

Yud-Hey-Vav-Hey

El Shaddai

Exodus Chapter 3-4 continued

We're continuing today in the Book of Exodus, beginning again in Chapter 3. But the foundational text today is not from Exodus but from Paul's 2nd letter to the Corinthians, chapter 4 verse 6:

"For God, who said, "Let there be light in the darkness," has made us understand that it is **the brightness of his glory** that is seen in the face of Jesus Christ."

The **Brightness of the Glory of God the Creator** of heaven and earth – is seen in the person of Jesus Christ.

SLIDE: WHAT COMES TO MIND ...

This is a quote by **Aiden Wilson Tozer** – a Christian pastor who died in 1963:

*"What comes into our minds when we think about God is the **most important thing about us...**"*

He went on... *"We tend by a secret law of the soul to move toward our mental image of God. This is true not only of the individual Christian, but of the company of Christians that composes the Church. Always the*

most revealing thing about the Church is her idea of God, just as her most significant message is what she says about Him or leaves unsaid, for her silence is often more eloquent than her speech. She can never escape the self-disclosure of her witness concerning God." A.W. Tozer¹

What comes to mind when we hear of "God's glory"? Or about God's glory in the person of Jesus? In fact, WHAT IS GLORY?

- For us, it is mostly fame or prestige – something that we earn – like the Metal of Honor, or inventing the light bulb – something we *didn't* have at one time but now do. But it is tacked on – there is no change in our essence.
- But for God, glory is *not* earned – He always had it – what we call God's glory is just something that we are allowed to see – it is really just a revelation of the Holiness and greatness that He and only He has

SLIDE: THEOLOGY OF MONOPOLY

Today, we're continuing on in the Book of Exodus. Specifically, we are going to look closer at the Names God gave to Moses in response to Moses' question – *"what shall I tell the Israelites about Who sent me?"* These Names (I AM THAT I AM and 'Y-H-V-H' tell about God *as Creator* of the heavens and the earth – Jesus applied the Name 'I AM' to Himself.

We'll use the board game Monopoly as a way of showing the uniqueness of God as Creator. But before we get there, I want to read from the Book of Romans. It states, in Chapter 1, that:

“For since the creation of the world, God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.

For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles.” Romans 1:20–23

- This was never truer than it was in Egypt.

As you may remember from our last time in the Book of Exodus, Moses offers a series of excuses as to why God has the wrong man for the job of confronting Pharaoh –

- Basically, Moses is saying that Chuck Schumer will never vote to confirm his appointment to the cabinet.

One of Moses’ excuses is that the Israelites do not know God’s Personal Name and the people will want to know what it is.

- WHY? Well, the word “*God*” is actually a title – similar to Mr. President. The Egyptians had many gods, and *they* all had personal names. “*What is the Personal Name of the God who appeared to you, Moses?*” would be the Israelites’ question.

When Moses posed this question, he may have thought that this would somehow win the argument because God might not want anyone to know His Personal Name, since the prevailing pagan magical belief at that time was that if you knew a god’s name, you had some degree of power over

him. But God enthusiastically and emphatically reveals that He wants His Name to be known. He says that His Name is 'I AM THAT I AM' and then He says that His Personal Name is spelled 'Yud-Hey-Vav-Hey' - what we usually translate as *Yahewh*.

- In fact, in Exodus 3:15, God SPECIFICALLY tells Moses that He WANTS to be known as 'Y-H-V-H THRU ALL GENERATIONS.'

And this leads to a question...

- 'YAHWEH' – what comes to mind when you hear that Name?

To be honest, most Christians find it somewhat archaic and out-of-date; it's a Jewish thing from long ago, we think, and therefore it is seldom used in everyday conversation, or even in preaching. In fact, out of the dozens of popular Bible translations today, few use the actual name 'Yahweh' in Exodus 3:15 – most use 'LORD'.²

It became this way because, over the years, both Christian and Jewish Bible translators – for very different reasons – substituted “*God*” or “*LORD*” for 'YHVH', and today, that's what we're used to.

- Nothing wrong with that per se – as long as we know that we're referring to “the *God* of Abraham, the *God* of Isaac and the *God* of Jacob.” (Exodus 3:15)

Even though we don't usually use (pronounce) the Name nowadays, is the MEANING of the Name part of what comes to mind when the Christian church thinks about God today?

Today, I want to take a closer look at that Name which spelled with the four letters 'Yud-Hey-Vav-Hey' because it relates to the Glory of God and His being the Creator.

The Names

When Moses asks God about His Name, it is because that's what the people will ask when he returns claiming that God appeared to him. God answered Moses but His answer was somewhat confusing. In just three sentences*, God uses FIVE different identifiers for Himself – two from the past, and three from now on.

SLIDE: FIVE NAMES

- Eloheim
- Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh (I AM WHO I AM", and then just
- Ehyeh (I AM) - a shortened version of the previous name
- Y-H-V-H (Proper Name of God consisting of four Hebrew letters: YUD and HEY and VAN and HEY). We normally translate this as 'Yahweh'.
- El Shaddai

Click> We covered the first three names last time. Eloheim is just the plural form of El, which is somewhat of a generic word for power and it is applied to anyone or anything with power. It occurs 2598 time in the OT, and in 2326 of those times, it refers to the God of the Bible.³

* Exodus 3:14-15, Exodus 6:3

Click> The Name 'I AM THAT I AM' - or 'I AM' for short - was also discussed last time. It is essentially the mirror image of the name 'Yahweh'. It reveals that the nature of God is truly unique. IF the ONLY possible way of defining something is by itself, then you're faced with something that is UTTERLY unique - something for which you can't just throw together two or three other concepts and thereby understand this new concept.

- God says, ***"There is NOTHING in your life and experience that can explain me, I am not from your world, I am the maker of your world."***
- The ONLY thing that would remotely describe Me is Me. But nothing else that is in your experience can do it.
That's what "I am..." implies.

Moving on... we come to El Shaddai and YHVH.

Click> Up to the burning bush incident, the Israelites mainly knew God as El Shaddai[†] because that's how He identified Himself to Abraham hundreds of years earlier[‡].

- But at the burning bush, God says that He is no longer to be known as El Shaddai; from now on, He is 'Yud-Hey-Vav-Hey'.

At this point, a curious questions arises:

[†] Exodus 6:2

[‡] Genesis 17:1

SLIDE: WHY?

Q: WHY is God so concerned at this point in history that everyone knows His Personal Name 'Yud-Hey-Vav-Hey'?

As far as I know, this is the only place in the Old Testament where God Himself makes a BIG DEAL about what name He is called. We humans have personal names and we respond to those names, but up until this point in history, God had many names (like Eloheim, Yehovah Jireh, El Elyon and so on) and He didn't seem to be concerned about what we called Him. But... now He is.

Why?

This is a key to what is going on in the Exodus story. There are three different *agendas* in play here:

1. One is to get the Jews out of Egypt – this is the surface understanding of the Israelites and the Egyptians. But, this could have been accomplished *without* 10 plagues. God could have just beamed them out like on *Star Trek*, or struck the entire Egyptian army with a severe case of the flu. Something *else* is going on.
2. God is beginning to form a people to be His own and from whom the Messiah would eventually come. "Let My people go... that they might serve Me." (Ex. 9:1)

3. God intends to reveal Himself more fully than ever before. This is **Why** God's New Names come forward at this point in human history and **why** Egypt is chosen as the center stage of this drama.

But – do the Egyptians really *care* about God's Name? Adding one more god to the thousands of other ones – what does it matter? What difference would it make to the Egyptians if someone just said “*The God of the Hebrews*” destroyed your nation vs “*YHVH destroyed your nation*”? Knowing which god is responsible it's not going to make things any easier for them.

- Why does God seem to say that it is to their benefit to know that a Being Named 'Yud-Hey-Vav-Hey' did it?

The reason is that God is about to introduce a **paradigm shift** in the world's concept of gods. Polytheistic Egypt – the preeminent military and economic power in this corner of the world – is the prime location.

Before we get to the *new* Name 'Yud-Hey-Vav-Hey', let's look at the *previous* name 'El Shaddai' and perhaps understand *why* it was necessary to make a *change* at this point in history.

SLIDE: NERD ALERT

- Caution... nerd alert!
- Glory of God – Psalm 19:1 “The heavens are telling the glory of God.”

The Name 'El Shaddai'

SLIDE: ALEPH BETA

As I did last time, I want to give TREMENDOUS CREDIT to **Rabbi David Fohrman** of *AlephBeta Institute* for the following approach to the Names El Shaddai and YHVH – I highly recommend that you subscribe to his website <https://www.alephbeta.org/>. Since I do not know the ins and outs of Hebrew, Rabbi Fohrman's insights into approaching this matter were invaluable to me.

SLIDE: EL SHADDAI

In talking about the name El Shaddai, a basic point to remember is that *men* DID NOT invent this Name, as they did with some other names such as *Jehovah Jireh* (*YAHWEH will provide*) or *Jehovah Raphe* (*The Lord who heals you*). God Himself announced to Abraham that He was El Shaddai. (Genesis 17:1)

- Question right off the bat – While it might be nice information to know what El Shaddai means, but so what? Why look at THIS name. The information might help to win a Bible trivia contest, but so what? God Himself says that the Name is out of date.

True – God's relationship with Israel is going to change and this will be reflected in His *new* Name. But it's like when a woman changes her maiden name after she marries. The maiden name meant something to everyone who knew her, and although her official *formal* name changes

because of her *new relationship*, that person's character and nature is still part of her underlying makeup.

- OK – When God announced to Abraham that He was El Shaddai, what was He saying?

Credit for much of the El Shaddai material is due to an *AlephBeta* presentation entitled "VA'ERA: SEEING GOD IN SCIENCE"⁴.

The Name EL Shaddai is usually interpreted as "*God Almighty*", but in reality we don't know what it means.

Click> we saw last time that the word 'El' is a word that refers to power; it denotes someone or something having power. It was often used to refer to either God Himself (capital G), the pagan gods (small g), judges and even angels.

Click> But, the actual meaning of term/word *Shaddai* is unknown.⁵ It is not a word in Hebrew.

BTW – many Orthodox Jews pronounce the name as '*Ke/ Shakai*' so as not to use God's name unnecessarily.

Even though we don't specifically know what it means, some of the ancient Jewish sages had an interesting interpretation of *Shadda[§]*, and that's what I want to explore.

[§] Example: *Genesis Rabbah* 5:8. The Midrash is a group of writings by famous Jewish scholars that are basically stories expanding on incidents in the Bible to derive principles or Jewish law or to teach moral lessons. The Midrash is NOT Scripture but can sometimes offer an interesting perspective on the Bible.

SLIDE: 'SHADDAI'

The rabbis looked at the ending of the name Shaddai and saw the Hebrew word *'dai'* which means “*enough*”. In their writings commenting on the **first chapters of Book of Genesis and the creation**, they speculated that Shaddai was actually a CONTRACTION of several words – somewhat like an acronym. You know, like OPEC stands for the “*Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries*” and POTUS is a contraction of the phrase “*President of the United States*”.

- And we all know about N.A.S.C.A.R., which stands for ‘Non–Athletic Sport Centered Around Rednecks’.⁶

They saw *Shaddai* as a contraction of the words: *'Mi she'Amar Dai L'olamo'*.⁷

Click> *"The God who said to His world, enough"*

In other words, there came a point during the creation when God stopped the creation and said “enough”.

- OK – What does this mean, to *say to your world, “enough”*?

No one really knows exactly *what* the sages meant – but their writings imply that the creation was *expanding* or *swelling*. It implies that God had to reign it in by saying to it “enough”.

OK – What does or could THAT mean? Again, we don't know for sure – a lot of “I don't know”, but although they lived long before modern theories of cosmology, the rabbis' words seem to anticipate what modern science is finding.

- Because, as it turns out, the very early universe really DID need reigning in and FINE-TUNING.
- Had God not said to the universe, "enough!", you and I wouldn't be here today

SLIDE: COSMOLOGY Here's where the nerd part comes out. Let's look at what modern cosmology says about the very beginnings of the universe. Like Julie Andrews sang, “*Let's start at the very beginning, A very good place to start*”.⁸

First, there was nothingness. In fact, there was not even nothingness, for nothingness itself is a thing.

Click> Then, a cataclysmic explosion, and something comes from nothing.

- Science is not yet able to say what happened *before* this “BIG BANG”, for the very concept of “*before the 'Big Bang'*” is a contradiction in terms; there was no “*before*” as there was yet no *time*.
- There was a cataclysmic explosion – the BIG BANG. According to modern physics, TIME ITSELF as well as space, came into existence. You can't say what happened BEFORE the bang. There WAS no

before. Time itself begins here. In this massive explosion, **everything begins.**

- Now that is important – TIME ITSELF began with that initial event.

And what was there *after* the explosion?

- At first, all there was were **SUBATOMIC PARTICLES**, racing out from the center in all directions. There weren't even any atoms formed yet. The temperature was extreme.
- Gradually, the super-hot subatomic particles began to cool as they spread out from that initial explosion. Eventually, they cooled enough that visible light first becomes apparent and in a blaze of brilliance, **LIGHT** comes into the world. **Echo???**
- Note: -> we tend to read Genesis 1 as God began creation by saying 'Let there be light.' But it actually says... "...and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters. ³ Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light."^{**}

- So, there was darkness FIRST, and THEN light.

- Over time, the **force of GRAVITY** begins to cause these subatomic particles to draw near to each other until the first simplest atoms

^{**} Genesis 1:1-3

- are formed – **HYDROGEN** atoms. And, for a long time, that's all there is in the universe.
- Huge clouds of hydrogen in which the hydrogen atoms are slowly drawn closer together by **GRAVITY**. Friction between the hydrogen atoms causes the hydrogen to heat up, and eventually.
 - The cloud becomes so dense and so hot that it ignites in a thermo-nuclear reaction. The hydrogen burns and transforms itself to **HELIUM**. We call these burning clouds of hydrogen, stars.
 - Now, for a long time, there was a universe just with stars in it. How did we get the rest of the universe? Eventually, a star will exhaust nearly all of its hydrogen fuel and gravity begins to cause the star to implode upon itself. The star caves in on itself, the remaining hydrogen become hotter and hotter as the friction goes stronger and stronger.
 - Eventually, the star explodes in a mammoth explosion that we call a **supernova**. In this hot kiln, all of the heavy elements are formed – carbon, gold, zinc, copper – and as the star explodes, these elements are cast out into the space and become the building block of things that we call **planets**.

Before you know it, you have got a universe going. So it all **sounds fairly simple**. You start off with a big bang and pretty soon, you got stars, you got planets. **Not so tough, right?**

- But here is the interesting thing, **the big bang – as you recall – was an EXPLOSION.**

SLIDE: EXPLOSIONS ARE CHAOTIC

Now, typically, explosions are not orderly things. For example: if Janell is using a Blender to make a Smoothie and doesn't put the top on securely, the liquid sprays all over the room. It looks pretty chaotic. There would be splotches of milk over there, pieces of bananas over here. That's **the random effect of an explosion.**

- The problem is the Big Bang **couldn't afford to be random.**

We wouldn't have the universe unless it was very **FINELY TUNED.**

Let me explain to you what I am talking about here.

Click> There is something that the cosmologists call the **FLATNESS PROBLEM.** This relates to the **SPEED OF EXPANSION.** It goes like this – remember right after the big bang, you have all these subatomic particles speeding out into space.

- How fast were they going?

You see, ***if they were going a little bit too fast***, gravity never would have been able to act upon them, to bring them together into atoms and to bring those atoms together to form clouds. Like a rocket ship that has reached escape velocity can escape the pull of the earth's gravity and go thru the atmosphere and into space. If they were going too fast, all you would have had is a universe of subatomic particles, no stars, no planets, no nothing – speeding away.

Okay, so they can't be going too fast. But what *if they were going a little bit too slow?* Then gravity would have stopped the acceleration altogether and brought everything back into one big crunch and you wouldn't have anything.

- So, the speed of expansion had to be just right: not too fast, not too slow.
 - OK – WHAT WAS THE MARGIN FOR ERROR HERE?

SLIDE: MARGIN OF ERROR –

- What are the chances that the universe formed after the Big Bang?

Click> Suppose the rate of expansion were **10% faster** than what it was and there wouldn't have allowed the formation of the universe?

Click> Suppose if it was **10% slower** than it was, we wouldn't have the universe.

You would probably say that we were pretty lucky – we had 9 chances out of 10 of *not* having a universe and we got lucky and the 1 chance out of 10 prevailed and here we are. We had a 10% chance in this case.

SLIDE: 10% chance

Click> Okay but what if the chance wasn't 1 out of 10 but it was **1 out of 100**? That 99 chances out of a hundred, the rate of expansion would be either too fast or too slow. We had a 1% chance that the rate of expansion would be in the safe zone, else no universe.

➤ So then you might say, well I guess we were really lucky.

Click> Suppose it was only 1 in a thousand or...

Click> If the chance was 1 in a million? What would you say if the chances were 1 in a million that the speed of expansion being exactly what was needed?

SLIDE: NYS LOTTERY –

BTW, the chances of hitting the NY MegaMillions lottery is:

Click> | approximately 1 in 259 million.⁹

SLIDE: CHANCES .

1 in a trillion: 0.00000000001%

Note that as the chances of success get smaller, the more zeros we see after the decimal point.

Click: 1 chance in a million has 4 zeros

NY Lottery 1 chance in 258 million has 6 zeroes

1 chance in a billion has 7

1 chance in a trillion has 10 zeros after the decimal point.

So, if percent chance that the universe would have the right rate of expansion is 1 chance in a trillion (which is 10 zeros after the decimal point), you might start to think that something is going on.

Cosmologists have estimated that the actual margin of error here regarding the Speed of Expansion (Flatness Problem) to be:

Click> 1 chance in 10 to the 55th power.¹⁰

- That's our odds here. – 55 zeroes after the decimal point!

Now, while it is extremely implausible that this *would* occur, I have to admit that it *could* occur. After all, people DO win the NYS Lottery even though the odds are 259 million to 1 against them. Ok – so the speed of expansion or flatness factor *could* theoretically have occurred by chance.

- But how many times in a row can something like that happen? How many times IN A ROW could you hit the mega lottery?

You see, there are at least 12 other factors, some with even more extreme chances against occurring, that all needed to happen for our universe to exist.

It's like someone going into a Grand Canyon filled with billions of white ping pong balls and one blue one – and while blindfolded – you dive in and pick out – on the first try – the one that is blue. Theoretically possible – yes – but highly unlikely. OK – now substitute a green ping pong ball for the blue one and mix them all up and then you try again –

will you pick out the green one while blindfolded on this attempt also?
You would have to achieve this impossible task 13 times in a row.

SLIDE: FIRING SQUAD

John Leslie example: 50 sharpshooters and all miss – what should u conclude?¹¹ The conclusion is that the fix was in – somehow there was some unseen authority authorizing the result.

So when you add it all up, this exploding universe needed quite a lot of organization and order. So a very long time ago, the Rabbis said Shaddai, the name of God, meant “the one who says to his world, ‘enough’”. Only in recent years have we began to understand, how deeply that is true.

- Were the Jewish sages alluding to what we know today?

It's hard to definitely say that they were, but perhaps their speculations were accurate. I will say that it agrees with Paul's letter to the Colossians:

Colossians 1:16-17

For in Him (Jesus) all things were created, things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities. All things were created through Him and for Him. 17 He is before all things, and in Him **ALL THINGS HOLD TOGETHER**.

In any event, the common translation of El Shaddai is “*God Almighty*”, and that's OK.

So, prior to the Exodus, the Israelites knew God as El Shaddai, a God of extreme power.

- But, like He periodically does with ALL OF US individually, God wants to shatter any limited view of Him that we have. In the case of the Israelites and the Egyptians, His actions are meant to demonstrate that not *only* is He God, not *only* that He is God Almighty, but that He is also the Creator of the universe. This is major agenda in the story.
- And He will do this in the best possible location – Egypt, the greatest kingdom in that part of the world, an empire that has thousands of gods and whose ruler is himself considered a god. It is here that the LORD is about to *reintroduce* a reality that had long been forgotten – the reality that there is only ONE God and that this God is the Sovereign Creator.

OK – Question: HOW does He go about doing that?

- If you were God, how would you go about demonstrating that you are the Creator ?
- Remember: the Egyptians were not atheists – they already believed in gods, and I expect that they were open to accepting that the Hebrews had a god named 'El Shaddai'.
- Just defeating all the main pagan gods of Egypt only proves that you are *stronger* than the Egyptian gods – it does NOT demonstrate that you are the Creator and the One and Only God

- you could just be the *strongest god* among the other gods in that part of the world.

- A paradigm shift in thinking is needed.
- AND that's the PURPOSE OF HIS NEW NAME and of THE WAY the plagues were implemented.

PARADIGM SHIFT: Does everyone know what a PARADIGM SHIFT is? It a MAJOR shift in the way we think about something. When the idea was accepted that the earth revolved around the sun, instead of vice versa, that was a paradigm shift. Shifting from the belief that you can EARN your way to heaven to the belief that ONLY THE BLOOD OF JESUS can do that for you is a paradigm shift.

THE NAME 'Y-H-V-H'

OK. El Shaddai was God's FORMER name. What was God saying by revealing this new Name spelled with the four letters 'Yud-Hey-Vav-Hey'?

- Why was God moving beyond the belief that He was just a God of power?
- What does this new Name mean?

SLIDE: Y-H-V-H

Here are the four letters of God's Proper Name: Yud and Hay and Vav and Hay. This Name occurs 6,220 times in the Old Testament. It comes from a FAMILY of words centered on the Hebrew word 'havah' verb "**to become**".¹²

What does the Name 'Y-H-V-H' mean? We don't know precisely. Names, especially Biblical names, *usually* do mean something and that comes from the characteristics of names when used as words in normal language. For example:

- Caleb = "forcible", "bold"¹³
 - Seth = "appointed" (like to a special task or position)
 - Timothy = "honoring God"
 - Gabriel = God is my strong man
- **Gary** = a fun-loving outgoing person, like to be on stage, tends to be "**a bit of a Hamm.**"

However, there is no other word in Hebrew that contain all these FOUR letters -> Yud and Hay and Vav and Hay. They only occur in the Divine Name. So, our normal way of understanding the meaning is of no use.

BTW – PRONOUNCING THE NAME We *usually* pronounce the Name YHVH as Yahweh, or sometimes as Yehovah. Some scholars boil down the four-letter Name to "Jehovah", but this pronunciation is particularly unlikely.¹⁴

However, in reality, we do NOT know how to pronounce the Name 'Y-H-V-H'. As you may know, the Hebrew language **doesn't contain vowels, only consonants**, so vowels are *added* to make the words, and which vowels go with which word is called learning the language. So,

unless you know what vowels are understood to be between the letters, you really don't know how it sounds.

That may sound strange, but we're doing the same all the time when texting on our IPHONES.

- LOL – *laugh out loud*; BYW – *By The Way*; BRB – *Be Right Back*; IMO – *In My Opinion*; THX – thanks, and so on.
- So, we fill in the missing letters to make the words we understand.

And, at one time, that's what happened with the four letters 'Y-H-V-H' – the name was pronounced with vowels added. Today, however, we DON'T KNOW how the Name is pronounced. What happened was that, over time, God's Name was considered so sacred – and the Jews were so afraid of violating the commandment not to take His Name IN VAIN – that the Name was discontinued in everyday conversation. Instead, substitutes were used, such as *Hashem* and *Adonai*. And, by the time of Jesus, only the High Priest was actually allowed to pronounce the Name aloud and then only on the Day of Atonement.¹⁵

- And then when the temple in Jerusalem was destroyed 40 years after the Crucifixion and Resurrection, the Day of Atonement ceremony was no longer possible and the actual pronunciation was lost.¹⁶

Interestingly, even Jesus Himself did not use the Divine Name 'Y-H-V-H' in any of His sermons.^{††} And neither did the writers (mostly Jewish) of the NT use the Divine Name.^{‡‡} It was simply not used in

^{††} Jesus quoted Psalm 22:1 on the cross, “Eli, Eli, lamah azavtani?” Orthodox Jewish Bible

^{‡‡} Some do hold that the Name is contained Revelation embedded in the Greek word *hallelouia*. 'Yah' is the abbreviated form of Yahweh, which is sometimes also used in the Hebrew Scriptures (mostly in the Psalms, but a few times in Exodus and Isaiah).

regular speech to refer to God, and therefore Jesus did not use this Name either. Instead, Jesus usually referred to God as His '*Father*'¹⁷ and the NT writers used the substitute Name *Adonai* (meaning **LORD**) even when quoting Hebrew Scriptures that had the Divine Name in the original.^{§§}

Today, orthodox Jews still treat God's Name with ultimate respect. They will not try to pronounce the four letter Name aloud, so they substitute 'Adonai' when reading aloud a passage of the Torah that contains the four letters. This respect even extends to the word "God"; the term 'Hashem' is used in everyday conversation when referring to God (Hashem = "The Name").

Observant Jews will NOT throw an old copy of the Scripture into the TRASH because it contains the Divine Name. **Anything that is used for holy purposes acquires a form of holiness itself – which actually is a Scriptural principle.** (example: Numbers 16:36–40). Jews today still observe a commandment (Deuteronomy 12:3) that indicates that it is considered a sin to desecrate/destroy God's Holy Name. So, any document that contains His Holy Name is treated with respect. Worn-out copies of the Torah, and even homework papers with God's Name on them, are set aside and **BURIED IN THE GROUND** in special boxes.¹⁸

- Observant Jews also show RESPECT when disposing of OBJECTS connected with practices commanded by scripture. The objects don't have to be buried in the ground unless they contain the Divine Name. Rather, they are double-wrapped in tissue before disposal in the garbage.¹⁹

^{§§} Example: when Jesus takes the Isaiah scroll at the synagogue in Nazareth (Luke 4:17–19 and is reading Isaiah 61:1).

- -> **PERSONAL NOTE:** Even before I came across this Jewish practice regarding respect for objects connected with a practice commanded by Scripture, I WAS PERSONALLY CONVICTED that I can no longer just throw MY **COMMUNION CUP** INTO THE TRASH WITHOUT WRAPPING IT. This is just my own approach to giving respect to an object that is part of Jesus' command to take and drink.
 - Please understand me here – I am NOT promoting the Catholic position of the real presence of Christ's body and blood in communion, and I am not suggesting that any else do this, but something inside of me says that I MUST treat this common plastic cup with respect.

OK – what was God trying to tell us by the Name 'Y-H-V-H'?

SLIDE: YUD-HEY-VAV-HEY

As I mentioned, the four letters yud and hey and vav and hey do not form any word in Hebrew other than the Proper Name of God.

Well, what do you do when you don't have any other reference point? Again, Rabbi Fohrman's insights are invaluable here. He suggests that we take the Name apart by its individual letters – *what makes up the name Y-H-V-H?* So, let's try to construct the Name Y-H-W-H.

This is fascinating to me...

SLIDE: WAS, IS, WILL BE

The Name appears to come from a family of words centered on the notion “I AM”.

The Hebrew word for ‘is’ is ‘HOVEH’ – Bill Clinton “It depends upon what the meaning of the word ‘is’ is.”

<click> The Hebrew word for ‘was’ is HAYAH,

<click> – and the future tense of the Hebrew word “to be” is ‘YIHYEH’ meaning “to exist in the future”.²⁰

Click> When you take hayah (the word for ‘was’) and <click> then add on top of that the Hebrew word ‘yihyeh’ – *to exist in the future* or *to become*²¹ – <click> and then put ‘hoveh’ (the word for *is* or *to breathe*²² – and really a reflection of **I AM**) on top of them, you can see right here that the overlay becomes yud and hey and vav and hey.²³

- So, if you take the Hebrew words for ‘was, is and will be’ and overlay them on top of each other, you actually get yud and hey and vav and hey.

Remarkable, isn’t it. God’s type of existence is reflected in His Name – past, present and future!

Many translations of ‘yud-hey-vav-hey’ show Yahweh to mean God is eternal – that *He was, is and will be*.

- But saying that He is *eternal* does NOT capture the FULL implication of this Name.

OK – What does ETERNAL mean in reference to God?

- You and I will *live* eternally but we have NOT **EXISTED** eternally. So, God's eternal existence is *different* than ours if only for the fact that He has been around since *before* the beginning of creation.
 - But that's **NOT** the FULL IMPLICATION of the NAME yud and hey and vav and hey.
 - Remember, there is no state of existence in Hebrew that can be described by yud and hey and vav and hey. There is hayah, (I was) and there is hoveh (I am) and there is yihyeh (will be) – but there is **none** of that *altogether* as a word.
 - YHVH IMPLIES THAT GOD EXISTS IN THE PAST–PRESENT–FUTURE ALL AT THE SAME TIME.

Time

SLIDE: LINEAR TIME

You see, you and I exist in LINEAR TIME. We travel through what we call the '*TUNNEL OF TIME*'. We see time as linear – we label it past, present and future.

<click> We say “*I was at the church last Sunday*”, “*I am at the church today*” and “*I will be at church next Sunday.*”

It is a linear existence – you and I *only* live in the present; the past is lost to us; and what is future now becomes the present when we get there. We can only live in the present. We can't live 2 years in the future today. We're creatures limited by living in time.

- But the idea of yud and hey and vav and hey seems to be a simultaneous experience of past, present and future; that's the kind of existence which is fundamentally different than ours. God is outside of time.

SLIDE: Before Abraham... I AM –

Abraham lived and died approximately 1600 years BEFORE Jesus, and yet Jesus said: Before Abraham sprang into existence, I AM.

- He did NOT say “*Before Abraham sprang into existence, I Was*” – but rather I AM. To reference some event hundreds of years earlier and say “*I was*” would indicate that – at the very

least – you were alive even then. We could never say that – except perhaps for a few in the back of the church.

- Now – an angel could say that “*I was*” because that angel *was* alive back then.
- If Jesus had only said “*I was*”, they probably would not have picked up stones to kill him – I don’t believe that equating yourself with an angel was a capital offense under the Torah – they would have just thought that He was nuts.

<click> But Jesus said “I AM”, making a direct reference to God’s name and God’s type of existence, and that’s why the Jews picked up stones to kill Him for blasphemy – equating Himself with God.

God the Son made a claim to live in a non-linear fashion. He essentially said – *I am standing here before you as a man, but know that – as God – I am back there also RIGHT NOW.* Everything is Present to God.

SLIDE: “BACK TO THE FUTURE” EXISTENCE?

Many of us have the idea of time that was part of the *Back to the Future* movies. Marty McFly and the Professor travel back into the past or forward into the future in a modified DeLorean equipped with a flux capacitor.

<click> But that concept of time is not an accurate portrayal of God’s eternal essence. You see, when they go back in time, they can enter and experience life as it was then but they always understand that they are just VISITING.

- But God doesn't need a DeLorean to go back into the past. He doesn't worry about bumping into *older* versions of Himself.
- God doesn't just VISIT the past, He says I AM in the past just as I AM now in the present and I AM now in the future – I change not!
- That's why Paul could state OUR future when he says: "And God raised us up with Christ and SEATED us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus." (Ephesians 2:6) God is there NOW -> God is with **our future-selves** there now but we have to wait for a bit until we get there – but we will!

I have to admit that it is easier for me to believe God is "in time" – this has God progressing along the Timeline with us; the difference in this view is that GOD CAN SEE AHEAD – like someone who has a **PROPHECY**.

- But that's incorrect! He does not 'foresee' the future in that sense. He doesn't *travel* to the future – **HE IS ALREADY THERE**.
 - Kind of blows the mind – doesn't it.

<click> He lives **SIMULTANEOUSLY** in all time – it is all the PRESENT for HIM;

This is experiencing time in a way *we cannot imagine*. To experience time like this, you would have to be OUTSIDE of time and space, outside of this realm of existence that is subject to time and space.

But WE are subject to time. And this is more disquieting the older you get. Time seems to pursue us and hunt us down. We are gradually passing OUT of this world of time.

SLIDE: THE NEXUS –

Some of you may have seen the movie *Star Trek Generations*. The theme of the movie is an attempt to escape the experience of time marching on. The film focuses on a fictional anomaly in space called the “*nexus*”—which is a **ribbon** of energy that draws you into an extra-dimensional realm where time has no meaning. This phenomenon can read your thoughts, so in this nexus you are placed into your ideal world to live out your dreams endlessly—an interesting heaven concept.

The villain of the story is a man named Soren, who is trying to enter the nexus ribbon as it travels thru space. He’s trying to alter the nexus’ path by destroying a star and thus changing the gravitational pull of the system which will alter the ribbon’s path.

Soren describes TIME AS A PREDATOR that is stalking us, closing in to make the kill; but he says that in the nexus,

➤ **“Time has no meaning there; the predator has no teeth.”²⁴**

Sort of echoes I Corinthians 15:54–55

“When this perishable body puts on imperishability, and this mortal body puts on immortality, then the saying that is written will be fulfilled:

‘Death has been swallowed up in victory.’

‘Where, O death, is your victory?’

Where, O death, is your sting?'

Deep within the human consciousness, we intuitively know that we should not have to die – this is a reflection of our original state in the Garden and our desire to get back there.

SLIDE: OUTSIDE OF TIME BOX

Getting back to astrophysics for a moment, one of the most difficult things to grasp is the idea that, in the **Big Bang, time and space were CREATED.**

- There IS no space and time *outside* of the Big Bang.
- Some probably are thinking right now that this is crazy talk.

Really? Then why do we not object when we sing songs like He Knows My Name²⁵? The lyrics are:

*I have a Maker
He formed my heart
Before even time began
My life was in his hands*

Before even time began – but how can this be? There is no space *outside* of the expansion, there is no time *outside* of the expansion? That's what Scripture and science tells us. The reason why we can't understand what that means is because we're on the *inside*, we're not on the outside – our whole existence is inside that realm. We have no words to explain anything beyond our realm.

- How does a fish in Kinderhook Lake possibly comprehend about life on Warren Street in Hudson? (come to think about it, I don't understand what it is like on Warren Street either, but I can understand more of it than a fish can).

The Creator lives in a different realm than the created. We can't fully understand what that means if we're living *inside* of the fishbowl.²⁶

Some of the Jewish Midrash writings that I mentioned earlier have called God "The Place" (*HaMakom*).²⁷ *"He is the place of the world... and yet the world is not His place."*²⁸ The world and universe where you and I live does not hold Him, space and time does not hold Him. If anything, HE is the place of the universe. HE is the vessel that contains it. God is the "environment" in which time, space and the universe find a home.

THEOLOGY OF MONOPOLY

SLIDE: LOOKING FOR PARKER –

Analogy of Rabbi David Fohrman²⁹:

Here's a simple analogy of what God will be demonstrating to a world about Himself: On the monopoly board, we have various token pieces that the players use as they travel around the board. For example, there's the little hat and the little shoe.

SLIDE: HAT AND SHOE

So imagine a conversation between the little hat and the little shoe.

Click: One day the Little Hat says to Little Shoe: *“do you believe in Parker?”*

Click: So Little Shoe says: *“what do you mean – do I believe in Parker?”*

Click: So Little Hat says, *“Parker! well, you know, right here on the board it says ‘made by Parker Brothers’. Do you believe in Parker?”*

Click: And Little Shoe says *“well, I guess so – what about you?”*

Click: Little Hat says *“you know, I’ve been around here a long time. I go around this board fifty times a week. I’ve seen it all. I’ve seen Jail, I’ve seen Free Parking, I’ve see Tennessee Avenue, Park Place, Boardwalk, the whole thing. I’ve been for a ride on the Reading RR, and I’ve gone past GO over 500 times each month for the past 25 years and collected my \$200 each time. I’ve see houses and hotels. I’ve met a battleship, the thimble, a cannon, a race car, even seen a little dog who tried to bite my foot. But, I’ve never seen Parker.”*

SLIDE: Don’t believe anymore ...

- *I don’t believe in Parker anymore. He’s not here. I’m a Parker atheist.*

Click: Little Shoe: “Think for a minute! Little Hat, do you really expect to meet Parker on the board? You’re looking for him in the wrong place.

SLIDE: NOT ON but MADE the Board ..

Parker is not ON the board – He MADE the board. You and I live ON the board along with all the other icons. Parker MADE the board. Obviously the one who *made* the board isn't going to live on the board.”

- As the creator of the Board, you can interact with that board whenever you want to. You can go from Jail to Boardwalk without passing Park Place. After all, you made the rules. But you don't live on that board.

The board is its own little world, its own little game world. The maker of the game is obviously in a different realm, is *kadosh*, Hebrew for Holy, separate – Parker is separate from the board. And God is *Kadosh*, separate from our world.

He does not live *on the board* – He made the board, He doesn't have to pass GO to collect \$200. He is outside of the board, but He can interact with it any time He so desires.

- **And God is going to demonstrate on the board in Egypt that He is something FAR GREATER** than all the tokens on the board.
- God's self-revelation is transforming from just a God of power to the Almighty Creator and the **COVENANT God of Israel**.

The Heavens Declare the Glory of God

SLIDE: PSALM 19 a

David wrote Psalm 1 about 400 years after the Exodus and God's name change. Verse 1 states: "The heavens declare the glory of God (EI); the skies proclaim the work of his hands."³⁰

- Note – David used the *older* name of God – El – but now God is recognized as the Creator of the heavens.

SLIDE: PSALM 19 b

Here is the end of the Psalm which is well known and it often refers to Jesus.

“Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you, O Lord (Yahweh), my rock and my redeemer.”

So, David begins his Psalm of praise with the older name of God – El - who now is seen as not just Power but the Creator of the heavens! And David *ends* with calling God by His Covenant Name 'Yahewh' – the Covenant God Who is the Creator and Who also is concerned with me! My Redeemer and my Rock!

- David’s Psalm, written about 400 years after the Exodus, reflects the transition in understanding in Who the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob really is.

What is the implication of this for us?

- It may impact the way we view God.

SLIDE: NIGHT SKY .

When David looked up at the night sky over Israel thousands of years ago, it inspired him to sing:

Psalm 19: The heavens declare the glory of God;
the skies proclaim the work of his hands.

Recently, I have been talking with Bob Wasson about his interest in the night sky and various stars and planets. He said something that struck a chord in me – he says that looking at the night sky gives him the feeling that we’re not as important as we think we are. It attacks our pride.

That struck a chord in me because I have recently run across a quote by C. H. Spurgeon. He stated:

“You will never glory in God (un)till – first of all – God has killed your glorying in yourself.”

I think that, every in a while, we all need to feel three things:

1. the utter smallness of man,
2. the bigness of the universe, and
3. the incredible bigness of the Creator who made this big universe.

Why? Because we all have the tendency to overestimate ourselves. All of us have bloated egos that need resizing. Seeing God’s glory is the cure to this.

- It helps to **GIVE US A FRAME OF REFERENCE TO HELP US UNDERSTAND GRACE.**

Night sky – especially if you look straight up! Seeing a fraction of the glory of God changes me.

- It humbles you and exalts you at the same time. It reminds you of your place in the world without making you feel like you don't matter. Seeing glory makes you realize that you are EXTREMELY SMALL AND YET YOU ARE EXTREMELY LOVED.

I've read that **Teddy Roosevelt** had an interesting habit. He had a house on Long Island Sound which he named Sagamore Hill (Oyster Bay Long Island NY). During Roosevelt's time as President, this was called the "Summer White House" because of the many meetings and entertainment of guests that took place there. One of his friends described a ritual that he and Roosevelt would do in order to restore a sense of wonder. Every now and then, they would step outside at dark, look into the night sky, find the faint spot of light at the lower left-hand corner of Pegasus, and one of them would recite: *"That is the Spiral Galaxy of Andromeda. It is as large as our Milky Way. It is one of a hundred million galaxies. It is seven hundred and fifty thousand light years away. It consists of one hundred billion suns, each larger than our own sun."* There would be a pause and then Roosevelt would grin and say, *"Now I think we feel small enough! Let's go to bed."* ³¹

Implication

As we saw, we are creatures presently limited by Time – do we realize that – in this life, we will NEVER be younger than we are TODAY? Let that sink in! We will never be younger than we are today!

Steven Sotloff, Jewish American journalist kidnapped in Syria by ISIS and beheaded in 2014. He managed to smuggle a message out 2 months before his death. He wrote: *“Live life to the fullest. Everyone has two lives, the second one begins when you realize that you only have one.”*³²

The apostle Paul use the stars analogy when he spoke about how our association with Christ is to compel our lives:

“Therefore, my dear friends... do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life.” Philippians 2:12–16

As Joe Skoda’s message last Sunday remarked, we must cooperate with the Holy Spirit to become that for which we were created.

- “Being a saint is being who you were meant to be: a frail human being keeping the Commandments (, especially the last one). It’s loving when you are not loved in return. It’s being patient when you want to hit somebody on the head. It’s loving your family as they are, not as you want them to be. It’s not letting the disappointments in your life crush you.”³³

- Paul wrote (Galatians 4:4): "When the **right time** came, God sent forth his Son." Time and eternity *collided* when JESUS came among us, born of a virgin. The creator of time and Lord of eternity became a human being. Humanity and divinity collided and yet they did not become identical, and history would never be the same again!

In looking at the night sky, it's almost as if you are somehow entering into communion with God. Even when your thought sweeps round the stars and space, you feel that heaven, even the heaven of heavens, cannot contain Him. Everything conceivable falls short of the inconceivable glory of God.

When you come, however, to gaze upon the face of Jesus, how different is the feeling! Now you have a mirror equal to the reflection of the eternal face, for

"In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." His name is "Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God."

He is the image of God, "the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person."

In the visible creation, we see God's works, but in Christ Jesus, we have God Himself, Emmanuel, "God with us."

- DON'T WASTE YOUR TIME in life trying to get even with the people who have hurt you. **The grave is a tremendous equalizer.** Six months after you all are dead, you look pretty much the same. All

you have to do is love and forgive. Try to forgive what people have done to you and leave all the rest to the Master.³⁴

- Don't say, "If it weren't for that person I could be holy." No; you can be holy *because* of that person."³⁵
- There are only two things that you have that God asks for: your will and your sin. Give your sins and imperfections to Him. He has come to call sinners and He WILL, He will work with you.
- Jesus said: "Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them." John 14:23
- If there is anyone here who hasn't accepted Christ as Lord and Savior, I urge that you do it today - while you still have time.

Endnotes

- ¹ A. W. Tozer, *Knowledge of the Holy*, Chapter 1, p. 5
- ² <http://biblehub.com/exodus/3-15.htm>
- ³ *The New Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* Strong's, Hebrew #430
- ⁴ <https://www.alephbeta.org/course/lecture/vaera-seeing-god-i>
- ⁵ Jewish Encyclopedia, NAMES OF GOD, <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/11305-names-of-god>
- ⁶ <http://www.jokes4us.com/peoplejokes/funnyacronyms.html>
- ⁷ *Shaddai in the Midrash*, <https://netzarifaith.org/2014/06/14/shaddai-in-the-midrash/>
- ⁸ *Sound of Music*, *Do-Re-Mi* lyrics
- ⁹ <http://nylottery.ny.gov/wps/portal/Home/Lottery/Home/Jackpot+Games/MEGA+MILLIONS/MegaMillions+++Chances+of+Winning> Accessed 12/14/2016
- ¹⁰ John Leslie, *Universes*, 1989, p. 3, 29
- ¹¹ *Ibid.* p. 13
- ¹² *Strong's*, Hebrew #3068
- ¹³ *Strong's*, Hebrew # 3612. Kaleb
- ¹⁴ The Name of God, <http://www.mechon-mamre.org/jewfaq/name.htm>
- ¹⁵ Alfred Edersheim, *The Temple* p. 310-11
- ¹⁶ Although some rabbis believe it is still known but kept in secret awaiting the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem.
- ¹⁷ John Oakes, "Why is the word yahweh not written in the NT? Is it because Yahweh refers to the whole Godhead?" <http://evidenceforchristianity.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/logo11.png>
- ¹⁸ Menachem Posner, **Proper Disposal of Holy Objects** http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/475304/jewish/Proper-Disposal-of-Holy-Objects.htm
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*
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- ²¹ *Strong's*, Hebrew #1961
- ²² *Strong's*, #1933
- ²³ AlephBeta, *What's in a Name*, <https://www.alephbeta.org/course/lecture/whats-in-a-name>
- ²⁴ Joe Boot, *The Origin and Meaning of Time*, posted December 18, 2005, <http://rzm.org/just-thinking/the-origin-and-meaning-of-time/>
- ²⁵ Tommy Walker
- ²⁶ Rabbi David Fohrman, *Tape 4: Time Space Fishbowl* - <http://www.aish.com/jl/l/dam/48961211.html>
- ²⁷ <http://www.aish.com/jl/l/dam/48961211.html>
- ²⁸ Yalqut Shimoni Vayetze remez 117
- ²⁹ Rabbi David Fohrman, *The Exodus You Almost Passed Over*, *Ibid*; p. 54
- ³⁰ <http://biblehub.com/interlinear/psalms/19.htm>
- ³¹ Ravi Zacharias, *Think Again: Shadows and Light* <http://rzm.org/just-thinking/shadows-and-light/>
- ³² Elyada Goldvicht, *Message from ISIS's Jewish Prisoner*, <http://www.aish.com/sp/pg/Message-from-ISISs-Jewish-Prisoner.html?s=show>
- ³³ Mother Angelica
- ³⁴ Mother Angelica
- ³⁵ Mother Angelica