

Exodus 3:14; John 8:58

Our Magnificent All-Sufficient Savior and God

Paternus told his son:

"First of all, my child, think magnificently of God. Magnify His providence; adore His power; pray to Him frequently and incessantly. Bear Him always in your mind; teach your thoughts to reverence Him in every place, for there is no place where He is not. Therefore, my child, fear and worship and love God; first and last, think magnificently of God."

God has revealed Himself to men. The great names of God in the Old Testament are self-revelations of the LORD God to men and women who were in helpless situations. "Man's extremity is God's opportunity." In each case God saw their need, demonstrated that He alone could perfectly meet the challenge and in that experience taught the individual or the nation some special characteristic or attribute of His person.

THE I AM WHO I AM

To Moses He revealed Himself by His personal name, "I AM" or "I AM THAT I AM."

Moses helplessness

Moses failed in his first attempt to deliver Israel from their Egyptian slavery, and was placed on a shelf for forty years on the backside of a desert tending his sheep. Then God called Moses to deliver His people Israel out of slavery in Egypt.

Exodus 2:23-25 tells us God saw the bondage of the children of Israel, and heard the cry of His people for help. "So God heard their groaning; and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. And God saw the sons of Israel, and God took notice of them" (vv. 24-25). Had God forgotten His people? Indeed not, for "God heard . . . God remembered . . . God saw . . . God took notice . . ."

God called Moses in the desert wilderness when "the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a blazing fire from the midst of a bush" that refused to burn up (3:2-4). In this call God told Moses He was going to send him to Pharaoh, the king of Egypt (v. 10). Moses, who had failed in his previous attempt asked, "Who am I?" (v. 11). He was like many of us when we sense our inabilities and failures we focus on ourselves and our weaknesses. "Who am I?" is the wrong question. The issue is not "Who am I? but "Who are You?" (v. 13).

The God of Israel revealed Himself as the great "I AM THAT I AM," or "I AM WHO I AM" (v. 14). He is the self-existing One, the "I AM" and there is none other. He is the One who in Himself possesses life, permanent existence.

Can He take care of such a tremendous task as delivering millions of slaves out of their bondage in Egypt? Can He be depended upon when we need Him? His very personal name reveals that He can be trusted and that He is completely adequate for the task at hand. His name reveals that He is "the I was, I am, and I shall always continue to be." He is the Eternal One—the Beginning and the End. He is the One whose years have no end. "I am the same yesterday, today and forever. I change not." He is the self-existent One beside whom there is no one else. He is without beginning, and without ending from everlasting to everlasting. By the name of the I AM, Yahweh, Jehovah, or LORD, He has revealed Himself as eternal, personal, continuous, absolute, uncaused, unconditioned, independent and self-sufficient One. As the God of grace He becomes whatever His people need. He is the "Becoming One." He is the "I will be that I will be." He is the One who always exists, the eternal and unchangeable.

You find this magnificent name Yahweh, transliterated into English "Jehovah" in the American Standard, "LORD" in the King James Version and the New American Standard Bible. "LORD" in all four capital letters is used to distinguish from *Adonai* also translated "Lord" in small letters in the Old Testament. Whichever translation you are using, Yahweh, LORD, or Jehovah, the same deity is being referred to some 6,823 times in the Old Testament.

Jesus is the I AM

The LORD God made His greatest and most complete revelation of Himself in the person of His Son, Jesus Christ.

The writer of Hebrews says,

"God after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high" (1:1-3).

The apostle Paul succinctly writes of Jesus Christ saying, "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. . . For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him" (Colossians 1:15-17, 19).

How did Jesus describe Himself? During a heated exchange with a group of Pharisees He said, "'Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.' So the Jews said to Him, 'You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?' Jesus said to them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am.' Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple" (John 8:56-59).

They knew exactly whom Jesus was referring to when He called Himself "I AM." They were so incensed they picked up stones to stone Jesus to death right there on the temple grounds.

Jesus said He was the same person as the "I AM," the Self-sufficient One, without beginning and without end.

Where is your desert? Do you live in a spiritual wilderness? Where is your bitterness? Where do you sense your helplessness? Listen again to the One who declared Himself to be the "I AM."

Do you need bread?

Jesus is the bread of life that satisfies our most basic needs. Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst. . . ." The Jews were grumbling about Him, because He said, "I am the bread that came down out of heaven." . . . I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread which comes down out of heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh" (John 6:35, 41, 48-51).

Do you still want to settle for that old stale bread the religions of the world have to offer? Jesus Christ is the only source of the bread of heaven and eternal life.

Do you need light?

Jesus is all the spiritual light you will ever need. Jesus said, "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life" (John 8:12). "I have come as Light into the world, so that everyone who believes in Me will not remain in darkness" (12:46). Why do we still blindly run around stumbling in a world of spiritual darkness? Jesus will give you all the spiritual light you need to find the LORD God and enjoy Him forever. He will lead you out of spiritual darkness into eternal light.

Do you need a way into God's presence?

Jesus is the Door into the Father's presence in heaven. "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter by the door into the fold of the sheep, but climbs up some other way, he is a thief and a robber." Jesus said to them again, "Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep" (John 10:1, 7). There is no other entrance into God's presence but through the doorway of Jesus. "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

Do you need a Shepherd to provide direction, nourishment and protection?

Jesus is the Shepherd, the Good One. "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep" (John 10:11). Jesus is the Good Shepherd who gave up His life to give you eternal life. There is eternal security and assurance in the Good Shepherd alone (vv. 25-30). There is no other shepherd; all the rest are wolves.

Do you find yourself going through the shadow of death?

Jesus is the resurrection and life. Jesus said to Mary and Martha who were grieving over the death of their brother, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?" (John 11:25-26). When it comes time to pull the sheet over your head there is no one else to turn to. Jesus alone is our only hope in the presence of death. His death is the death that ends all deaths. He alone rose from the dead and gives eternal life to all who will believe on Him.

Do you need absolute truth, the perfect way, and the only giver of abundant life?

Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life. He said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me" (John 14:6). There is simply no other place to look, no other person or god to turn to. There is none other who can take you by the hand and lead you into the presence of our heavenly Father. Jesus alone is the way, the truth and the life that will give you eternal life in the presence of the LORD God. Are you looking to lesser gods to give you abundant life?

Do you need unbroken fellowship with God?

Jesus is the only person who can provide you with sustenance, communion and continual fellowship with the great I AM because He is the I AM. Jesus said, "I AM the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser" (John 15:1). Then Jesus said, "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing" (v. 5). How I wish God's children would learn that great truth. Has the Lord removed every false security from your life so that you will realize that "apart from Me you can do nothing?" There is blessedness in nothingness. Apart from Jesus Christ you can do nothing.

Note very carefully that in every one of these quotes in the Gospel of John, Jesus has revealed Himself as the I AM. He is Jehovah. He is the LORD. He is God with us. He was using the great divine name He gave to Moses for the absolute, timeless existence of the LORD God. He was walking and talking with these men revealing this great truth among them.

Will you be a part of that great company in heaven that will bow their knees before the Lord Jesus Christ, the name that is above every name, and confess "Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:11)?

Have you discovered the all-sufficient Savior? He alone can meet our every need if we will trust Him. But we have to meet Him on His conditions, not ours.

HE SEES AND PROVIDES FOR HIS OWN

This great truth was revealed to Abraham.

A time of testing

The LORD God tested Abraham to see if he would trust Him to be able to fulfill His covenant. In His covenant God promised Abraham descendants who would be as numerous as the stars of heaven and the sand in the desert. Years passed by and Abraham and Sarah became old without any descendants of their own. Then God provided a "miracle" child in their old age. His name was Isaac.

In Genesis 22:8-18 God revealed to Abraham that He alone is able to see and provide for Abraham and Isaac. Jehovah, the LORD sees and provides for the needs of His people. God cares for His people and He provides as no one else can.

God commanded Abraham to go and offer up a sacrifice. As they walked up the mountain Isaac was getting concerned about not having a lamb to sacrifice and asked his father, "Behold, the fire and the wood, but where

is the lamb for the burnt offering?" (v. 7) Abraham said, "God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." So the two of them walked on together (v. 8). God will see and provide. If God is going to be faithful to His promise, He is going to have to raise him from the dead (cf. 21:12).

When the father and the son arrived at the place to make the sacrifice without a lamb, Abraham built the altar, arranged the wood, bound his son Isaac, and laid him on the altar on top of the wood. It wasn't just the faith of Abraham, but Isaac, too! Abraham stretched out his hand, and took the knife to slay his son (vv. 9-10). That was a giant step of faith on the part of the father and the son.

God's perfect timing

But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." He said, "Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me." Then Abraham raised his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him a ram caught in the thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram and offered him up for a burnt offering in the place of his son. Abraham called the name of that place The LORD Will Provide, as it is said to this day, "In the mount of the LORD it will be provided" (Genesis 22:11-14).

The LORD God is always saying to us on every occasion, "Your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things" (Matt. 6:32), and then Jesus proceeds to tell us the secret (v. 33). He said, "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."

Since He is a faithful Father He sees and knows, and it is impossible for Him not to provide. It is His nature to provide for His kingdom. Since He sees and knows, He always provides. When the Lord God says to you, "I am the One who sees your need," He is also saying, "I am the One who sees your need and I will provide because I cannot see it and not provide what is best for My own."

Why doesn't God provide the way I want Him to do it?

As an all knowing and seeing person, He sees what we do not need, and He chooses not to provide what is not in His and our best interest. He provides His very best. We are so willing to choose the second best because our vision is limited and our interests are selfish. He is also completely aware of what we need that we do not see. If God in His wisdom gave us all that we want instead of what we need, our most important needs would go unmet. The Great I AM WHO I AM, Jehovah, LORD God sees the complete picture and provides what He considers to be His very best.

He saw our sin and depravity and cared enough to send His very best when He sent His Son, Jesus Christ to come and die for us. God stayed the knife in the hand of Abraham, but plunged it deep into the heart of His only begotten Son at Calvary. There was no substitute for God's Son. He was the magnificent, all-sufficient Lamb of God who made perfect atonement for our sins. He gave Himself on behalf of our sins. God Himself in the person of His Son saw our need and provided "the Lamb without blemish and without spot." The LORD God has seen and fully provided for our greatest need.

Since His heart is as large as His infinite power there is no need that can go unmet. God's vision issues in perfect provision for every need. "And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:19).

HE FIGHTS OUR SPIRITUAL BATTLES

Do we tend to ask the same question Israel asked Moses, "Is the LORD among us, or not?" (Exodus 17:7)

Where is God when I need Him?

All these things sound great Wil, but where is God when I am in the fight of my life? The forces of evil rose up against God's people and Joshua went out to battle the Amalek. "So it came about when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed, and when he let his hand down, Amalek prevailed" (v. 11). When Moses grew tired he sat on a stone and Aaron and Hur supported his hands on either side of him. That day as the sun set Moses and the children of Israel learned that "The LORD is My Banner" (v. 15). The Lord demonstrated to Israel that He will fight for us if we will allow Him. All that He demands of us is to be still and trust Him. That is the only way we can ever succeed in spiritual conflicts.

Have you learned that great truth from our God? We take pride in our natural abilities and our pragmatic self-sufficient nature. But we never win spiritual battles with those resources. Ours is a spiritual battle and we are to put on the spiritual armor and walk by faith. It is God's armor, not our armor that wins spiritual battles. Our interference with our natural powers and abilities only hinders the Holy Spirit. We win the battle only when we trust Him to gain the victory. We cooperate with Him when by faith we put on the spiritual armor and trust the leading of the Holy Spirit and use our spiritual weapons (Ephesians 6:10-20).

We are to abide in the Lord and draw our strength from Him. Your natural abilities are no match in a spiritual war. You trust in yourself and you will fail miserably spiritually. You trust in your own abilities and you will turn into a rebel. It is a spiritual battle we are in, and a spiritual victory is won by faith in Christ alone. We get into a verbal fistfight and the Devil wins the victory every time, not God. We get into a spiritual war, and use gossip, bickering, backbiting, negative blame game tactics, harsh criticism, etc. Only Satan wins those battles because we play into his game plan. God reminds us He is very capable of winning the victory if we put on our spiritual armor and trust Him.

We win through submission

The angel of the LORD wrestled Jacob one night (Gen. 32:22-30). In the battle Jacob was wining against the angel of the LORD. Jacob's resistance against the angel was so great that "he could not prevail against him." The angel was losing the fight. The angel of the LORD touched the socket of Jacob's thigh and dislocated it while he wrestled with Jacob (v. 25). God made Jacob lame and weak so he would no longer wrestle with God. Jacob gained power when he lost it. He conquered when he failed.

Things haven't changed. Has the LORD wrestled with you lately and won? You and I win by losing. The LORD wrestles with us so we will lose, and learn to depend completely on Him. Have you learned that lesson? We fight with God as long as we have any strength left. The Lord finally touches us in our strongest area to demonstrate to us that we really are weak and helpless.

Only when our self-confidence, self-competence, personal resources are demonstrated for what they really are do we win. Only when we realize our helplessness and yield to Him do we conquer. Our victory in the spiritual life is always a victory through weakness. It always takes us to the cross.

The apostle Paul learned this lesson the hard way. God brought him to the end of himself. "And He has said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.' Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor. 12:9-10).

Since Jesus has demonstrated Himself to be the all-sufficient Savior, the great I AM, are you still trying to do it yourself, or do you trust Him? If you still think you can do it yourself you don't need the Savior. He comes to the weak and helpless and gives life (Matt. 11:28-30).

THE LORD IS HERE

I will be with you

The Lord Jesus is here when we need Him. All of these truths from God's Word demonstrate to us the Lord is here. Yes, He is right here with us today. He is with you as you read this study on the magnificent, all-sufficient Savior. He is always where we are. His presence alone is always enough to meet our every need. Just as He said to Israel, He says to us today, "I will be with you." Nine times in the Old Testament He said to Israel, "I will be with you." "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they will not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched, nor will the flame burn you" (Isaiah 43:2).

At Moses' death the LORD said to Joshua and the people of Israel, "No man will be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you" (Joshua 1:5).

The presence of the Lord is our present security that He will meet all our needs. With His presence we can face our greatest foe and win. The apostle Paul appropriated this great truth.

"Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Just as it is written, "FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG; WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED." But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:35-39).

Jesus is God with us

Yes, Jesus is "God with us." He is Immanuel. God our Creator, and Redeemer, came down to this earth and dwells among us. He is here. He is in our midst. He is always here. He is "God with us."

He is everywhere present, surrounding, sustaining and holding us secure in His safe keeping. Closer is He than our very breath. He reminds us today, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

"Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, 'I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU,' so that we confidently say, 'THE LORD IS MY HELPER, I WILL NOT BE AFRAID. WHAT WILL MAN DO TO ME?' Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Hebrews 13:5-6, 8).

The apostle Peter appropriated this great truth also when he wrote, "Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you" (1 Peter 5:6-7).

SOME ABIDING PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

Since Jesus Christ is God, then He has every right to my full allegiance and complete loyalty.

Because He is God I fully accept Him as Lord and Master of my life. There can never be any room for indifference to His person. We have no exception but to follow Him. It is all or nothing. Jesus claimed to be all that men need for spiritual life. What is your response to such an offer?

When Jesus Christ is acknowledged as God in the flesh we are confronted with a personal decision.

Will it be Jesus Christ as Lord of my life or my own god made in my own image? I choose the magnificent all-sufficient Savior over all lesser gods. Your choice determines where you will spend eternity. Will you cast stones at the Rock of Ages? You cannot get rid of Him by throwing stones at Him. He will not go away. Each individual must stand before Him on Judgment Day.

Since the claims of Jesus Christ are true we must bow and worship Him alone as God.

The eternal preexistence of Jesus Christ as the I AM is our guarantee of eternal security. Jesus assumed the divine name and title of Yahweh, Jehovah, LORD when He said, "I am the way, the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me." Practically everything Jesus said was an indirect claim to deity. "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30). He claimed to be Jehovah, using the very word "Jehovah." Have you acknowledged His claim on your life and worshiped Him as "My Lord and my God"?

The claims of Jesus Christ remain unchanged. Time has not eradicated His claim to be God. That same Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever.

John R. W. Stott keenly observes: "So close was His connection with God that He equated a man's attitude to Himself with his attitude to God. Thus, to know Him was to know God (John 8:19; 14:17); to see Him was to see God (John 12:45; 14:9); to believe in Him was to believe in God (John 12:44; 14:1); to receive him was to receive God (Mark 9:37); to hate Him was to hate God (John 15:23); and to honor Him was to honor God (John 5:23)" (*Basic Christianity*, p. 26).

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