

“What God tells us about Himself 6,800 times”

- John Piper

- As posted by Nick Roark on the blog TolleLege.net

God's name is a message. And the message is about how He intends to be known.

Every time His name appears—all 6,800 times—He means to remind us of His utterly unique being. As I have pondered the meaning of the name Yahweh, built on the phrase “I AM WHO I AM” and pointing to God's absolute being, I see at least ten dimensions to its meaning:

God's absolute being means He never had a beginning. This staggers the mind. Every child asks, “Who made God?” And every wise parent says, “Nobody made God. God simply is and always was. No beginning.”

God's absolute being means God will never end. If He did not come into being, He cannot go out of being, because He is absolute being. He is what is. There is no place to go outside of being. There is only God. Before He creates, that's all that is: God.

God's absolute being means God is absolute reality. There is no reality before Him. There is no reality outside of Him unless He wills it and makes it. He is not one of many realities before He creates. He is simply there, as absolute reality. He is all that was, eternally. No space, no universe, no emptiness. Only God, absolutely there, absolutely all.

God's absolute being means that God is utterly independent. He depends on nothing to bring Him into being or support Him or counsel Him or make Him what He is. That is what absolute being means.

God's absolute being means that everything that is not God depends totally on God. All that is not God is secondary and dependent. The entire universe is utterly secondary—not primary. It came into being by God and stays in being moment by moment on God's decision to keep it in being.

God's absolute being means all the universe is by comparison to God as nothing. Contingent, dependent reality is to absolute, independent reality as a shadow to its substance, as an echo to a thunderclap, as a bubble to the ocean. All that we see, all that we are amazed by in the world and in the galaxies, is, compared to God, as nothing. “All the nations are as nothing before Him, they are accounted by Him as less than nothing and emptiness” (Isa. 40:17).

God's absolute being means that God is constant. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. He cannot be improved. He is not becoming anything. He is who He is. There is no development in God. No progress. Absolute perfection cannot be improved.

God's absolute being means that He is the absolute standard of truth, goodness, and beauty. There is no law book to which He looks to know what is right. No almanac to establish facts. No

guild to determine what is excellent or beautiful. He Himself is the standard of what is right, what is true, what is beautiful.

God's absolute being means God does whatever He pleases, and it is always right, always beautiful, and always in accord with truth. There are no constraints on Him from outside Him that could hinder Him from doing anything He pleases. All reality that is outside of Him He created and designed and governs. So He is utterly free from any constraints that don't originate from the counsel of His own will.

God's absolute being means that He is the most important and most valuable reality and the most important and most valuable person in the universe. He is more worthy of interest and attention and admiration and enjoyment than all other realities, including the entire universe.

This is the message of His name. And in the exodus, He establishes a link forever between His name and His mighty rescue of Israel from bondage.

The timing of the revelation of His name is not coincidental. God is coming to save. Israel will want to know who this saving God is.

God says in effect, 'Tell them that My name is Yahweh, and make clear what this means. I am absolutely free and independent. And I choose freely to save My people. The freedom of My being and the freedom of My love are one.'

-John Piper, Providence (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020), 90-92.