

Who Is the I AM?

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Brethren, it is a wonderful yet humbling honor that we are understanding the truth of God the Father and of Jesus Christ more and more. It seems like we're understanding more things each and every week. I believe that God the Father is actually pouring out His Spirit among His children, and He's allowing us to understand more and more about Him, more about His identity, more about the identity of Jesus Christ, more about His plan of salvation, more about His Holy Days, more about His Kingdom, more about His Spirit, and more about His will.

Many sermons have been given, many articles have been written and published, and many discussions have been held, in many churches over the past decades, on whether Jesus Christ was the God of the Old Testament. That is a controversial subject right now in the churches of God. In the grand majority of these communications, two scriptures are consistently mentioned as major proofs that Jesus Christ was indeed the God of the Old Testament. These two verses are Exodus 3:14 and John 8:58, which discuss the term or the title "I AM".

Please turn with me to Exodus 3:14, where we read about Moses's introduction to God at the burning bush.

Exodus 3:14 *And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And He said, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'"* (NKJV)

Please turn with me to John 8:58, where we read about Jesus proclaiming the fact that He had existed at the time of Abraham.

John 8:58 *Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM."* (NKJV)

Those who believe that Jesus was the God of the Old Testament use the occurrences of the words "I AM" in both verses as a direct link between both verses, and as proof that Jesus was that "I AM", and therefore was the Yehovah God of the Old Testament.

So brethren, in my sermon this afternoon, titled, Who Is the I AM?, I would like to explore in depth these two verses to discover their meaning, to analyze the grammar of the Hebrew and Greek texts, and to determine the identity of the "I AM".

In most of the sermons or publications that I have heard or read by many of the churches of God, this subject is discussed using the English verses, English words, English definitions, English meanings and syntax, English sentence structure, and English grammar. As a result of the differences between languages, in grammar, in

verb tenses, in word meanings, in sentence structure and in syntax, an explanation of these verses using only English does not represent the basis for establishing doctrine.

First of all, the Old Testament was written almost entirely in Hebrew, while the New Testament was written entirely in Greek, although there is some discussion and debate by scholars as to whether some of the gospel books were originally written in Hebrew or in Aramaic.

First of all, let's discuss Hebrew. In order to explore the meaning of Exodus 3:14, we need to learn just a little about Hebrew and its grammar. Here are two important points in Hebrew grammar that will help us in that understanding.

1. There is no simple present tense for the verb "to be" in Hebrew.

Like many other languages such as Russian, Arabic, Ukrainian, Hungarian, Japanese, Hawaiian and Turkish, the Hebrew language does not have the verb "to be" in the present tense. In Russian, to say "The book is here," one would simply say "Книга здесь," or "Book here." The verb "to be" is understood but not included in the sentence.

Please turn with me to Genesis 15. The Hebrew language handles the verb "to be" in the present tense exactly the same way. In verse 1, we read,

Genesis 15:1 *After these things the word of the LORD [Yehovah] came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward."* (NKJV)

For those of you who have a New King James Version of the Bible, you will notice that the word "am" in this verse is in italics, indicating that the word does not exist in the original text. Just a few of the over 2,700 examples of this grammatical construct in Hebrew include Genesis 17, verse 1. Please turn with me there.

Genesis 17:1 *When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD [Yehovah] appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am Almighty God [El Shaddai]; walk before me, and be blameless."* (NKJV)

You'll notice there that the word "am" is in italics. In Genesis 28:13, we read,

Genesis 28:13 *And behold, the LORD stood above it and said, "I am the LORD God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants."* (NKJV)

Again, the word "am" is in italics. In Genesis 35:11, we read,

Genesis 35:11 *Also God said to him: "I am God Almighty. Be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall proceed from you, and kings shall come from your body."* (NKJV)

Again, the word “am” is in italics because the verb “to be” doesn’t exist in the text. The lack, in Hebrew, of the verb “to be”, conjugated in the present tense, is an important and critical concept in the subject of this sermon.

2. Hebrew places importance on verb aspect more than verb tense.

The English language has three main groups of tenses: present, past, and future. Each of these tenses contains four sub-tenses: the simple, the progressive, the perfect, and the perfect progressive. English also has four other special-use tenses. Therefore, the English language has sixteen tenses—sixteen tenses which cause students of English much consternation when they’re trying to learn and trying to speak English correctly, even after years of study. English is a very “tense-centric” language. Knowledge of this peculiarity of English is important because other languages, such as Hebrew and Greek, are not so tense-centric, but instead rely on other ways of denoting actions in time and in manner.

Hebrew, like many other languages, such as Russian, places high importance on the aspect of the verb—on whether an action has been completed or not. So there are two main aspects in Hebrew verbs: the perfective aspect and the imperfective aspect.

The perfective aspect is used in Hebrew to show that an action has been performed and has been completed (hence the word “perfective”). The perfective aspect is mainly used as a past-tense verb form for actions that have been completed. Please turn with me to Genesis 1:1—a very, very famous verse—and we will read an example of the perfective aspect.

Genesis 1:1 *In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.* (KJV)

God created the heaven and the earth, and He finished it. The perfective aspect of the verb “create” was used in this verse because it has been completed. The imperfective aspect is used in Hebrew to show that an action is an ongoing action, or is an action that has not yet occurred, so it can’t be completed. The key is that the action has not been completed, so the action cannot be perfective, hence, it is imperfective.

Please turn with me to Jeremiah 30:22, and we will read an example of the imperfective aspect in Hebrew.

Jeremiah 30:22 *And ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.* (KJV)

The Hebrew word for “will be” is *ehyeh*. In this verse, the imperfective aspect denotes future tense—it has not occurred yet. It’s future so it can’t be complete. We’ll return to this word *ehyeh* shortly. Remember the word *ehyeh*. In Genesis 2:6, we read another example of the imperfective aspect, but, when worded this way, it’s in the past.

Genesis 2:6 *But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground. (KJV)*

In this verse, “went up” is actually in the imperfective aspect because it was referring to repeated past action. A better rendering of this verse would be, “But there used to go up a mist from the ground.” It happened again and again and again. Therefore, the imperfective aspect can denote future actions, or past, present, or future actions that are repeated on a continual basis, or past or present actions that move forward in a progressive manner, without completion. Context in the sentence will dictate what tense should be used in translating and understanding what has been written.

Please be aware that this discussion has been a very substantial simplification of a much more complex grammatical discussion on the use of Hebrew aspects, verb tenses, and their meanings when reading the scriptures.

Now that we have reviewed some of the very basics of Hebrew grammar, let’s turn back to Exodus 3, and we will read the very well-known story of Moses’s introduction to the Almighty God. Moses had fled Egypt forty years prior and then the following forty years he had been tending sheep. So Moses is now eighty years old when he comes into contact with the Almighty God.

Exodus 3:1 *Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb.*

2) *And the angel of [Yehovah] the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush:*

So here is an entity who is the messenger of Yehovah.

2 continued) *and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.*

3) *And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt.*

4) *And when the LORD [Yehovah] saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. (KJV)*

So here we have another entity, who is Yehovah; you have the messenger of Yehovah, and you have Yehovah. Let’s skip down to verse 13.

13) *And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? (KJV)*

And then the famous verse, verse 14.

14) *And God said unto Moses, I Am That I Am: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I Am hath sent me unto you. (KJV)*

In verse 14, the words “I Am That I Am” are the Hebrew words *ehyeh asher ehyeh*. There’s the word *ehyeh*. The Hebrew word *ehyeh* is the first-person-singular form of the verb “to be” in the imperfective aspect. This is the exact same word as we read earlier in Jeremiah 30:22. Again, verbs in the imperfective aspect can denote future actions, or past or present actions that are repeated or are on a continual basis, or past or present actions that move forward in a progressive manner, without completion. It covers a whole host of verb tenses in the English language.

An option for translating *ehyeh asher ehyeh* would be simply to translate the phrase in the future tense in both occurrences. In German, the 1545 Luther Bible translates this phrase as *Ich werde sein, der ich sein werde*, meaning, “I will be who I will be.” In the German Bible it has translated both parts into the future tense.

Most translators in English and in other languages have chosen the simple present tense as the wording of the phrase “I AM That I AM.” However, the simple present tense in English does not adequately convey the progressive and imperfective nature of the verb in Hebrew. *Ehyeh* denotes more than a static state of being. It conveys a dynamic state of being that transcends the past, the present, and the future.

In the Russian Synodal Version of the Bible, “I AM That I AM” is translated as Я есть Сущий, which means “I am existing”, and “I AM” is translated as Сущий, which means “the existing one”. Russian has the same problem that Hebrew does because they do not use the verb “to be” in the present tense. This translation transcends the present time and bridges the past and the future. This translation is similar to the Greek Septuagint translation, which we will discuss momentarily.

I personally believe that an option for translating *ehyeh asher ehyeh*, that conveys this dynamic state of being, across time, would be “I have been who I will be,” which would convey a past continual state of being, in the past up to the present, as well as a future continual state of being. It is important and critical to note that *ehyeh asher ehyeh* was not the name of the God Being who was talking to Moses—it was not His name. Let’s read further in Exodus 3. It is incredible that everyone stops at the end of verse 14, but let’s read further; we’ll begin in verse 14 of Exodus 3.

Exodus 3:14 *And God said unto Moses, I Am That I Am: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I Am hath sent me unto you. (KJV)*

Now let’s read verse 15—no one ever reads verse 15 and it’s a key.

15) *And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, the LORD [Yehovah] God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever [Yehovah was His name forever], and this is my memorial unto all generations.*

16) *Go, and gather the elders of Israel together, and say unto them, the LORD [Yehovah] God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared unto me, saying, I have surely visited you, and seen that which is done to you in Egypt ... (KJV)*

The importance of verse 15 is that Yehovah reveals to Moses that His name was Yehovah; *ehyeh*, or *ehyeh asher ehyeh*, was not His name. Please turn with me to Exodus 6:3, where we will read additional proof of this. This God Being revealed something very special about Himself to Moses that He had not revealed before to anyone else, apparently.

Exodus 6:2 *And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am [Yehovah] the LORD:*

3) and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them. (KJV)

[Note that “Jehovah” is an alternate spelling of “Yehovah”, a variation of the name “YHVH”; throughout this transcript we will generally use “Yehovah”.]

So verse 3 says, I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob by God Almighty—*EI Shaddai*. Abraham knew God the Father as *EI Shaddai*, not as Yehovah. “But by My name Yehovah I was not known to them.” Abraham, and the patriarchs before Moses, knew God Almighty—Yehovah—as *EI Shaddai*. Again, the words “the name of” in verse 3 are not present in the Hebrew text. *EI Shaddai* was not the name of that God Being. Yehovah was the name of that God Being.

The Hebrew Bible was translated into Greek by seventy Jewish scholars in the late-to mid-third century B.C., in a document which we now commonly refer to as the Septuagint, which is just the Greek Old Testament. “Septuagint” is Latin for “seventy”, in reference to these seventy Jewish scholars. The Septuagint translates *ehyeh asher ehyeh* as *Εγώ ειμι ο ων*, which means “I am the one existing” or “the one that’s being” or “I am the being.” In the second part of verse 14, “I AM has sent you” is translated as “ο ων has sent you” or, “the one being has sent you”. It was not translated as *Εγώ ειμι* or “I AM”. The Jewish scholars did not translate the “I AM” as “I AM”. The Jewish scholars knew that the meaning of *ehyeh* would not be properly conveyed by simply using *Εγώ ειμι* or “I AM”. This translation of *ehyeh asher ehyeh*, and *ehyeh*, in verse 14 in the Septuagint, will become important later in the sermon.

We’ve studied a little about Hebrew and Exodus 3:14; let’s turn now to Greek. In order to explore the meaning of John 8:58, we need to learn just a little about Greek language and its grammar. Here are two important points in Greek grammar that will help us in that understanding.

2. Greek has only one tense for the present tense.

Like Hebrew, Greek is a very different language than English, having its own alphabet and lettering system, and is a much more grammatically complex language than

English. Some of these complexities are discussed in the study paper on John 1:1, which was recently posted on our website. And, like Hebrew, the treatment of verbs is very different in Greek than it is in English.

In English, we have five variations of the present tense. Remember, English is a very tense-centric language. We have five variations of the present tense, each with its own subtle differences in meaning and connotations. The first one, the first of the five, is the simple present tense. If we say, “I serve the man”, we are using the simple present tense, which implies a repeated, uncompleted action in the present. An example would be, “I serve the man each day.”

The second of the five tenses, in the present tense, is the present progressive tense. If we say, “I am serving the man”, we are using the present progressive tense, which implies an ongoing, uncompleted action into the present. Actually, the present progressive tense is our most-used present tense in English. This is the most commonly used form of the present tense: “I am going to the market; I am studying for the test; I am cooking dinner.” The example in this case would be, “I am serving the man today.”

The third tense in the present tense in English is the present perfect tense. If we say, “I have served the man”, we are using the present perfect tense, which implies a past action continuing to the present. An example of that would be, “I have served the man each time he came.”

The fourth option would be the present perfect progressive tense. If we say, “I have been serving the man”, we are using the present perfect progressive tense, which implies a past action continuing up to the present and into the future. An example would be, “I have been serving the man for twenty years”—you served him for twenty years, you’re serving him now, and you will continue to serve him in the future.

The fifth option would be the emphatic present tense. If we say, “I do serve the man”, we are using the emphatic present tense, which implies an emphasized present action: “I do serve the man when I can.” In English, we automatically use these tenses without even thinking about them, because each comes with its own nuanced meaning in English. Whereas English has these five variations of the present tense, Greek has only one variation in the present tense—the simple present tense. It doesn’t have these five, it just has the one, the simple present tense. In each of these five examples of the English present tense, the simple present tense in Greek would be used. In the Greek language, the context of the sentence—and this is what’s important—tells the listener or the reader the meaning of the tense.

2. Greek verbs are very progressive in nature.

Again, Greek verbs in the present tense tend to be very progressive in nature. In that sense, the present tense in Greek is similar to the imperfective aspect in Hebrew, in that both are progressive and ongoing, and not completed.

Please turn with me to Luke 15:29, and we'll read part of the story of the Prodigal Son. One of the uses of the present tense in Greek can be described as "the present of past action still in progress." (In such a case in English, we usually use the present perfect tense.) This is a very important aspect of Greek. The present tense may be used to describe an action that, once begun in the past, continues on into the present. The emphasis is on the present time. We can read this in Luke 15:29. First we will read this in the King James Version.

Luke 15:29 *But he answered, and said to his father, Lo, these many years have I done thee service, neither brake I at any time thy commandment, and yet thou never gavest me a kid that I might make merry with my friends. (KJV)*

Notice it says, "have I done" in verse 29. In the New Living Translation it says:

Luke 15:29 *"But he replied, 'All these years I've slaved for you and never once refused to do a single thing you told me to [do]...' (NLT)*

In Luke 15:29, the verb in the original Greek, "to serve" or "to do service", appears in the present tense because it reflects an action starting in the past and continuing to the present. This verse was translated into English in the King James Version and in the New Living Translation, using the present perfect tense, not the simple present tense, because it wouldn't make any sense in English to do that. In Greek, it's in the simple present tense. In the New King James Version, same verse, we read:

Luke 15:29 *So he answered and said to his father, 'Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time ... (NKJV)*

Again, the verb in the present tense in Greek was translated into English (in the New King James Version) using the present perfect progressive tense, denoting an action in the past that is continuing in the present and will continue in the future. The son had served his father in the past, was serving him now, and would serve him in the future.

Please turn with me to John 8. When describing all these rules of grammar, what comes naturally in English can become difficult to explain when we automatically use the right tense in English. In John 8 we will read a famous story of Jesus' interaction with the Jewish leadership concerning His Messiahship. In verse 51, we read,

John 8:51 *Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.*

52) *Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death.*

53) *Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself?*

- 54) *Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God:*
- 55) *Yet ye have not known him; but I know him: and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his saying.*
- 56) *Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.*
- 57) *Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?*
- 58) *Jesus said unto them, [here's the famous phrase] Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.*
- 59) *Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by. (KJV)*

The Greek words for “I am” in verse 58 are Εγώ ειμι (“ego eimi”), which is the first-person singular conjugation of the verb “to be” in the present tense—just the simple present tense in Greek. The Greek words have been translated into English, also using the simple present tense in English. However, the context of the passage is in past events and past relationships. Jesus is referring to Abraham, who lived more than 1,600 years before the time that Jesus spoke these words to the Jews. Whereas the simple present tense in Greek can be used to show this relationship—this present connection to past actions or past events—the simple present tense in English cannot adequately denote this connection to the past. We would automatically use a different tense in English. This is why the phrase “Before Abraham was, I am” sounds so stilted in English. No one would say that in English. In fact, it is so stilted that people have attempted to apply a special meaning to the phrase because the simple present tense makes no sense here in English.

To accomplish the bridge between the past and the present, English does not use the simple present tense like Greek does. In English we use one of two tenses to accomplish bringing the past and the present together. Those two tenses, as we’ve seen earlier, are the present perfect tense and the present perfect progressive tense; the two tenses that were used to translate Luke 15:29. So, the present perfect tense for “I am” is “I have been”. The present perfect progressive tense for “I am” would be “I have been being”, which is also very stilted—we would never say that—and no English speaker would express that idea in that manner. Therefore, English speakers would naturally choose the present perfect tense of the verb “to be” to describe a condition that was in the past that continues into the present. Consequently, a better rendering of John 8:58, using this present perfect tense, would be:

Jesus said unto them, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I have been.”

John 8:58 proclaimed three very important facts, facts that the Pharisees thought were completely heretical and blasphemous, facts that become more clear when we use the better rendering provided by the present perfect tense: (1) Jesus existed at the time of Abraham, which automatically meant that He was with Yehovah at the time of Abraham, and that He knew Abraham; (2) Jesus was indeed the Son of Yehovah who

had always existed previously; and (3) Jesus still was at that present time, and, by extension, would be that same divine Being, in the future. That simple proclamation was the reason why the Pharisees picked up stones to stone Jesus, as recorded in verse 59. In their unconverted and twisted minds, what Jesus had just said was blasphemy.

The Pharisees were not reacting to the use of the words “I AM” as if Jesus were using a specific and special title. So brethren, as we have explored, there is no tie-in or direct link between Exodus 3:14 and John 8:58, except if we stay entirely in English. Over the centuries, however, translators have repeatedly tried to link the two verses together. The King James Version, which was translated in 1611, as well as many others, capitalized the words “I AM” in both verses. The capitalization of those words was the decision of the English translators, not the original writers. There are no capital letters in Hebrew, and in Greek there were no small letters at the time of the oldest manuscripts. The Greek of the New Testament was written entirely in capital letters. The small letters in Greek did not appear until centuries later.

Yet the question remains: Who is the I AM? To begin with, it is important that we return to Exodus 3. We’ll read verses 14 through 16 once again.

Exodus 3:14 *And God said unto Moses, I Am That I Am: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I Am hath sent me unto you.*

15) And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, the LORD [Yehovah] God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever [that is huge: Yehovah is His name forever], and this is my memorial unto all generations.

16) Go, and gather the elders of Israel together, and say unto them ... (KJV)

So the name of the Being who is the I AM is Yehovah. Yehovah is His name forever. We also read in verse 15 that Yehovah is “God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” Please turn with me to Acts 3:13, where we will read of this descriptor once again. This verse is a portion of the message that Peter gave to the multitudes in Jerusalem from Solomon’s Portico at the Temple.

Acts 3:13 *The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go. (KJV)*

This verse clearly shows that the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob—the God of our fathers—was God the Father because He glorified His Son Jesus.

Acts 5:29 *Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.*

30) The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. (KJV)

Again, this verse clearly shows that the God of our fathers was indeed God the Father, because He raised up Jesus. Thus the God of our fathers could not be Jesus. Referring back to Exodus 3:15, these two verses show that God the Father was indeed Yehovah. Please turn with me to Revelation 1. Referring back to Exodus 3:14, as discussed earlier with the imperfective aspect of Hebrew, the *ehyeh asher ehyeh* could be translated as “I have been who I will be”. Revelation 1 describes a Being who is represented by this same description that transcends time, except this time, the description is in Greek.

Revelation 1:4 *John, to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne,*
5) *and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood,*
6) *and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. (NKJV)*

These verses include the salutation of grace and peace, coming from three sources: (1) the Being who is and who was and is to come; (2) the seven Spirits who are before His throne; and (3) Jesus Christ. So the Being who is and who was and who is to come cannot be Jesus Christ, because Jesus was one of the other entities listed here. Therefore, the Being who is and who was and who is to come is God the Father—it has to be God the Father; there is no other entity besides God the Father and Jesus Christ and the seven Spirits. The Greek term “who is and who was and who is to come” transcends time, including the past, the present, and the future, just as the phrase *ehyeh asher ehyeh* does in Hebrew.

Please turn with me to Revelation 21. When the seventy Jewish scholars prepared and translated the Hebrew text into the Greek, in what we know as the Septuagint, they did not transliterate the name Yehovah into Greek. They transliterated every other name, but the tetragrammaton, YHVH, they did not transliterate. They instead translated YHWH, or Yehovah, as “LORD”, which is *κυριος (Kyrios)* in Greek, but when they did it, they did it as a title, excluding the word “the” in front of it, so it’s just “LORD”. All verses in the New Testament which are quoting verses in the Old Testament containing Yehovah, in the Septuagint, translated the name as *κυριος (Kyrios)* without the article “the”. So there’s a direct tie-in between the Greek of the Septuagint and the Greek in the New Testament. In Revelation 21:22, we read something very, very remarkable here. The Bible is so consistent.

Revelation 21:22 *And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. (KJV)*

It is important to note that the Lord God Almighty is not the Lamb. The Lamb is Jesus Christ. Therefore, the Lord God Almighty cannot be Jesus Christ. That means that the Lord God Almighty is God the Father.

The Greek words for “Lord God Almighty” are κυριος ο θεος ο παντοκρατωρ (*Kyrios ho Theos ho Pantokratōr*). In this same verse (Revelation 21:22), κυριος (*Kyrios*) appears without the definitive article—the word “the”—before it. Translated into Hebrew, these words would be *Yehovah El Shaddai*. *Kyrios*, without “the” in front of it, would be *Yehovah*; *ho Theos*, which means “God”, would be *El*, and then *Pantokratōr*, which means “Almighty”, would be *Shaddai*. So here you have *Yehovah El Shaddai*—all names and titles referring to God the Father. These are the names and titles given by Yehovah to Moses in Exodus 6:3, which we read previously.

Another important concept is to place ourselves in Judea; this is something I think people just don't do. We need to place ourselves in Judea, as a Jew, at the time of Christ. All Jews, in good standing, in Judea at that time, believed that Yehovah was their God. The God they prayed to was Yehovah. Please turn with me to Deuteronomy, chapter 6, and we'll read verse 4. In Deuteronomy 6:4—which is called the *Shema*, and is one of the most, if not the most, revered and sacred texts in Judaism—we read:

Deuteronomy 6:4 *“Hear [Shema, in Hebrew, means “hear”], O Israel, the LORD [Yehovah] our God [Elohim], the LORD [Yehovah] is one.” (KJV)*

Again, all the Jews in the time of Christ in Judea believed that Yehovah was their God—the God they prayed to, the God they worshipped. During His ministry, Jesus never once declared or preached that He was their God or that He was Yehovah. Jesus declared and preached that He was the Son of God, and to a Jew, that meant that He was saying that He was the Son of Yehovah. During His ministry, Jesus referred to Himself as the Son of Man and as the Son of God, or the Son of Yehovah. He never referred to Himself once as God. Please turn with me to John 11, where we will read the beginning of the story of the resurrection of Lazarus.

John 11:1 *Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha.*

2) *(It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.)*

3) *Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.*

4) *When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby. (KJV)*

So there is a clear distinction here—for the glory of God (or of Yehovah), that the Son of Yehovah might be glorified thereby. In verse 3, Jesus said that Lazarus's sickness was for the glory of God. Again, He then referred to Himself as the Son of Yehovah, and not as Yehovah; not as God, which was the God whom the Jews worshipped. Later in the chapter, Jesus asks Martha what she believes, and in John 11:27, she replies,

John 11:27 *... Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ [Kristos, in Greek, which means “Messiah” or the “Anointed One”], the Son of God [the Son of Yehovah], which should come into the world. (KJV)*

Martha never claimed that Jesus was the God whom she was worshipping; she never claimed that Jesus was Yehovah. Instead, she believed that Jesus was the Messiah, the Anointed One, whom the Father—Yahweh—had sent. And that Yahweh was the God whom she worshipped, and Jesus was His Son.

Please turn with me to John 6. Jesus had just finished preaching to the multitude of believers and disciples, who had become offended at what Jesus had preached. Many of those disciples left and never followed Jesus again.

John 6:66 *From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.*

67) *Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?*

68) *Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.*

69) *And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ [you are that Anointed One], the Son of the living God. (KJV)*

Christ, or *Kristos* (χριστος) in Greek, simply means Messiah, or “the One sent”. In verse 69, Peter confidently declares that he and the disciples believe that Jesus is the Messiah—the One sent by Yehovah—and that He is the Son of the living God, which means that Peter did not believe that Jesus was that living God. To Peter, as a Jew, that living God was Yehovah. So the disciples declared that Jesus was the Son of Yehovah, or the Son of God the Father.

Please turn with me to John 10. Jesus was confronting the Jewish leadership, and so many times it got very testy because the Jewish leadership hated His message. They hated what He stood for.

John 10:34 *Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?*

35) *If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken;*

36) *Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?*

37) *If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. (KJV)*

Again and again, Jesus refers to the God that the Jews worshipped as His Father. He never claimed to be that Being; He claimed to be that Being’s Son. The God that the Jews worshipped was Yehovah. So Yehovah was His Father. He proclaimed time and time again that He was the Son of His Father, Yehovah.

Please turn with me to John 4, where Jesus points the worship, not to Himself—He never directed worship to Himself while He was here on the earth—but He always directed it to the Father. In John 4:23, we read a prophecy about something in the future, about future worship.

John 4:23 *But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. (KJV)*

Again, Jesus never claimed to be the God that the Jews were worshipping. And they were worshipping Yehovah. Jesus never instructed His disciples or the Jews to worship Him. He always instructed them to worship the Father.

Please turn with me to John 8, where we will read the heated conversation between Jesus and the Pharisees about who exactly Jesus was.

John 8:31 *Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;*

32) *And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*

33) *They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?*

34) *Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.*

35) *And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever.*

36) *If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.*

37) *I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you.*

38) *I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father.*

39) *They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham.*

40) *But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham.*

41) *Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God. (KJV)*

Those Jews are saying, we have one Father, even Yehovah. Here in verse 41, the Jews acknowledged that Yehovah, the God whom they worshipped, was their Father. And the Being whom they worshipped was God the Father. It kind of makes sense.

John 8:53 [The Jews asked] *Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself?*

54) *Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God ... (KJV)*

So here in verse 54, Jesus acknowledged that the Jews considered God the Father to be their God. Their God was Yehovah, so this is another proof that God the Father was Yehovah, and Christ acknowledged that fact; the Jews acknowledged that fact.

Brethren, Jesus spent three and a half years of His ministry announcing the Kingdom of God, and announcing that He was the Messiah (the Anointed One), and that He was

sent by God the Father. All of the Jews acknowledged God the Father as their God, and they acknowledged God the Father as Yehovah. Again, Jesus never claimed to be Yehovah, but he did claim to be the Messiah, the One sent by Yehovah.

Please turn with me to John 11, where we will read a short prayer that Jesus prayed right before the resurrection of Lazarus. What did Jesus pray that the people would understand?

John 11:41 *Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.*

42) *And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me. (KJV)*

That was Christ's prayer—that people would believe that He had been sent by His Father, Yehovah.

Please turn with me to John 14, and we will read a passage that we read every Passover service. Jesus even instructed His disciples that they believe in Him. Again, as Jews in Judea, the disciples already believed in Yehovah, who was God the Father. They knew who Yehovah was; that's the God they had been worshipping for centuries.

John 14:1 *Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. 2) In my Father's house are many mansions [offices]: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. (KJV)*

Verse 1 contains a statement of fact and then a command. The statement of fact was that the disciples believed in God; they believed in Yehovah, they believed in God the Father. The command was that the disciples should believe also in Jesus, that He was the Son of Yehovah, that He was the Messiah, and that He was the One whom the Father sent, He was the Anointed One, He was the one who came fulfilling the prophecies of the Old Testament. Again, you believe in God—statement of fact—believe you also in Me—a command.

In verse 2, Jesus also refers to the Temple as His Father's house, not His own house. The Temple was His Father's house. The Temple was the House of Yehovah. Conversely, the Jewish leadership and the community acknowledged Yehovah to be their Father, but they never acknowledged that Jesus was Yehovah's Son, and that He was the Messiah, the Anointed One who had been sent by Yehovah, His Father.

The Bible is full of passages in the New Testament referring to God the Father that are direct quotes from passages in the Old Testament referring to Yehovah. These passages never refer to Jesus as being Yehovah.

Brethren, much has been written and published, much has been announced and discussed, declaring that Jesus Christ was and is the "I AM". This claim and belief is

made by staying completely in English, and making the discussion and the resulting proofs an English-English determination. It's just not correct.

Brethren, in conclusion, the Bible shows that the "I AM" in Exodus 3:14 was indeed Yehovah. The Bible also shows that God the Father was indeed Yehovah. Jesus never claimed to be Yehovah, but He did always claim to be Yehovah's Son. Jesus never claimed to be the "I AM".

Brethren, we can confidently state that John 8:58 was an announcement by Jesus Christ that He existed back at the time of Abraham and that He still exists. He was not announcing that He was the "I AM" of Exodus 3:14.

Brethren, who is the "I AM"? From the many points and proofs explored this afternoon, we can confidently state the "I AM" is indeed God the Father and not Jesus Christ.

May God the Father and Jesus Christ bless us as we strive and desire to understand more and more about both of Them, as we strive and desire to obey Them more and more each day, and as we strive and desire to show Their love for us in the way that we treat one another.