

**Chardon Christian Fellowship**  
**Home Fellowship Lessons**  
**Names of God**  
**Lesson 2: YHWH (Jehovah)**  
**LEADER GUIDE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

In this lesson and the next, we will focus on the most Holy name of God – *YHWH* (or *YHVH*). Actually pronouncing *YHWH* has been forbidden since 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC, and Hebrew scholars have since substituted *Adonai* for *YHWH*. [For the Bereans in the group, *YHWH* is H3068 in Strong's Lexicon]. In modern Jewish culture, it is accepted as forbidden to pronounce the name the way that it is spelled. Most modern Jews never pronounce *YHWH* but instead read *Adonai* ("My Lord") during prayer and while reading the Torah and as *HaShem* ("The Name") at other times.

## **LESSON**

### **A. YHWH**

*YHWH* is known as the Tetragrammaton name of God in that it only has four (tetra) letters (gramma). It is the most sacred name for God. In English Bibles, the word *YHWH* is translated as: Lord, Jehovah, Personal God of Israel, The Self-Sufficient One, The Existing One, The Eternal One. This name projects an overall image of "The Self Sustaining, Eternal God above all things".

It is important that we understand the magnitude of this name, and the power behind this name. Since it is used 6,519 times in Old Testament, we should discover as much as we can about this name of God.

### **B. First use of YHWH in the Bible**

The first use of *YHWH* is in **Genesis 2:4** where God has Moses pen in the Pentateuch (first 5 books of Old Testament) a description of the creation of the universe:

**Genesis 2:4** *This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God (YHWH Elohim) made earth and heaven.* (New American Standard Bible, NASB)

In this verse we see the word *YHWH* combined with *Elohim*. *Elohim* will be studied in future lessons, but it means "supreme God". Putting this combination together, we see our God referring to Himself as *YHWH Elohim*, that is, "The Eternal One, The Supreme God" or "The Self-Sufficient One, The Supreme God." According to some scholars, "...*YHWH Elohim* .. means that *YHWH*, the personal God who rules over Israel, is at one and the same time the universal God who rules over all."

*YHWH Elohim* is first recorded in **Genesis 2**, and we see throughout the account of creation God referring to His divine power in bringing all into existence as ‘*YHWH Elohim*’.

See: **Genesis 2:4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 15, 16, 18, 19, 21, 22**  
**Genesis 3:1, 8, 9, 13, 14, 21, 22, 23**

### **C. Revelation of God to man as *YHWH***

We see God revealing Himself to man as *YHWH* in the encounter of Moses with Him at the burning bush.

**Exodus 3:1-6** *Now Moses was pasturing the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian; and he led the flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. <sup>2</sup> The angel of the LORD (YHWH) appeared to him in a blazing fire from the midst of a bush; and he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, yet the bush was not consumed. <sup>3</sup> So Moses said, “I must turn aside now and see this marvelous sight, why the bush is not burned up.” <sup>4</sup> When the LORD (YHWH) saw that he turned aside to look, God (Elohim) called to him from the midst of the bush and said, “Moses, Moses!” And he said, “Here I am.” <sup>5</sup> Then He said, “Do not come near here; remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.” <sup>6</sup> He said also, “I am the God (Elohim) of your father, the God (Elohim) of Abraham, the God (Elohim) of Isaac, and the God (Elohim) of Jacob.” Then Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God (Elohim). (NASB; words not in italics added for clarity)*

**Exodus 3:13-15** <sup>13</sup> Then Moses said to God (Elohim), “Behold, I am going to the sons of Israel, and I will say to them, ‘The God (Elohim) of your fathers has sent me to you.’ Now they may say to me, ‘What is His name?’ What shall I say to them?” <sup>14</sup> God (Elohim) said to Moses, “**I AM (YHWH) WHO I AM (YHWH)**”; and He said, “Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, ‘**I AM (YHWH)** has sent me to you.’” <sup>15</sup> God (Elohim), furthermore, said to Moses, “Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, ‘**The LORD (YHWH), the God (Elohim) of your fathers, the God (Elohim) of Abraham, the God (Elohim) of Isaac, and the God (Elohim) of Jacob, has sent me to you.**’ This is My name forever, and this is My memorial-name to all generations. (NASB)

We see God revealing Himself to man as both *YHWH* and *Elohim* in the encounter of Moses at the burning bush. God refers to Himself as the Supreme God (*Elohim*) over the Hebrews. He then emphasizes in **Exodus 3:14** that He is The Absolute Self Sufficient Eternal One by saying “*I Am who I Am*” (אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה ; *YHWH ‘asher YHWH*). There is none His equal. He eternally exists. He also told them His name, and this is personal with Israel.

The name “*I AM*” confidently states that His existence is different from all other existence.

**Isaiah 45:5-7** “*I am the LORD (YHWH), and there is no other; Besides Me there is no God (Elohim). I will gird you, though you have not known Me; <sup>6</sup> That men may know from the rising to*

*the setting of the sun that there is no one besides Me. I am the LORD (YHWH), and there is no other, <sup>7</sup>The One forming light and creating darkness, causing well-being and creating calamity; I am the LORD (YHWH) who does all these.” (NASB)*

**QUESTION:** *Why did God say it this way, that is, state His name as YHWH and Elohim?* (perhaps see how your group responds) If they are tracking along with this lesson, someone may say something like: *“It is like a dad talking to a child and saying ‘I am your daddy ... but I am also your father, husband to your mother, beginning of your life, and provider and sustainer of your life.’ The dad is speaking of multiple levels of relationship with the child. In **Exodus 3**, God is answering Moses on at least two levels, that is, He is the One and Only God, Personal God of the Hebrews, but He is also Supreme Creator, Ruler and Totally Self Sufficient God of the Universe.”*

### **D. Jesus in light of revelation of YHWH**

We must not lose sight that any revelation regarding the name or nature of God is also a revelation regarding Jesus. Jesus is as much of the Godhead as the Father (YHWH) and Holy Spirit. Although separate ... they are One.

**John 8:58** *Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I AM.” (NASB) [Jesus reinforced His Deity in this statement, stating emphatically that He is equal with YHWH].*

**Hebrews 13:8** *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. (NASB) [This is a characteristic of God, that YHWH is self-sufficient and immutable (not changed by time). In Hebrews, Jesus is proclaimed equal to YHWH and Elohim]*

**John 1:1-3, 14** *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup>He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup>All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. <sup>14</sup>And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. (NASB) [We are all so familiar with this passage in John. It clearly states the Deity of Jesus, and that He and the Father are one]*

**John 5:17-18** <sup>17</sup> *But He answered them, “My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working.” <sup>18</sup>For this reason therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God. (NASB)*

**John 8:24** *Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.” (NASB) [Most authorities associate this with Exodus 3:14, “I AM WHO I AM”]*

**John 14:6-7** <sup>6</sup> *Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me. <sup>7</sup>If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him.” (NASB) [Again, Jesus stating that He and the Father (YHWH) are One.]*

**Revelation 1:8** *"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."* [Perhaps the most concise definition of YHWH, stated by Himself.]

**Revelation 22:13** <sup>13</sup> *I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end."* [Jesus stating very clearly that He is God, because only YHWH the Elohim can have these attributes.]

## **E. How does knowing the name YHWH affect me?**

A fundamental question is *"How does knowing God's names impact my Christian walk? How should this affect me? Is this mere academia, that is, just facts?"*

In these times where Christianity is under such attack by people, Hollywood, the courts, and media, we must know the nature of the God we worship and serve.

God, as the Self-Sufficient One, never changes (immutable) since there is nothing incomplete or insufficient in His character. He does not change with time, and time or events do not control Who or when He is ... He is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. Our nation and culture are undergoing considerable change ... 'sexual sins' are now called 'alternate lifestyles' ... 'lying and cheating' are called 'advantageous business practices' ... marriage is being redefined by the courts ... clothing that 40 years ago was called vulgar and nudity is called 'avant-garde' ... people worship Hollywood actors and not righteous men ... .. but ... God does not change. It is the nature of YHWH to be Self Sufficient, the One, Creator of all, the Alpha and Omega, He who transcends time ... He Is (YHWH)!

**James 1:17** *Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.* (NASB)

**Psalms 90:2** *Before the mountains were born or You gave birth to the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God (Elohim).* (NASB)

**Malachi 3:6** *"For I, the LORD, do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed (have not come to an end)."* (NASB)

**Isaiah 43:10,11** *"You are My witnesses," declares the LORD (YHWH), "And My servant whom I have chosen, So that you may know and believe Me and understand that I am He. Before Me there was no God (El) formed, and there will be none after Me. <sup>11</sup> "I, even I, am the LORD (YHWH), and there is no savior besides Me." (NASB)*

## **CONCLUSION/APPLICATION**

We need to move beyond academics with this lesson. Just knowing about *YHWH* being a Tetragrammaton and that it translates to *LORD* in most Bibles is just ‘academics.’ We need to realize in our soul Who we are talking about. We need to change our attitude about using His name in any frivolous manner (no written examples in this lesson ... just printing them would be wrong). We need to know that the world judges His Holy Name based on our behavior. While we love Him, and we know He loves us, we need to be afraid of the power and majesty of His Holy Name !!!

**Romans 12:1-2** *Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. <sup>2</sup> And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.*  
(NASB)

**Colossians 3:2** *Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. <sup>2</sup> Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. <sup>3</sup> For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.*  
(NASB)

## **REFERENCES**

All Bible quotes are from New American Standard Bible, Lochmann Foundation

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