

# (Names of Jehovah) 1. I Am

by Roy Hession

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*Roy Hession explores the profound significance of God's name 'I Am' and its implications for believers today.*

**Duration:** 40:30

**Scripture:** Isaiah 12:2-3, Isaiah 26:4, John 8:58

**Topics:** "Jehovah"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of confessing the negative aspects of our lives to God. He highlights that only by acknowledging our faults and weaknesses can we fully experience God's grace and see Him as the answer to our problems. The preacher mentions that God sometimes fills up the blank check in our lives as a suggestion for us to do the same. He then discusses five places in the Old Testament where God completes the unfinished sentence Himself, revealing His character as Jehovah. The preacher encourages listeners to bring their needs, sorrows, failures, and sins to God, as this is how Jehovah is revealed and His faithfulness is experienced.

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## Transcript

I want you to understand that I shall be working from the authorised version. Many of you have the NIV. Someone's called it the Nearly Infallible Version.

I got that from Keswick. So it didn't need some heretical expression of opinion, though it was generally used. But I shall be working from the authorised version and that certain things we're going to dig out of God's Word strangely are to be found and dug out of the authorised version in a way they cannot be so easily from the other versions.

There are insights that the old original translators expressed that haven't always come through in the other versions. And on the subject of versions, all I would say, use whatever version God makes a blessing to you, but do not discard your authorised version. You ought to keep up with your authorised version.

There'll be all sorts of allusions. They're there in literature, for instance. They're there in the English language, which you won't understand.

Don't discard it. I would suggest you might have two times of reading the Word every day and that for one of them you say, I'm going through such and such a book. In the authorised version, go on with the others.

I refer to the other versions almost every day of my life. But it's only to elucidate the old original version and you will see clearly places where a truth is brought out in the authorised that isn't so clearly brought out together. So we shall combine the two and make reference to this one and that one, but I want you to know that.

I want to say that I will be sharing with you this morning and the following mornings that which has meant most to me in my Christian life. That which has virtually given me a new Bible. And to this hour, what we shall think about is ever with me as I live with the Lord, as I read His Word and seek to serve Him.

And our subject is going to be the great name of God, I Am. I Am. You will remember that when Moses was accosted by God at the burning bush and given his commission to go and bring God's people out of Egypt, Moses said, But when I tell them that the God of their fathers has appeared to me for this purpose, and they ask me, What is His name? What shall I say? And the voice from the burning bush said, You are to say, I Am has sent me unto you.

And God revealed His own personal private name as I Am. And we are going to look at that. You have two names, a family name and a given name.

When you go abroad, they don't ask you what your Christian name is because so many people travelling abroad aren't Christians, not in any sense at all. They're of other faiths. And therefore it's a family name and a given name.

But of course we call it the Christian name. And that last name is the private one, it's the personal one. We may say of a certain person to tell you that we're great friends, we are on a first name basis.

This name is God's first name. This is His most personal name. Some of His other titles, there are different Hebrew words for God.

There are more titles than names. But the name of I Am is not a title. It is His own personal name.

So sacred was it considered that the Jews of old hardly ever dared to sound it, express it. And as we shall see in a moment, that reticence about speaking about the personal name of God is carried over in their scriptures. And the translators have respected it too.

And that's the reason why in the authorised version there are only five places where Jehovah is written. And in the other versions no places at all. But a clue is given to us where it is meant to be in the Hebrew I Am or Jehovah in that Lord is substituted but it's always substituted all four letters in capitals.

And it will be a great enrichment for you to know that. And as you read your Bible and you see Lord all in capitals know you're speaking about the sacred, marvellous first name of God. Now we're going to look strangely at the New Testament for our first verse.

John 8, verse 58. John 8, verse 58. And here Jesus himself is speaking.

Verse 57, Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am. Before Abraham was, I am. What a striking verse.

And what strikes us most is the liberty it seems to take with our grammar. It's mixing the tenses up. If Jesus simply wanted to express his pre-existence he would have said Before Abraham was, I was.

But he doesn't do it. He mixes the tenses up. And he says, Before Abraham was, I am.

Quite obviously. Jesus is taking us back to the passage in Exodus which we shall look at in a moment. When God gave himself to Moses the revelation his own personal name was, I am.

And you're to tell all the people that I am hath sent me unto you. And here is Jesus claiming identity with the great I am of the Old Testament. It's the clearest place where Jesus claims equality with identity with the God of Israel.

Before Abraham was, I am. And his opponents understood him to be making that claim because he goes on to say Then took they up stones to cast at him and Jesus hid himself. They considered it blasphemy indeed.

He's claiming to be none other than the great I am whose name we've always regarded with such reticence. And here he is clearly claiming himself to be the I am. And more than that he says your eternal destiny is at stake as to whether or not you believe me to be that.

In 24 of that very chapter I said therefore unto you that you shall die on your sins if you believe not that I am you shall die in your sins. In the authorised version you will see that he is in italics. If you believe not that I am he it's in italics.

And by the way certainly with the authorised I don't know if it's carried over into the other versions whenever a word is put in italics it means it's not in the original. The translators thought they had to add something to complete a sentence and to give it sense. And they completed it by adding he if you believe not that I am he but it's in italics.

But in the original it is if you believe not that I am you shall die in your sins. And all this gives us a heightened view of our Lord Jesus. Well now let's turn back to the beginning of it all in Exodus chapter 3 verses 14 and 15.

Exodus chapter 3 verses 14 and 15. Let's begin at verse 13. And Moses said unto God Behold when I come unto the children of Israel and shall say unto them The God of your fathers has sent me unto you and they shall say to me What is his name? What should I say unto them? And God said unto Moses I am that I am.

And he said Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel I am has sent me unto you. And God said moreover unto Moses Thou shalt say unto the children of Israel The Lord. That's in caps.

And in the Hebrew it is Jehovah. Jehovah the God of your fathers the God of Abraham the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob has sent me unto you. Now listen to this This is my name forever and this my memorial unto all generations.

And of course there is a very close connection between I am and Jehovah. The word Jehovah in the Hebrew comes from the same root as I am. Indeed you could say that I am is the verb is the noun and I am the verb.

The I am. And in the word Jehovah I am is enshrined. It comes from the same root so you can take it that Jehovah means I am.

And this was the sacred name. So sacred to the Hebrews that they hardly dared express it. It was irreverent to do it very much at all.

And when they read their scriptures they used to substitute another word for Jehovah Adonai. But there in the scripture it's Jehovah. But the translators whereas they respected the ancient Jewish tradition and the revisers have done the same they put another word they put Lord.

But to show you that in that case it is really Jehovah L-O-R-D all in capitals. And therefore you are right when you read it to think of it as Jehovah. Jehovah! Jehovah! Jehovah! I've looked at my young's analytical concordance today and I've looked at Lord and it gives you all the places where in the original it's Adonai or it's one of the other words Elohim or something like that.

All the cases where it's Elohim are listed all the places where it's Adonai but then all the places where Lord is in caps and where it's Jehovah. That is in my concordance Jehovah. And I'm amazed column after column of columns hundreds if not thousands of cases and you'll find the capital letters of Lord absolutely litterate through your Old Testament.

And dear one it means Jehovah and we're going to see what it means and take it to pieces a little. And it's quite astonishing. I mean to say, but you've got the sentence Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord.

Well if you don't see any distinction you say it's a bit funny. Blessed is the nation whose God is God. Oh no! Blessed is the nation whose God is Jehovah.

And we shall see in a moment Jehovah is the name supremely of grace. Oh happy the nation who has such a God to be their God. Happy the man whose God is Jehovah.

Happy the man who knows what it is to stay himself upon Jehovah. The great name of I Am. Now as I say in our Bibles and in the Authorised normally Jehovah is in caps and is Lord in caps.

But very conveniently the translators of the Authorised in five places four places have put Jehovah. But for these four places we wouldn't even know the name. And those who do not read their Authorised version will never read in their Bibles Jehovah.

As I say, but for these four places you wouldn't have read it in the Authorised it would have always been Lord, Lord. You'd have to be told it's Jehovah. But in four places you've got it.

And I read them to you and they are significant because of that very fact. Psalm 83, 18. Psalm 83, 18.

Let them be confounded and troubled these are the enemies of the Lord. Yea, let them be put to shame and perish that men may know that thou whose name alone is Jehovah art the most high over all the earth. And the lovely thing is that they put all the letters there in caps if they put all the letters of Lord in caps they put them here but a word like Jehovah all in caps it stands out on the page in my Bible that thou whose name alone is Jehovah this is all over the place but hidden by the word Lord but in this place they give it to you.

Turn to Isaiah chapter 12 verse 3 Isaiah 12 verse 3 verse 2 Isaiah 12 verse 2 Behold God is my salvation I will trust and not be afraid for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song He also has become my salvation. That's the second place where you've got Jehovah printed as such in the authorised version and then in Isaiah 26 verse 4 Trust ye in the Lord forever for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength. So the

hymns that do speak about Jehovah are based on these few references except as I say they are hidden behind the word Lord.

There's one other and perhaps the most important and intriguing is Exodus chapter 6 verse 3 Here you have Jehovah and this is quite an extraordinary verse God is answering Moses who is very discouraged at his first attempts to bring the people out of Israel and he goes back to God and says nothing's happened and in verse 2 of chapter 6 of Exodus God spake unto Moses and said unto him I am the Lord that's in capitals I appeared unto Abraham and Isaac and Jacob by the name of God Almighty and that is El Shaddai in the margin that's another glorious name has a special meaning but by my name Jehovah was I not known to them as I am now being revealed to you and the interesting thing quite obviously this name means something I didn't reveal myself by this name before now I am actually of course

the interesting thing is in the passages before back in Genesis you have Lord in caps that is Jehovah but don't you see it was Moses who wrote the first five books of the Bible the Pentateuch and he wrote them after the event he wrote them after he had this all important word I am now making a new revelation of myself under the name of Jehovah well he couldn't ever forget it so when he's writing about creation you'll find this Lord in caps all sorts of things it doesn't mean that Jehovah was made known by that name he says he wasn't but the man has had the revelation and he can't get away from it and therefore he uses it before it was officially known chronologically but of course he was writing after the event and knew it and couldn't get away from it now what does this name Jehovah mean

well we have said that it really is I am it comes from the same root of I am that's what it means well you could say I suppose it means that God is telling us that he is the ever present one not I was nor I will be but I am and with him everything is in the present tense eternity is not elongated time it's another element altogether your past is as present with him as your future well that's quite one obvious meaning he is the ever present one outside of time altogether then secondly God had selected the seed of Abraham the children of Israel as his special people he made covenants with them about their future and about all he was going to do for them and through them they were his elected people and this name of Jehovah is always used in relation to them almost always when he is talking

about the Gentiles and the nations it's God Elohim but when it's Israel and Israel is a great theme of so much of scripture it's this other name blessed is the nation whose God is not merely Elohim but all, all Jehovah well what does it mean then beyond that and that's what we come to and this is the important meaning the fact of his being ever present is important but not all that the fact that he is Israel's God and speaks of himself with that name is important but if it means I am it means it's an unfinished sentence it absolutely foxed Moses what shall I say is your name I am go on that's all but I am what well if you do want me to complete the sentence all I can say is I am that I am and it goes round in a circle don't worry about completing the sentence just take it that is my name

I am especially in relation to my covenant people there was a special relationship between Israel and God that he hadn't with other people just as there's as you know politically a special relationship between the United Kingdom and the United States it's often spoken of a special I rather like it how nice it isn't written down in any treaty it's just there a special relationship so it is between Israel and Israel's God there's a special relationship and in as much as the saints of God the redeemed of the Lord in our day are called in one place the Israel of God please turn the cassette over now do not fast wind it in either direction and in as much as the saints of God the redeemed of the Lord in our day are called in one place the Israel of God this special relationship between you and

Jehovah is for you too you are in as special a relationship with Jehovah as Israel was theirs referred to their earthly affairs ours to our eternal and spiritual affairs and so it is this name is the name of the unfinished sentence and as such it doesn't tell us a thing it's made no revelation of God at all ah, he says the sentence is not finished you can finish it it's in your power to finish it then you'll have a revelation of me and as you go through your Old Testament and you remember that Lord in capitals is Jehovah I am by seeing its use in its various contexts you discover how that sentence is to be completed I am whatever my people need until a man brings his needs and his sorrows his failures and his sins God's unknowable God isn't known but the moment a man one of this special

people brings all their sins and sorrows whatever they may be to the I am that I am says I am for you the answer to that very thing and the sentence is completed and God is revealed in other words this great name of Jehovah meaning as I say I am is like a blank check it's signed it shall be honored but it's left to you to fill up that check and he is this great I am whatever my dear people sometimes down in the dumps sometimes in a bad spiritual state sometimes going through terrible troubles I am whatever my people need can you not see how this name has been called the name of grace stayed upon Jehovah a God who is pledged to be to me what I need in my weakest and even my worst moments stayed upon Jehovah hearts are fully blessed finding as he promised perfect peace and rest turn to

psalm 33 verse 12 psalm 33 verse 12 blessed is the nation I've quoted it already there it is blessed is the nation whose God is Jehovah and the people whom he has chosen for his inheritance blessed is the people blessed is the group blessed is the church blessed is the individual whose God is this glorious wonderful God of grace and David took this God of grace to be his his prayers are always addressed to Jehovah Jehovah is littered through the psalms and what experiences he had I've been so thrilled with dear brother David there wasn't a need or a trouble or a sickness or a calumny whatever it may be that he didn't suffer but he knew he was in a special relationship with God he knew there was a covenant not only the general covenant of Israel between Israel and God but between God and

David's house and so it is all his appeals are made to Jehovah it's all Lord in capitals and as a result of a lifetime of seeing God live up to his name on his behalf in the most dire situations he says in psalm 116 I love the Lord I love Jehovah for he hath heard my voice Amen look at that psalm 116 I love the Lord it's in caps I love Jehovah he's been the I am to me in case after case delivered me from all my foes even my sicknesses and my sins has brought me to this place he destined for me leading his people I love Jehovah because he has heard my voice and my supplication and I have been praying that the Lord will give me occasion after occasion that I can say the same Lord I say so deal with me in my needs in my old age in my pains and all other things not too bad really but not all

that nice but we've all got something I love Jehovah I want to have occasion more than I've had I've had plenty of occasion but I want more for me to say I love Jehovah he's lived up to his name because he hath heard my voice and my supplication you know this makes God Jehovah lovable lovable he did there were times when he doubted he wondered where in the world Jehovah had gone but God hadn't left him Jehovah was still there and gave him and he wrote a wonderful psalm it's last it's put in it's psalm 18 it's quoted from Samuel where he reviews all that Jehovah has done for him the trials he's been through the faithfulness of the I Am now what it means is this in practical terms you've got to bring your needs otherwise Jehovah is an unfinished sentence someone objected and it doesn't say

very much to anybody but when he's brought you've brought needs and the fears, troubles sins and failures and he's found he's all that you needed in those matters and restored you and delivered you so

wonderfully then he's revealed now there is the value of testimony oh when we sit around and hear the saints testify they're saying oh I love Jehovah and you tell us where in he's been the answer to that need you have to tell us about the need oh I'd rather not mention that well then you're depriving the Lord of a bit of glory we could see something more in him were you willing were I willing to share frankly our testimonies and this is the reason why a testimony meeting in the Spirit is so wonderful the Lord is manifesting in those meetings the sentence is completed and God is known bring

your needs don't bring your prayers don't say oh Lord give me peace there's no need in that say Lord I haven't got any peace don't bring to me your attempts to trust me that's not a need say Lord I'm not trusting you I'm full of fear don't ask for gladness tell him your sorrow in other words something I've often said before and I'm going to go on saying it I know it's true don't ask for the positive so much as confess the negative only so is the sentence completed grace at last has an object on which to bestow itself and Jehovah is seen to be the answer is that your God blessed is the nation blessed is the Christian whose God is Jehovah who did not spare his only son but gavest him for a world undone Amen in order to encourage you to fill up the blank check on some occasions God does it

himself and he fills it up for you as a little suggestion that you should go on do likewise and there are five places in the Old Testament and we're going to look at them indeed if you include the last one in the New there are six places where God completes the unfinished sentence himself and you have most intriguing compounds of Jehovah after a great experience of deliverance they would sometimes build an altar and call the altar by one of these compounds take the case of their first victory out of Egypt their victory which God gave them over the Amalekites with Joshua praying in the mountain and Moses in the mountain praying Joshua in the valley and what a victory it was and they built an altar and they called it there Jehovah Nissi it's there in the text of the authorised I don't know

that the other versions have necessarily we're going to look at those in coming days these glorious compounds of Jehovah in which God finishes the sentence for us and shows it working out in order to encourage us to go on doing likewise I've only got to say the final compound which we shall look at in detail later on Jehovah Nissi Jehovah Zikinu Jehovah Jari five of them but there's a sixth a virgin shall conceive and bring forth a son and she shall call him Jesus Je is short for Jehovah and Sus is one of the several compounds the most important just what a sinner needs Sus means a saviour many of these other revelations could refer to our earthly ordinary needs but unless God has is set on dealing with our moral and spiritual or our unspiritual needs our sins he's no great saviour to us

but so there the very name of Jesus is in life which is Jehovah Sus and so this morning we just look at the word Jehovah I don't know whether I've made it clear but it's true I won't do any better by repeating myself I do too much of it when I repeat myself of course I wasn't sure I was I got it home that you're an intelligent spiritually intelligent people you've come here to learn and you've got it you've got it friend you've seen afresh Jehovah your blank check all that my people need and I want to tell you that name occurs in the scriptures in the original scriptures innumerable I would like to show you the page in Young's Analytical Concordance they usually put the whole text out but when it comes to this they give up they give you the reference I don't know how many and here's a

name that we've hardly dared to explore but dear one bear it in mind praise the Lord when you see a capital letters like that in some places God is in capitals and that's because in that case the reasons we didn't go into they couldn't Lord is used for some other purpose therefore it's God the Lord God in that case the Lord might be Adonai one of the other names but God is Jehovah therefore God has to go into

caps the God of Abraham praise hallelujah this is the God we are that we adore and how we praise him for that last and final combat Jehovah sus taking account of the worst about us but loving us just the same and friend I want to tell you you may be going through a bad time you're going to have cause to praise Jehovah if your trust is in him oh he tests us he chastens us yes it's not

all sugar with him but it's only that we might be ready to taste more fully this marvelous grace Jehovah the one who's all he needs and if there's anybody going through a hard time take heart you're going to have cause to praise him again and again he says I'm going to do this that or the other that you may know that I am Jehovah there's a bit of study how many times do you get that that you may know I'll tell you how it is in my concordance tomorrow perhaps oh this is one of the great themes of scripture and I want to tell you I really lived on this when I was recovering from that accident I said Lord please give me cause to praise you as David did David discovered you didn't bear the name of Jehovah unworthily may I discover the same I'm only asking to have the same sort of testimony to

you that David and the others did and it's available to you oh this sounds too optimistic I want to tell you that God is the great optimist Jehovah who's most like the Lord the pessimist or the optimist I know there can be a false optimism but when you've got rid of all the false optimisms the great optimist is God himself I am whatever my people need and I'm so going to deal with them that they may know that I am Jehovah Amen and Amen

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