



02/05/2023 “Survival of the Friendliest”

How we read the Bible informs what we glean from the Bible. There is a recurring theme of relationship, from creation to Revelation, the story of the Bible is one of relationship—between God and creation, creation and humanity, God and humanity, and person to person. The key for how these relationships thrive can be found in the very name of God.

1. What themes do you feel are most prominent in the Bible or Christianity?
2. The Bible has frequently been read with the goal of getting into heaven or getting out of hell. How prominent was or is this view of the Bible for you? How has that focus been used positively or negatively?

In Luke 3:4, John the Baptizer quotes from Isaiah, declaring, “Prepare the way for the Lord”. The term “Lord” reflects the Hebrew name, “YHWH” (יהוה). This term, academically known as the *tetragrammaton*, goes unpronounced in Judaism out of reverence. In Christianity, it has been pronounced in two main ways: Yahweh or Jehovah.¹ The name comes from Exodus 3:14, the self-identification of God to Moses. In essence, the name derives from the verb “to be”. It is a statement of existence, there is no precise translation but refers to God’s presence and ability to be present in the manner and mode necessitated by the situation—eg. in Exodus 3:14 as deliverer.

Read Exodus 3:7-15

1. How does God’s name in Exodus 3 speak to the value of relationships? What relationships are described in this passage? How does God’s name help paint a picture of what this looks like?
2. God has chosen to be fully present with his people, to be what they need in their time of need. Have you experienced a time when God was present with you in this way? When was a time someone else was fully present with you in this way?
3. Righteousness in the Bible is about being in right relationship—loving God and loving others. How does being in right relationship with God and others play out in Luke 10:25-37? What about this story shocked the religious leaders?
4. Where does being fully present show up in Luke 10:25-37, what effects did it have? Can you think of any stories where Jesus is fully present for those that need him?
5. What things tend to get in the way of you being fully present? For you, what might being fully present with God look like in this season of your life?
6. Is there someone in your life with whom you need to be more fully present? What might that look like? What routine can you build to be more fully present with them?

¹ Jehovah is a poor pronunciation since there are no “j” sounds in Hebrew. The ‘j’ sound carries over into English from the German transliteration of the Hebrew.