

From YHWH to Father: The Intimacy Jesus Revealed

The divine name YHWH (Yahweh) is given to us in the Hebrew Scriptures as God's personal name. It is holy, sacred, and associated with His eternal, self-existent nature. In the Old Testament, God's name was often revered to the point of not being pronounced aloud. Yet when we come to the New Testament, something striking happens—Jesus, the Son of God, does not use the name YHWH in His prayers. Instead, He introduces a new level of intimacy with God by addressing Him as “Father,” and even “Abba,” the Aramaic term for “Papa” or “Dear Father.”

This change is not a dismissal of the holiness of God's name, but an unveiling of the depth of relationship God desires with His people—revealed through the Son.

1. God's Name Revealed as YHWH

God revealed His name to Moses at the burning bush: “I AM WHO I AM” (Exodus 3:14), from which the Tetragrammaton YHWH derives. The name is used throughout the Old Testament to emphasize God's covenant faithfulness and eternal nature. In Psalm 83:18, we read, “That they may know that You alone—Your name is Yahweh—Are the Most High over all the earth.”

The tone of the Old Testament is reverent, awesome, and often distant. God was holy and unapproachable except through mediated worship (via priests, sacrifices, and the temple). This tone instilled fear and reverence, which is proper and foundational.

2. Jesus Introduces the Father

Jesus consistently refers to God as “Father.” When teaching His disciples how to pray, He begins with: “Our Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 6:9). This is revolutionary. Instead of focusing on a distant, unapproachable deity, Jesus brings God near—as a loving Father.

Even more intimate is Jesus' own address to God as “Abba.” In Mark 14:36, during His agony in Gethsemane, He prays, “Abba! Father! All things are possible for You.” The use of “Abba” expresses deep trust, dependency, and closeness.

3. Jesus' Relationship with the Father

Jesus shared perfect intimacy with the Father. In John 10:30, He says, “I and the Father

are one.” In John 17, His high priestly prayer, He prays, “Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am” (John 17:24). He not only loves the Father but wants us to enter that same relationship.

4. We Are Invited Into That Intimacy

This new closeness is not reserved for Jesus alone. Through Him, we are invited into the same relationship. Romans 8:15 says: “For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons by whom we cry out, ‘Abba! Father!’”

And in Galatians 4:6, we’re reminded: “Because you are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, ‘Abba! Father!’”

What was once a fearful distance has now become a Spirit-empowered closeness. We still revere God’s name—but Jesus teaches us to draw near, to know Him not only as Yahweh but as Father.

5. The Amplification of the Old by the New

Jesus did not replace the holiness of God with familiarity; He brought fullness. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Proverbs 9:10), but in Jesus, we see that perfect love casts out fear (1 John 4:18). The Old Covenant prepared us to understand God’s greatness; the New Covenant reveals His desire for intimacy.

Conclusion

Jesus did not nullify the sacredness of YHWH’s name; He fulfilled its meaning by showing us that the Eternal, Self-Existent One desires sons and daughters—not merely servants. He wants relationship, not ritual. Through Jesus Christ, we have received the Spirit of adoption. Let us not take this lightly. Let us walk with reverence and confidence into the presence of our Abba.

To God be the glory:

John 1:12 (LSB): “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name.”

Reference Scriptures

Exodus 3:14 (LSB): And God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM”; and He said, “Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”

Psalms 83:18 (LSB): That they may know that You alone—Your name is Yahweh—Are the Most High over all the earth.

Matthew 6:9 (LSB): Pray, then, in this way: ‘Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.’

Mark 14:36 (LSB): And He was saying, “Abba! Father! All things are possible for You; remove this cup from Me; yet not what I will, but what You will.”

John 10:30 (LSB): I and the Father are one.

John 17:24 (LSB): Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.

Romans 8:15 (LSB): For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons by whom we cry out, “Abba! Father!”

Galatians 4:6 (LSB): And because you are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!”

Proverbs 9:10 (LSB): The fear of Yahweh is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

1 John 4:18 (LSB): There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears has not been perfected in love.

John 1:12 (LSB): But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name.