

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

We're in... Unit 4: The God Who Reveals Himself

Unit 4 Big Question and Answer:
Can Anybody Tell Me What the LORD Is Like?
He's Not Like Anyone Else!
 PFI NIV Songs 4, Tracks 3,4

Unit 4 Bible Verse: 1 Kings 8:23, NIV 1984
 "O LORD, there is no God like you." 1 King 8:23
 PFI NIV Songs 4, Track 6

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 9:
The LORD's Names Tell Us about Him

When we are born, our parents name us. Sometimes we are named after someone in our family or someone in the Bible. Besides our real names, many times our family or friends give us a nickname that describes something about us.

The Bible tells us that God has a real name and many nicknames, too. All His names tell us something about Him. God's real name is "Yahweh," which means "I Am Who I Am. It means that God is eternal, with no beginning or end. It means that no one else is like Him. He alone is the source and sustainer of all life. When we read the word "LORD" in the Bible that is like saying "Yahweh."

God has many nicknames, too, such as Savior; God Most High, Almighty God, the Everlasting God, the Rock and the Good Shepherd. God commanded Mary and Joseph to give His Son the name, Jesus, because it means "Yahweh saves." At the end of time when Jesus returns, the Bible tells us that every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

God's name and nicknames tell us how great He is and how completely worthy of all of our love, trust, obedience and praise.

BIBLE VERSE

How do I know this is true? The Bible tells me so!

Bible Truth 9 Bible Verse: Deuteronomy 32:3-4
 "I will proclaim the name of the LORD. Oh, praise the greatness of our God! He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he."

CASE STORY

Genesis 22; Exodus 2-5,12:31

Our story is called:
The Case of the Unknown Name.
As you listen to the story, see if you can figure out:

1. Whose name was unknown? What nicknames was he given? Why those?
2. What was his real name? What did that name mean?

This story is an Old Testament story. It takes place about 2000 years before Jesus lived on earth, in one of the greatest lands on earth.

In the far off city of Haran, God spoke to a man named Abraham. "Leave your country and your relatives and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you and all nations through you," He promised.

Would Abraham believe this God? He had never even heard of Him before! Abraham had spent his life worshiping the gods of Ur, his home country. There was Anu, the sky god; Enlil, the god of air, wind and storms and Nannar, the moon god. Abraham knew the names of these gods from the time he was a little boy. Now he was seventy years old. Yet in all those years, never had those gods spoken to him or worked in his heart. Never had they shown any signs of life at all! Yet this new God--whose name he didn't even know-- had spoken to him and worked in his heart already! Yes, here was the living God, and Abraham knew it. So Abraham put his faith in this God with the unknown name. Then he and his family set out for the new land He promised--Canaan!

Canaan was a wonderful land, but it was not an empty land. It was filled with people who worshiped other gods and treated Abraham as an enemy. Would God really take care of Abraham and bless him as He promised? Yes, He would and He did! Abraham praised and worshiped God for His faithfulness, but not by name. How could he? He didn't know it. So he praised Him using nicknames. "I praise You, El Elyon--God Most High! You are greater than all other gods," Abraham exclaimed. "I praise You, El Shaddai--God Almighty! You are more powerful than all my enemies. I praise You, El Olam--the Eternal God! You will never leave me."

Abraham lived almost one hundred years in Canaan and oh, how good God was to him! He blessed everything Abraham had and did. Abraham's son, Isaac, and then

Isaac's son, Jacob also enjoyed the same special relationship and blessings that Abraham had with God. They praised and worshiped Him for His faithfulness, too; but like Abraham, it was only by nicknames. Never did God tell them what His real name was.

Over four hundred more years passed, and still none of Abraham's children, grandchildren or even great, great, great grandchildren—who we call the Israelites—knew the real name of their God. But while these great, great, grandchildren of Abraham may not have known the name of their God, oh, how they cried out to Him for help! They had become the slaves of the Egyptians and were suffering terribly. "O God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, rescue us from our slavery! What great promises You made to our fathers! What mighty acts You did for them! We are their children! Save us!" they pleaded. God heard their prayers and answered them through a man named Moses.

One day, as he was tending the flocks near Mt. Sinai, Moses saw a strange sight. There was a bush aflame with fire, but it didn't burn up! When Moses went closer to get a better look, things became even stranger! The angel of the LORD appeared to him in the flames and the God of the unknown name spoke to Moses through him, "Moses! I am the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Take off your sandals to show honor for My holiness."

Moses took them off, then hid his face. He was afraid to look at God!

"I've heard the cries of My people and I'm sending you to rescue them. You will lead them out of Egypt and take them home to Canaan, the land I gave to Abraham long ago," God told him.

Moses was full of questions and fears. "Who am I to face Pharaoh and free the Israelites? And who do I tell them has sent me to do this? I don't even know Your name, God," Moses said.

"Moses, it's not about who you are. It's about who I am, and I will be with you. Tell them My name is Yahweh—I Am Who I Am. I am the Living God. I am the one who is. I give life and keeps it going," the LORD responded.

So that was the name of their God! Yahweh, the 'I Am Who I Am.' And what a name it was! It was like all His nicknames rolled into one...and more. He was more than just the Most High God, the Almighty God, the Eternal God, and the Provider, as Abraham had called Him. He was so great that He was more than anyone can completely understand

or ever imagine. He was the Living God. He was the one who is. He gives life and keeps it going. Yes, He, Himself! How amazing!

Moses obeyed Yahweh. He and his brother Aaron set out through the Sinai wilderness to Goshen, Egypt, where the Israelite slaves lived. They called the leaders of the Israelites together and told them the wonderful news: "God has heard your prayers. He sends you this message: 'I am Yahweh, the 'I Am Who I Am,' I am the Living God. I am the one who is. I give life and keeps it going. I'm going to rescue you from the Egyptians by doing amazing things, then I'll take you home to Canaan.'" The elders bowed down and worshiped. Yahweh, their God had come to rescue them!

Before long, Moses and Aaron started off on the seventeen-mile journey from Goshen to Pharaoh's splendid palace in Zoan. What a big, scary task they had before them! They were going to tell to the mightiest king on earth that Yahweh, their God, demanded all the thousands (maybe even millions!) of Israelites be freed to worship Him. Wow! Yes, Moses and Aaron knew of God's great promises. They knew He planned mighty works. Now they even knew His great name—Yahweh, I Am Who I Am. But, Pharaoh had never heard of Yahweh. And he certainly didn't care about what Yahweh commanded. He made this quite clear to Moses and Aaron, when they went to talk to him.

"Who is this Yahweh that I should obey Him and let Israel go?" Pharaoh said to them. "I do not know Yahweh and I will not let Israel go. Go tell your lazy people that now I will make their work harder than ever."

How Pharaoh made fun of the name of Yahweh and the very idea of freeing the Israelites to worship Him-- at least at first, that is. But soon, Yahweh brought one terrible plague after another upon the Egyptians. These plagues showed how powerful Yahweh was...and that He should be obeyed.

"Go, take the Israelites to worship Yahweh their God," Pharaoh said to Moses at last, "but promise to pray to Yahweh for me."

News of Yahweh's great rescue spread throughout Egypt and beyond. It was all as the LORD had said it would be: the Israelites, the Egyptians, even the whole world, would see what Yahweh was like.

From that time on, the Israelites thought Yahweh's name

too holy for them to say or write down. "All these years, our people didn't call God by His name because they didn't know it," they said. "Now that we know His name and understand who He really is, we can't bring ourselves to use it. We will change some of the letters of Yahweh and say it and spell it "LORD or "Jehovah." Yahweh heard our prayers when we didn't know His name at all. Surely He will still hear our prayers, if we call Him LORD/Jehovah, instead of Yahweh. He will know what we mean. He will know that we consider His name too holy for us to even use," they decided.

And even to this day, the Israelites still don't speak or write the real name of God out of reverence to Him.

Something For You and Me

Our Bible Truth is: The LORD's Names Tell Us about Him

Our Bible Verse is: Deuteronomy 32:3-4

"I will proclaim the name of the LORD. Oh, praise the greatness of our God! He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he."

So now when you read the words "LORD" or "Jehovah" in the Old Testament, you'll know they're really just a substitute, made-up word for Yahweh, that the Israelites made to honor the holiness of Yahweh's name. Perhaps that is one way to honor Yahweh.

But do you know what honors Him most of all? When we confess our sins to Him, knowing that He is the Living God who made us, but whom we have disobeyed. He is honored when we ask forgiveness for our sins, turn away from them, trusting in His Son Jesus to be our Savior. And. He is honored when we live our lives for Him, just as Abraham did, long ago: trusting Him, obeying Him and loving Him most of all.

Let's praise the great "I Am Who I Am." Let's ask Him to work in our hearts, helping us to turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Let's ask Him to help us honor Him with our whole lives.

Draw a picture from the story

SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

1. A Question about the Bible Truth, True or False:
 God's real name is Yahweh, which means "I Am Who I Am."
 Answer: True.

2. Crack the Case Questions
a. Whose name was unknown? What nicknames was he given? Why those?
 Answer: The LORD's. El Elyon--God Most High; El Shaddai--God Almighty; El Olam-the Eternal God. These nicknames all reflected what He was like.

b. What was his real name? What did that name mean?
 Answer: Yahweh (The LORD). I Am Who I Am. He is the living God, who always has lived and sustains all things.

3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse: Deuteronomy 32:3-4
 "I will proclaim the name of the _____. Oh, praise the greatness of our _____! He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are _____. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he."
 Answers: LORD; God; just.

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

Oh, How I Love Jesus

PFI NIV Songs 4, Track 25

Verse 1

There is a name I love to hear,
 I love to sing it's worth;
 It sounds like music in my ear,
 The sweetest name on earth.
 Oh, how I love Jesus,
 Oh, how I love Jesus,
 Oh, how I love Jesus,
 Because He first loved me.

Words: Frederick Whitfield Music: Traditional American Melody

Jesus' name means 'Yahweh Saves.' It tells us that Jesus is God. He came to save us from our sins. When we turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior, it is the best thing that will ever happen to us. That's why God's people think that name of Jesus is the sweetest name of earth. It reminds them of how God loved them before they loved Him. It reminds them of how He showed this love by coming to earth to live and to die for them, that they might be saved. That is a name worth a lot! That is a name worth most of all!

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

A=Adoration, C=Confession, T=Thanksgiving, S=Supplication

A God, we praise You for being Yahweh, the I Am Who I Am. Eternal; unlike anyone else; source and sustainer of all life.

C God, we confess that many times we don't trust God to be as good as His names tell us He is. We need Jesus to save us.

T God, we thank You for showing us what You are like through Your names.

S God, we ask that You would work in our hearts that we might turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Help us to truly believe You are who Your names tell us You are and live joyfully because of who we know You are.

BIBLE VERSE SONG

I Will Proclaim

PFI NIV Songs 4, Track 26

I will proclaim the name of the LORD,
 Oh, praise the greatness of our God!
 I will proclaim the name of the LORD,
 Oh, praise the greatness of our God!
 He is the Rock! (He's the rock!)
 His works are perfect! (His works are perfect!)
 His ways are just! (His ways are just!)
 A faithful God who does no wrong.
 A faithful God who does no wrong.
 Upright and just is He.
 Upright and just is He.
 Deuteronomy Thirty-two, three and four.

Words: Deuteronomy 32:3-4 NIV 1984 Music: Constance Dever ©2012

Each day the LORD displays His wonderful ways and perfect care of His people. He is the LORD—the I Am Who I Am, who is eternal, like no one else, and the source and sustainer of life. He is like a Rock they can always depend on. They have nothing but praise for His name.