding words, the feel good saying de jour, that is emptily mouthed, but a creed that is lived. It is a creed based on the existing and directional Yahweh's own word:

NAB Jeremiah 29:11 'For I know the plans that I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope.'

WTT Jeremiah 29:11 כִּי אֲנֹכִי יְדַעְתִּי אֶת־הַמַּחְשָׁבֹת אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי חָשָׁב

עֲלֵיכֶם נְאֻם־יְהוָה מִחֻשְׁבוֹת שְׁלוֹם וְלֹא לְרָעָה לְתֵת לָכֶם אַחֲרֵית וְתִקְוָה:

In this creed all events of life have a blessed purpose and meaning. To all the pains, the struggles of faith and the like that there is a plan. OT Joseph knew and lived this during his thirteen years of slavery and imprisonment—the last two years of which he was “not remembered, but forgotten.” His words, confessions, actions, demeanor all say, “The LORD is working here. There is a purpose to all this. It is simply my task to remain faithful and let God work out the details and his plan.”

Jesus is the ultimate example of such a faith. “Thy will be done,” “Into your hands I commit my spirit,” he said. He could do this because he knew there was meaning and direction in his life and work. John wrote that knowing where he came from, from God, and where he was going to, to God (John 13:3). Jesus set aside his robes and washed feet. Facing the cross Jesus expressed that same sense of directional-ism: “He turned his face resolutely toward Jerusalem” (Luke 9:51), “Get behind me Satan” (Mark 8:33), “*who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God*” (NAB Hebrews 12:2b, emphasis added).

Who is Yahweh? He is the Existing God who is directional, who gives his people purpose, direction and meaning in life and an ultimate goal to look forward to.

What are the qualities of this Yahweh? Biblical scholars and their input may be fine, but to really fine-tune our praises I would suggest that we follow the example George Herbert (1593-1633) gave. In a poem celebrating the resurrection he wrote:

Rise, heart, thy Lord is risen.  
Sing his praise  
Without delays.  
....  
Awake, my lute, and struggle for thy part  
With all thy art.  
The cross taught all wood to resound his name  
Who bore the same.  
His stretched sinews taught all strings, what key  
Is best to celebrate this most high day  
....  
O let thy blessed Spirit bear a part,  
And make up our defects with his sweet art.

To properly celebrate Herbert exhorts his lute to go back to the sources to learn what melody and key would be appropriate and he wisely asks God that the Spirit be there to make up for his limitations and faults. To learn of the theological and practical aspects of the Tetragrammaton calls for us to do the same—to go back to the Source to find the words and melody to speak of him, and pray as well that the Spirit “make up our defects with his sweet art.” To do this I have chosen to work with 200+ occurrences of Yahweh speaking of himself and saying, “I Yahweh was,” “am” “will be ... ”

## Yahweh Defines Himself

### *Answerer*

NAB Isaiah 41:17 “The afflicted and needy are seeking water, but there is none, And their tongue is parched with thirst; I, the LORD, will answer them Myself, As the God of Israel I will not forsake them.”

### *Creator*

NAB Isaiah 40:28 Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth Does not become weary or tired. His understanding is inscrutable.

NAB Isaiah 45:8 “Drip down, O heavens, from above, And let the clouds pour down righteousness; Let the earth open up and salvation bear fruit, And righteousness spring up with it. I, the LORD, have created it.

### - *Who formed us*

NAB Isaiah 44:24 Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, and the one who formed you from the womb, “I, the LORD, am the maker of all things, Stretching out the heavens by Myself And spreading out the earth all alone,

### - *The One for whom nothing is too difficult*

NAB Jeremiah 32:27 “Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh; is anything too difficult for Me?”

NAB Isaiah 50:2 “Why was there no man when I came? When I called, why was there none to answer? Is My hand so short that it cannot ransom? Or have I no power to deliver? Behold, I dry up the sea with My rebuke, I make the rivers a wilderness; Their fish stink for lack of water And die of thirst. 3 I clothe the heavens with blackness And make sackcloth their covering.”

### - *LORD of hosts/ Stirrer up of sea*

(In OT time *Yam* [the sea] was considered an enemy of God, the source of chaos, etc. To be, then, the One who rebukes the sea (Isa. 50:3) and stirs it up (Isa. 51:15) speaks of his power and might. Compare Jesus calming of the sea.)

NAB Isaiah 51:15 “For I am the LORD your God, who stirs up the sea and its waves roar (the LORD of hosts is His name).

- *Causing well-being and calamity*

NAB Isaiah 45:7 The One forming light and creating darkness, Causing well-being and creating calamity; I am the LORD who does all these.

- *Helper/Upholder of your right hand*

NAB Isaiah 41:13 “For I am the LORD your God, who upholds your right hand, Who says to you, ‘Do not fear, I will help you.’ ”

#### *Deliverer*

NAB Isaiah 46:4 Even to your old age I will be the same, And even to your graying years I will bear you! I have done it, and I will carry you; And I will bear you and I will deliver you.

#### *Desirer for our repentance and return*

- *Works for that*

NAB Amos 4:6 “But I gave you also cleanness of teeth in all your cities And lack of bread in all your places, *Yet you have not returned to Me,*” declares the LORD. 7 “Furthermore, I withheld the rain from you While *there were* still three months until harvest. Then I would send rain on one city And on another city I would not send rain; One part would be rained on, While the part not rained on would dry up. 8 “So two or three cities would stagger to another city to drink water, But would not be satisfied; *Yet you have not returned to Me,*” declares the LORD. 9 “I smote you with scorching *wind* and mildew; And the caterpillar was devouring Your many gardens and vineyards, fig trees and olive trees; *Yet you have not returned to Me,*” declares the LORD. 10 “I sent a plague among you after the manner of Egypt; I slew your young men by the sword along with your captured horses, And I made the stench of your camp rise up in your nostrils; *Yet you have not returned to Me,*” declares the LORD. 11 “I overthrew you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, And you were like a firebrand snatched from a blaze; *Yet you have not returned to Me,*” declares the LORD. 12 “Therefore thus I will do to you, O Israel; Because I will do this to you, *Prepare to meet your God, O Israel.*” 13 For behold, He who forms mountains and creates the wind And declares to man what are His thoughts, He who makes dawn into darkness And treads on the high places of the earth, The LORD God of hosts is His name (emphases added).

- *Pleads for us to return*

NAB Ezekiel 18:31 “*Cast away from you all your transgressions which you have committed and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! For why will you die, O house of Israel?* 32 “*For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone who dies,*” declares the Lord GOD. “*Therefore, repent and live*” (emphasis added).

*Does not change*

NAB Malachi 3:6 “For I, the LORD, do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed.

*Enemy to your enemies*

NAB Exodus 23:20 “Behold, I am going to send an angel before you to guard you along the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared.... 22 But if you truly obey his voice and do all that I say, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries.”

*Exclusive*

- *God/LORD, there is no other; Calls his by name*

(see Isa. 43:1) NAB Deuteronomy 32:39 “See now that I, I am He, And there is no god besides Me; It is I who put to death and give life. I have wounded and it is I who heal, And there is no one who can deliver from My hand.

עֲתָה כִּי אֲנִי הוּא וְאֵין אֱלֹהִים עִמָּדִי אֲנִי אֲמִית וְאֶחָיָה מִחֲצַתִּי וְאֲנִי אֶרְפָּא וְאֵין  
:מִצִּיל WTT Deuteronomy 32:39

NAB Isaiah 45:3 “I will give you the treasures of darkness And hidden wealth of secret places, So that you may know that it is I, The LORD, the God of Israel, who calls you by your name. 4 “For the sake of Jacob My servant, And Israel My chosen *one*, I have also called you by your name; I have given you a title of honor Though you have not known Me. 5 I am the LORD, and there is no other; Besides Me there is no God. I will gird you, though you have not known Me; 6 That men may know from the rising to the setting of the sun That there is no one besides Me. I am the LORD, and there is no other”

14 Thus says the LORD, “The products of Egypt and the merchandise of Cush And the Sabeans, men of stature, Will come over to you and will be yours; They will walk behind you, they will come over in chains And will bow down to you; They will make supplication to you: ‘Surely, God is with you, and there is none else, No other God.’ ” ... 21 “Declare and set forth *your case*; Indeed, let them consult together. Who has announced this from of old? Who has long since declared it? Is it not I, the LORD? And there is no other God besides Me, A righteous God and a Savior; There is none except Me. 22 “Turn to Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth; For I am God, and there is no other.”

NAB Joel 2:27 “Thus you will know that I am in the midst of Israel, And that I am the LORD your God, And there is no other; And My people will never be put to shame.”

- *Savior—no other*

NAB Isaiah 43:11 “I, even I, am the LORD, And there is no savior besides Me.

אַנְכִי אֶנְכִי יְהוָה וְאֵין מַבְלַעְדֵי מוֹשִׁיעַ: WTT Isaiah 43:11

NAB Hosea 13:4 Yet I *have been* the LORD your God Since the land of Egypt;  
And you were not to know any god except Me, For there is no savior besides Me.

וְאַנְכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וְאֱלֹהִים זֹלָתִי לֹא תִדְעַ וּמוֹשִׁיעַ אֵין בְּלָתִי:

WTT Hosea 13:4

Not to be political in this political year—but, note Bill Bradley’s thoughts concerning God’s claims to exclusivity. In an article in *WORLD* (Oct. 1999) Gene Edward Veith quotes from Bill Bradley’s book *Time Present, Time Past*.

He (Bradley) became bothered by the exclusive truth claims of “fundamentalism,” ... People everywhere in the world seem more than ever to yearn for an inner peace, a oneness with themselves and their world. Christianity offers one way to achieve it; Buddhism, Judaism, Islam, Confucianism, Hinduism offer others.... Increasingly, I resist the exclusivity of “true believers.” Isn’t it better to remain open, so you may learn from another’s truth?... I seek my own individual faith. (Bradley pp. 422-3; Veith p. 26)

*Exerciser of lovingkindness, justice, righteousness*

NAB Jeremiah 9:24 “but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things,” declares the LORD.

*Faithful*

NAB Isaiah 49:7 Thus says the LORD, the Redeemer of Israel and its Holy One, To the despised One, To the One abhorred by the nation, To the Servant of rulers, “Kings will see and arise, Princes will also bow down, Because of the LORD who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel who has chosen You.”

*Father/Master*

NAB Jeremiah 31:9 “With weeping they will come, And by supplication I will lead them; I will make them walk by streams of waters, On a straight path in which they will not stumble; For I am a father to Israel, And Ephraim is My firstborn.”

NAB Malachi 1:6 “A son honors his father, and a servant his master. Then if I am a father, where is My honor? And if I am a master, where is My respect?” says the

LORD of hosts to you, O priests who despise My name. But you say, “How have we despised Your name?”

### *First and Last*

NAB Isaiah 41:4 “Who has performed and accomplished it, Calling forth the generations from the beginning? ‘I, the LORD, am the first, and with the last. I am He.’ ”

*Gracious, compassionate, long-suffering, slow to anger, patient, kind, forgiver of wickedness, rebellion, sin*

NAB Exodus 34:6 Then the LORD passed by in front of him and proclaimed, “The LORD, the LORD God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; 7a who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin;”

### *Healer*

NAB Exodus 15:26 And He said, “If you will give earnest heed to the voice of the LORD your God, and do what is right in His sight, and give ear to as commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have put on the Egyptians; for I, the LORD, am your healer.”

#### *- of faithlessness*

NAB Jeremiah 3:22 “Return, O faithless sons, I will heal your faithlessness.”  
“Behold, we come to You; For You are the LORD our God.”

#### *- of apostasy*

NAB Hosea 14:4 I will heal their apostasy, I will love them freely, For My anger has turned away from them.

### *Holy*

NAB Leviticus 19:2 “Speak to all the congregation of the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.’ ”

#### *- Sanctifier*

NAB Exodus 31:13 “But as for you, speak to the sons of Israel, saying, ‘You shall surely observe My Sabbaths; for this is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the LORD who sanctifies you.’ ”

וְאַתָּה דִּבֶּר אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר אֲדָא אֶת-שִׁבְתֵּי תִשְׁמְרוּ כִּי אוֹת הוּא בְּיָנִי  
וּבְיַיִנְכֶם לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם לְדַעַת כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה מְקַדְּשְׁכֶם:  
WTT Exodus 31:13

- *Separator*

NAB Leviticus 20:24 Hence I have said to you, “You are to possess their land, and I Myself will give it to you to possess it, a land flowing with milk and honey.” I am the LORD your God, who has separated you from the peoples.  
וְאָמַר לָכֶם תִּירְשׁוּ אֶת-אֲדָמָתָם וְאֲנִי אֶתְנַנְנָה לָכֶם לְרִשְׁתָּ אֹתָהּ עֵרָץ זֹבַת חֶלֶב  
וּדְבַשׁ אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר-הִבְדַּלְתִּי אֶתְכֶם מִן-הָעַמִּים:  
WTT Leviticus 20:24

- *Who sets apart*

NAB Leviticus 20:26 “Thus you are to be holy to Me, for I the LORD am holy; and I have set you apart from the peoples to be Mine.”  
וְהִייתֶם לִי קְדוֹשִׁים כִּי קְדוֹשׁ אֲנִי יְהוָה וְאַבְדַּלְתִּי אֶתְכֶם מִן-הָעַמִּים לְהִיּוֹת לִי:  
WTT Leviticus 20:26

*Husband (our)*

NAB Isaiah 54:5 “For your husband is your Maker, Whose name is the LORD of hosts; And your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel, Who is called the God of all the earth.”  
כִּי בַעֲלִיךָ עֲשִׂיךָ יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ וְגֹאֲלֵךָ קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֱלֹהֵי כָל-הָאָרֶץ יִקְרָא:  
WTT Isaiah 54:5

- *Jealous*

NAB Exodus 20:5 “You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me,”

- *Jealous, exceedingly, for his people*

NAB Zechariah 1:14 So the angel who was speaking with me said to me, “Proclaim, saying, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, “I am exceedingly jealous for Jerusalem and Zion. 15 But I am very angry with the nations who are at ease; for while I was only a little angry, they furthered the disaster.’ ”

- *Sharp tongued and graphic in his jealousy—does not pull punches*

NAB Ezekiel 23:5 “Oholah played the harlot (beneath me); and she lusted after her lovers, after the Assyrians, *her* neighbors, (adapted)

וַתִּזְן אֶהְלָה תַחֲתַי וַתַּעֲגֹב עַל־מֵאֲהַבְיָהּ אֶל־אֲשׁוּר קְרוּבִים: WTT Ezekiel 23:5

### *Imperturbable*

NAB Psalm 2:1 Why are the nations in an uproar And the peoples devising a vain thing? 2 The kings of the earth take their stand And the rulers take counsel together Against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying, 3 “Let us tear their fetters apart And cast away their cords from us!” 4 He who sits in the heavens laughs, The Lord scoffs at them. 5 Then He will speak to them in His anger And terrify them in His fury,

### *Searcher of hearts*

NAB Jeremiah 17:10 “I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give to each man according to his ways, According to the results of his deeds.”

### *Shepherd*

NAB Isaiah 40:10 Behold, the Lord GOD will come with might, With His arm ruling for Him. Behold, His reward is with Him And His recompense before Him. 11 Like a shepherd He will tend His flock, In His arm He will gather the lambs And carry *them* in His bosom; He will gently lead the nursing *ewes*.

NAB Ezekiel 34:8 “As I live,” declares the Lord GOD, “surely because My flock has become a prey, My flock has even become food for all the beasts of the field for lack of a shepherd, and My shepherds did not search for My flock, but *rather* the shepherds fed themselves and did not feed My flock; ... ” 11 For thus says the Lord GOD, “Behold, I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out. 12 As a shepherd cares for his herd in the day when he is among his scattered sheep, so I will care for My sheep and will deliver them from all the places to which they were scattered on a cloudy and gloomy day.... ” 15 “I will feed My flock and I will lead them to rest,” declares the Lord GOD.

### *Shield*

NAB Genesis 15 :1 After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, “Do not fear, Abram, I am a shield to you; Your reward shall be very great.”

### - *Sanctuary*

NAB Ezekiel 11:16 “Therefore say, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD, “Though I had removed them far away among the nations and though I had scattered them

among the countries, yet I was a sanctuary for them a little while in the countries where they had gone.” ’ ’ ”

לְכֵן אָמַר כֹּה־אָמַר אֲדַנִּי יְהוָה כִּי הִרְחַקְתִּים בְּגוֹיִם וְכִי הִפִּיצוּתִים בְּאַרְצוֹת וְאֶהֱיֶה לָהֶם לְמִקְדָּשׁ מֵעַט בְּאַרְצוֹת אֲשֶׁר־בָּאוּ שָׁמָּה: ם WTT Ezekiel 11:16

- *Wall of fire/Glory*

NAB Zechariah 2:5 “For I,” declares the LORD, “will be a wall of fire around her (Jerusalem), and I will be the glory in her midst.”

*Who acts for sake of his name* (the LORD’s concern for his name is a major theme in Ezekiel)

NAB Ezekiel 20:9 “But I acted for the sake of My name, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations among whom they *lived*, in whose sight I made Myself known to them by bringing them out of the land of Egypt.”

*Who acts so we/ people might know him*

At this point it would be good to look at a rather enigmatic passage from Exodus:

NAB Exodus 6:2 God spoke further to Moses and said to him, “I am the LORD; 3 and I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as God Almighty, but by My name, LORD, I did not make Myself known to them.”

וַיְדַבֵּר אֱלֹהִים אֶל־וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אֲנִי יְהוָה וְאַרְעֵ אֶל־אַבְרָהָם אֶל־יִצְחָק וְאֶל־יַעֲקֹב בְּאֵל שַׁדַּי וְשְׁמִי יְהוָה לֹא נִודַעְתִּי לָהֶם: WTT Exodus 6:2

Already in Genesis 15:7 Yahweh had “introduced” himself to Abraham, “I am the LORD,” and in 15:2 we see Abram calling on the name of the LORD, “LORD God, what will you give me since I remain childless.” Obviously the name ‘LORD’ was known to Abraham. So how is it possible for God to say to Moses, “My name, LORD, I did not make myself known to them”? Kretzmann hit on the proper solution:

To the patriarchs the LORD had not revealed himself in his specific capacity as Jehovah although the name was not unknown to them. Now he would give actual proof, of himself in fulfilling his promises, in carrying out the conditions of the Messianic covenant. (OT vol. 1, p. 121)

“In his specific capacity as Jehovah” he would give actual proof as he acted miraculously and powerfully in the lives and histories of nations, peoples, and specifically his people. They would see tangible evidence of his existence. In Exodus 6 we see Yahweh first use the phrase “You will know that I am Yahweh.”

NAB Exodus 6:6 “Say, therefore, to the sons of Israel, ‘I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from their bondage. I will also redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. 7 Then I will take you for My people, and I will be your God; and you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. 8 I will bring you to the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and I will give it to you for a possession; I am the LORD.’ ”

וְלִקְחֹתִי אֶתְכֶם לִי לְעָם וְהָיִיתִי לָכֶם לְאֱלֹהִים וַיְדַעְתֶּם כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם

הַמּוֹצִיא אֶתְכֶם מִמִּצְרַיִם מִתַּחַת סְבִלֹת מִצְרַיִם::

WTT Exodus 6:7

The name had been known. Now the reputation would be seen, by the people of Israel and the Egyptians:

NAB Exodus 7:3 “But I will harden Pharaoh’s heart that I may multiply My signs and My wonders in the land of Egypt. 4 When Pharaoh does not listen to you, then I will lay My hand on Egypt and bring out My hosts, My people the sons of Israel, from the land of Egypt by great judgments. 5 The Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I stretch out My hand on Egypt and bring out the sons of Israel from their midst.”

NAB Exodus 14:4 “Thus I will harden Pharaoh’s heart, and he will chase after them; and I will be honored through Pharaoh and all his army, and the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD.”

This same theme is repeated some 63 times in Ezekiel:

NAB Ezekiel 5:13 “Thus My anger will be spent and I will satisfy My wrath on them (apostate Israel), and I will be appeased; then they will know that I, the LORD, have spoken in My zeal when I have spent My wrath upon them.”

Again, this acting is not only so Israel would know him, but also so the heathen nations would:

NAB Ezekiel 36:23 “I will vindicate the holiness of My great name which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst (by the people’s actions, and by God driving them into exile). Then the nations will know that I am the LORD,” declares the Lord GOD, “when I prove Myself holy among you in their sight.”

*Who Brings out*

- *Abram out of Ur*

NAB Genesis 15:7 And He said to him, “I am the LORD who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess it.”

- *People of Israel out of Egypt*

NAB Psalm 8:10a “I, the LORD, am your God, Who brought you up from the land of Egypt;”

- *People out of Babylon*

NAB Jeremiah 29:10 “For thus says the LORD, ‘When seventy years have been completed for Babylon, I will visit you and fulfill My good word to you, to bring you back to this place.’ ”

*Who called us in righteousness*

NAB Isaiah 42:6 “I am the LORD, I have called you in righteousness, I will also hold you by the hand and watch over you, And I will appoint you as a covenant to the people, As a light to the nations,”

*Who fills of heaven and earth*

NAB Jeremiah 23:23 “Am I a God who is near,” declares the LORD, “And not a God far off? 24 Can a man hide himself in hiding places So I do not see him?” declares the LORD. “Do I not fill the heavens and the earth?” declares the LORD.

*Who knows*

NAB Jeremiah 29:23 “because they have acted foolishly in Israel, and have committed adultery with their neighbors’ wives and have spoken words in My name falsely, which I did not command them; and I am He who knows and am a witness,” declares the LORD.

- *touching example*

NAB Exodus 2:23 Now it came about in *the course* of those many days that the king of Egypt died. And the sons of Israel sighed because of the bondage, and they cried out; and their cry for help because of *their* bondage rose up to God. 24 So God heard their groaning; and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. 25 God saw the sons of Israel, and God (knew). [adapted]

וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֵּדַע אֱלֹהִים: ט

*Who punishes the wicked/ like a lion/leopard/bear*

Exodus 34:7b “yet He will by no means leave *the guilty* unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations.”

NAS Hosea 13:1 When Ephraim spoke, *there was* trembling. He exalted himself in Israel, But through Baal he did wrong and died. 2 And now they sin more and more, And make for themselves molten images, Idols skillfully made from their silver (cf. KJV “and have made them molten images of their silver, *and* idols according to their own understanding”), All of them the work of craftsmen. They say of them, “Let the men who sacrifice kiss the calves!” 3 Therefore, they will be like the morning cloud, And like dew which soon disappears, Like chaff which is blown away from the threshing floor, And like smoke from a chimney. 4 Yet I *have been* the LORD your God Since the land of Egypt; And you were not to know any god except Me, For there is no savior besides Me. 5 I cared for you in the wilderness, In the land of drought. 6 **As they had their pasture, they became satisfied, And being satisfied, their heart became proud; Therefore, they forgot Me.** 7 **So I will be like a lion to them; Like a leopard I will lie in wait by the wayside.** 8 **I will encounter them like a bear robbed of her cubs, And I will tear open their chests; There I will also devour them like a lioness, As a wild beast would tear them.** 9 *It is* your destruction, O Israel, That *you are* against Me, against your help (emphasis added).

*Who speaks to us* (worthy of their own study and paper)

כה אמר יהוה or כה אמר אדני יהוה x 417 verses

נאם יהוה x 253 verses

דבר יהוה ( the Word of the LORD) x 255 verses

*With you*

NAB Isaiah 41:10 “Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, Surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.”

*Your God* (x 440)

NAB Numbers 15:41 “I am the LORD your God who brought you out from the land of Egypt to be your God; I am the LORD your God.”

אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִי אֶתְכֶם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לְהִיֹּת לָכֶם לְאֱלֹהִים אֲנִי  
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: פ

It is interesting, and, I believe, significant, to note that the greatest majority of instances of the phrase “the LORD your God” are in a book of law, Deuteronomy. 240 verses of its 959 verses contain the expression a total of 280 times. Thus 54.3% of all occurrences of the phrase are in

Deuteronomy. There are any number of reasons for this, which are not part of the scope of this paper, but I would briefly suggest they, by and large, are there as *Gospel* motivation for keeping the Law. God was saying to his people in this ‘second giving of the Law,’ “I have made myself yours.” Note also the various occurrences “Egypt” in the same book—reminding the people of what God had done there, what he had delivered them from, and what he had brought them to mentioned for the same reason, as the basis for their obedience. Deuteronomy is not just a book of Laws in which God says to his people, “*Ich bin der Herr, and Sie müssen!*” Rather on the basis of who he is and what he has done for them he is exhorting and encouraging his people *to be his people*. Is there a sense of warning there as well, yes, but the overall purpose and theme of these words, I would argue, is Gospel “I Yahweh am *your* God.”

On the opposite side of this Gospel reminder, “I the LORD am *your* God,” is the horrible law preaching found in Hosea 1:9

And he (LORD) said, “Call him Lo-ammi, for you are not my people and *I am not yours*” (emphasis added).

וַיֹּאמֶר קְרָא שְׁמוֹ לֹא עַמִּי כִּי אֶתֶם לֹא עַמִּי וְאֲנֹכִי לֹא-אֶהְיֶה לְכֶם: ח Hosea 1:9

What a horrible, horrible statement to hear from “our God,” “our Husband”!!! Just hearing it takes one’s breath away. It’s a statement that makes a believer cringe even to read, let alone think of hearing it spoken to him or her.

This Law preaching is also seen in the various times that God says to his people,

NAB Ezekiel 21:3b ‘Thus says the LORD, “*Behold, I am against you; and I will draw My sword out of its sheath and cut off from you the righteous and the wicked* (emphasis added).

- *Your King/Great King/Whose Name is feared*

NAB Isaiah 43:15 “I am the LORD, your Holy One, The Creator of Israel, your King.”

NAB Malachi 1:14 “But cursed be the swindler who has a male in his flock and vows it, but sacrifices a blemished animal to the Lord, for I am a great King,” says the LORD of hosts, “and My name is feared among the nations.”

- *Your Redeemer* (only used in Isaiah. NOTE THE STACKING UP OF TERMS!!!)

NAB Isaiah 44:24 Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, and the one who formed you from the womb, “I, the LORD, am the maker of all things, Stretching out the heavens by Myself And spreading out the earth all alone,”

NAB Isaiah 48:17 Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, “I am the LORD your God, who teaches you to profit, Who leads you in the way you should go.”

NAB Isaiah 49:26 “I will feed your oppressors with their own flesh, And they will become drunk with their own blood as with sweet wine; And all flesh will know that I, the LORD, am your Savior And your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.”

- *Strong Redeemer*

NAB Jeremiah 50:33 Thus says the LORD of hosts, “The sons of Israel are oppressed, And the sons of Judah as well; And all who took them captive have held them fast, They have refused to let them go. 34 Their Redeemer is strong, the LORD of hosts is His name; He will vigorously plead their case So that He may bring rest to the earth, But turmoil to the inhabitants of Babylon.

The above is *just a beginning* of what Yahweh has to reveal about himself? That fact is remarkable enough in itself. Perhaps the more amazing thing is that Yahweh by revealing himself to us in these many ways is, in effect, saying to us, “Take this information and deduce from it correct theses about me, my characteristics, my work, my attitudes toward you, sin, etc.”!!! Being a pastor of a congregation is challenging and daunting enough, but the knowing and the growing in the knowledge of Yahweh, Creator, Filler of all things, Holy One, Sanctifier, etc. etc, is mind-boggling to the extreme, but this is what Yahweh desires each believer to do, and especially his shepherds to do, so his sheep may know him better.

Not only does he desire us to do this, he expresses his confidence in us that we are able to do this!!!!!! Each time we read his name he says, “I am know that you are able to learn about me what I desire you to learn. You will interpret my name rightly, use it rightly and won’t come to the wrong conclusions. Just listen to what I have told you, follow my instructions and you’ll be okay.” He by such revealing is saying to us, “I have every confidence that you are able with my Spirit to know and understand me - insofar as I have revealed myself to you.”

How do we do that? By giving priority time to considering prayerfully, carefully and studiously his 6,600+ (6,800+) usages of his name:

- a. Hearing what he has to say about himself by each usage (Is. 36:3-4 “Listen to me” Yah says)
- b. Absorbing what he says (NAB Psalm 119:148 My eyes anticipate the night watches, That I may meditate on Your word.)
- c. Believing what he says (compare Abram’s belief of God’s promises)
- d. Recognizing when you have experienced him in your own life and ministry (compare Joseph’s naming of his sons—Gen. 41:51-52)
- e. *Putting him and his qualities to use in our lives and ministries*

OT believers knew the qualities of God, believed in him and his goodness. Such a believing heart is what brings salvation—“Abram believed God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.” What these people were doing was that they were putting their faith in action—they believed that Yahweh exists, understood his qualities, made use of those qualities, and understood that “he is a rewarder of those who seek him” (Heb. 11:6).

Luther encouraged such when he stated that the right way to study theology was by being in the Word 1. praying God would teach us, 2. by meditation on what was heard - in the heart and out loud, and not just once or twice, and 3. *by trial*—“*this (i.e. trial) is the touchstone that teaches you not only to know and understand but also to experience how right, how true, how sweet, how lovely, how mighty, how comforting is God’s Word, wisdom above all wisdom.*” (*Prayer Book*, #142, p. 287-288). I would add, *It is not enough for us only to know and understand Yahweh, but also to experience how right, how true, how sweet, how lovely, how mighty, how comforting he is.*

- f. Acknowledging his acts in our life and ministry
- g. Proclaiming them

Again, this is exactly what the OT writers did, “Our help is in the name of the LORD,” “I lift up my eyes to the hills. Where does my help come from? From the LORD who made heaven and earth.” “In my distress I called to the LORD and he answered me,” “Even in the shadow of death you are with me,” etc., etc. Psalm 103, for one example, is a wonderful exercise in taking what God has said about himself and applying it to the everyday life of a believer.

Another practical aspect of Yahweh and his qualities is that we are able to put our absolute trust in him. He is utterly consistent. With him with us we need not doubt, he is there for us entirely without a doubt. He and his word can be trusted completely in every and any situation. He can be counted on wholly, positively, unconditionally. Yahweh and his qualities listed above are immutable—beyond ‘rock-solid-sure.’ “In him we will never be shaken, never be put to shame.”

NAB Psalm 95:10 come, let us sing for joy to the LORD, Let us shout joyfully to the Rock of our salvation.... 3 For the LORD is a great God And a great King above all gods, 4 In whose hand are the depths of the earth, The peaks of the mountains are His also. 5 The sea is His, for it was He who made it, And His hands formed the dry land. 6 Come, let us worship and bow down, Let us kneel before the LORD our Maker. 7 For He is our God, And we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand.

NAB Isaiah 26:4 “Trust in the LORD forever, For in GOD the LORD is an everlasting Rock.” (adapted)

בְּטַחוּ בַיהוָה עֲדֵי־עַד כִּי בֵּיתָהּ יְהוָה צוּר עוֹלָמִים WTT Isaiah 26:4

NAB Psalm 117:1 Praise the LORD, all nations; Laud Him, all peoples! 2 For His lovingkindness is great toward us, And the truth of the LORD is everlasting. Praise the LORD!

הֲלֵלוּ אֶת־יְהוָה כָּל־גּוֹיִם שִׁבְחוּהוּ כָּל־הָאִמְּוֹת:  
כִּי גָבַר עָלֵינוּ חַסְדּוֹ וְאֱמֶת־יְהוָה לְעוֹלָם הֲלֵלוּ־יְהוָה:

WTT Psalm 117:1

## Conclusion

Psalm 9:11 Sing to Yahweh, who dwells in Zion;

Declare among the peoples His deeds. (NAB, adapted).

וּבְטַח בָּהּ יוֹדְעֵי שְׁמֶךָ כִּי לֹא־עֲזַבְתָּ דַרְשֵׁיךָ יְהוָה:

Psalm 135:3 Praise Yah, for Yahweh is good;

Sing praises to His name, for it is lovely. (NAB, adapted)

הַלְלוּ־יָהּ כִּי־טוֹב יְהוָה זַמְרוּ לְשִׁמּוֹ כִּי נָעִים:

Psalm 147:1 Praise Yah! For it is good to sing praises to our God;

For it is pleasant *and* praise is becoming. (NAB, adapted)

הַלְלוּ יָהּ כִּי־טוֹב זַמְרָה אֲלֵהֵינוּ כִּי־נָעִים נְאֻהָ תְהִלָּה:

“Sing To Yahweh. Praise Yah!” As believers and as pastors this is what we are to do. To do this calls for us to know him. How? David encourages us: “Taste and see that the LORD is good” (Psalm 34:8a). But we are not left to do that on our own. The LORD himself invites us to learn from him, “I, the LORD, am your God, Who brought you up from the land of Egypt; Open your mouth wide and I will fill it.” NAB Psalm 81:10

At Yahweh’s invitation then, let us open our mouth’s wide and let him fill them. Having been so fed, let’s inwardly digest what he has given us. Then let us sing praises to his name for his name is lovely, because it is pleasant to sing his praises, and because praise is becoming to him. Such a beautiful and becoming song of praise is found in the Jewish Passover Service or *Haggadah*:

If our mouths were full of praise, as full as the sea,  
If our tongues could sing the way the waves are singing,  
If our lips could exalt you the way the heavens do,  
If our eyes could shine like the sun and the moon,  
If our arms could be outstretched like the eagle’s under the sky,  
If our feet could be swift as the gazelle’s, Even then, we would not be capable of  
thanking you LORD, God of our fathers and our God,  
and bless your name  
For all the thousands, and thousands of thousands, and tens of thousands of the  
blessings that you offered our ancestors and ourselves.  
You have redeemed us from Egypt, LORD, our God. (*A Passover Haggadah*, pp.  
114-5)

If Jews can and do sing so eloquently to and about God for their deliverance from Egypt, think of what songs we should sing to and about him “Who redeemed us from the Egypt of our sin, death, Satan, and hell!”

This has been just a brief taste, a sampling, of who יהוה is and what he means for us. To better understand him for ourselves, and then by extension, to share him with the members of his family in our care, calls for each of us to listen to him without distractions hearing him tell of

himself. It calls for us to absorb and apply to ourselves the 6,639+ times he used his name, asking questions of him, and watching him in action. It calls for us to pray for his Spirit's blessing on our activities, to guide us in our studies, and to bring us safely to *his* destination, i.e. the conclusions that are his.

This is our work as pastors: *The God fearing pastor or teacher must consider it a priceless privilege to be called for no other purpose than to occupy himself completely with this wisdom*, Shaller said (*Wauwatosa Theology*, II, p. 172, emphasis added).

... the whole point of the ministry, the reason why there is a ministry at all, is that the people out in the press of life and finding that there they cannot keep in sight of God but get continually drifted away from him, that the little matters, to which it is their duty to attend, of necessity crowd him out of their preoccupied minds—lay hands upon a man, praying him, “Live in the secret of God’s presence; and in the hush there, which we cannot know, commune with him face to face; and week by week, come out and share with us the message which, in that stillness, you have had a chance of hearing. We’ll pay you for it, man, if you will only do it!” But now the ministry is every whit as busy as the rest of folk; and in the roar of its machinery, can hear no more than anybody else. If only we would pray! But we, too, put our trust in our own animal heat and hard breathing activity. Macaulay’s fault, said that shrewd judge, Lord Cockburn, is that “he is always over-talking, and so under-listening.” So is the ministry these days. And, as Euripides reminds us, “even Zeus cannot reveal himself to a busybody” (Arthur John Gossip, *Minister’s Prayer Book*, # 150, pp. 298 and 299).

Compare Jesus’ warnings about our faith-life being full of and choked out by the weeds of this life, Luke 8:14. And how painfully close Matthew 23:23 may come to describing us!

NAB Matthew 23:23 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others.”

We too may find ourselves extremely active in the busy-ness of doing the ‘Lord’s work’ (tithing dill, etc. as it were) and being pleased with what we have achieved, but in the process neglecting the weightier provisions of our calling.

Yahweh the only God, the Creator of all things, the only Savior, the existing and directional God doesn’t deserve this, nor do his people, his sheep. He has revealed himself to us and desires to be revealed through us, but Yahweh “cannot reveal himself to a busybody.” Insofar as we are “always over-talking, and so under-listening,” let’s see to it that we repent, and do the work we have been called to do.

O my Master! on whose errand I come, let me hold my peace, and do thou speak thyself, for thou art Love, and when thou teachest, all are scholars. (George Herbert, *Minister’s Prayer Book*, #220, p. 140)

We note ... a certain detachment in Jesus' attitude toward contemporary events and the secular problems and policies of his day.... he lived, a deep, personal, interior life that found its source and center in the life of God.... The channels of communication between his own soul and the Life of God were always clear and open so that his own life was being constantly reinforced by fresh supplies of diving grace and strength.

....  
Only the cultivation of the life of God, only the possession of the Spirit of God will equip us with the peace, the poise, the serenity, the power that will enable us to be in any degree to our world what Jesus was to his.

Thus we will take up our Bibles and seek to know God afresh in the plentitude of his power.... To move this world to better things, to lift it to nobler purposes, to be amongst those who are helpers and healers of mankind, it is necessary to have this vantage ground outside ourselves, outside the world, and that vantage ground is God. (Raymond Catkins, *Minister's Prayer Book*, # 140, pp. 284-5)

Can we ever in this life totally understand the blessings that we have in having Yahweh as our God, The Existing One; The Directional One; The One Consistent in all his qualities and words and actions, in his love, in his faithfulness; The Rock-solid One? No. But that does not mean we should not try. What better and more purposeful and meaningful work could there be than making the investigation of Yahweh and the proclamation of him our lifelong vocation, avocation and delight?

+++++

בְּרוּךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עֲשֵׂה נִפְלְאוֹת לְבָדּוֹ:  
וּבְרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹדוֹ לְעוֹלָם וְיִמְלֹא כְבוֹדוֹ אֶת־כָּל הָאָרֶץ אָמֵן וְאָמֵן:

Psalm 72:18-19

SCS, Wednesday morning of Epiphany 5, 9 February 2000

## Appendix

This paper is largely based on these **אני יהוה** references.

The #'s are the MT references.

Gen. 15:7

Gen. 28:13

Exod. 6:2

Exod. 6:6

Exod. 6:7

Exod. 6:8

Exod. 6:29

Exod. 7:5

Exod. 7:17

Exod. 8:18

Exod. 10:2

Exod. 12:12

Exod. 14:4

Exod. 14:18

Exod. 15:26

Exod. 16:12

Exod. 29:46

Exod. 31:13

Lev. 11:44

Lev. 11:45

Lev. 18:2

Lev. 18:4

Lev. 18:5

Lev. 18:6

Lev. 18:21

Lev. 18:30

Lev. 19:2

Lev. 19:3

Lev. 19:4

Lev. 19:10

Lev. 19:12

Lev. 19:14

Lev. 19:16

Lev. 19:18

Lev. 19:25

Lev. 19:28

Lev. 19:30

Lev. 19:31

Lev. 19:32

Lev. 19:34

Lev. 19:36

Lev. 19:37

Lev. 20:7

Lev. 20:8

Lev. 20:24

Lev. 20:26

Lev. 21:8

Lev. 21:12

Lev. 21:15

Lev. 21:23

Lev. 22:2

Lev. 22:3

Lev. 22:8

Lev. 22:9

Lev. 22:16

Lev. 22:30

Lev. 22:31

Lev. 22:32

Lev. 22:33

Lev. 23:22

Lev. 23:43

Lev. 24:22

Lev. 25:17

Lev. 25:38

Lev. 25:55

Lev. 26:1

Lev. 26:2

Lev. 26:13

Lev. 26:44

Lev. 26:45

Num. 3:13

Num. 3:41

Num. 3:45

Num. 10:10

Num. 14:35

Num. 15:41

Num. 35:34

Deut. 29:5

Jdg. 6:10

1 Ki. 20:13

1 Ki. 20:28

1 Chr. 17:16

Isa. 27:3

Isa. 41:4

Isa. 41:13

Isa. 41:17

Isa. 42:6

Isa. 42:8

Isa. 43:3

Isa. 43:15

Isa. 45:3

Isa. 45:5

Isa. 45:6

Isa. 45:7

Isa. 45:8

Isa. 45:18

Isa. 45:19

Isa. 45:21

Isa. 48:17

Isa. 49:23

Isa. 49:26

Isa. 60:16

Isa. 60:22

Isa. 61:8

Jer. 9:23

Jer. 17:10

Jer. 24:7

Jer. 32:27

Ezek. 5:13

Ezek. 5:15

Ezek. 5:17

Ezek. 6:7

Ezek. 6:10

Ezek. 6:13

Ezek. 6:14

Ezek. 7:4

Ezek. 7:9

Ezek. 7:27

Ezek. 11:10

Ezek. 11:12

Ezek. 12:15

Ezek. 12:16

Ezek. 12:20

Ezek. 12:25

Ezek. 13:14

Ezek. 13:21

Ezek. 13:23

Ezek. 14:4

Ezek. 14:7

Ezek. 14:8

Ezek. 14:9

Ezek. 15:7

Ezek. 16:62

Ezek. 17:21

Ezek. 17:24

Ezek. 20:5

Ezek. 20:7

Ezek. 20:12

Ezek. 20:19

Ezek. 20:20

Ezek. 20:26

Ezek. 20:38

Ezek. 20:42

Ezek. 20:44

Ezek. 21:4

Ezek. 21:10

Ezek. 21:22

Ezek. 21:37

Ezek. 22:14

Ezek. 22:16

Ezek. 22:22

Ezek. 24:14

Ezek. 24:27

Ezek. 25:5

Ezek. 25:7

Ezek. 25:11

Ezek. 25:17

Ezek. 26:6

Ezek. 26:14

Ezek. 28:22

Ezek. 28:23

Ezek. 28:26

Ezek. 29:6

Ezek. 29:9

Ezek. 29:21

Ezek. 30:8

Ezek. 30:12

Ezek. 30:19

Ezek. 30:25

Ezek. 30:26

Ezek. 32:15

Ezek. 33:29

Ezek. 34:24

Ezek. 34:27

Ezek. 34:30

Ezek. 35:4

Ezek. 35:9

Ezek. 35:12

Ezek. 35:15

Ezek. 36:11

Ezek. 36:23

Ezek. 36:36

Ezek. 36:38

Ezek. 37:6

Ezek. 37:13

Ezek. 37:14

Ezek. 37:28

Ezek. 38:23

Ezek. 39:6

Ezek. 39:7

Ezek. 39:22

Ezek. 39:28

Joel 4:17

Zech. 10:6

Mal. 3:6

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