

Jehovah or Yahweh?

The term "Jehovah," appears in the American Standard Version (1901) as well as in most modern versions. It derives from four Hebrew consonants, called the Tetragrammaton (a term that simply signifies a four-letter word). This expression is used by scholars for the four Hebrew letters, YHWH, that constitute a name for God, employed some 6,800 times in the Old Testament.

The name *Jehovah* is a hybrid term. Vowels from the Hebrew word *adonai* (meaning Lord) were imported into the four Hebrew consonants (YHWH). Actually, the same procedure is employed in the construction of *Yahweh*. Numerous scholars have noted that the original word's exact pronunciation has been lost and the various spelling forms are speculations, e.g., "Jehovah, Yehovah, Jahweh, Yahweh". All of these forms are conjectural transliterations. There is no solid documentation to confirm the original vocalization of YHWH. Dogmatism, therefore, is without justification. It is difficult to appreciate the rationale of caustic critics who virtually rail against the name Jehovah, when no one knows precisely how the original term was pronounced.

- by **Wayne Jackson**

Questions on Forgiveness and Repentance

Question: If a brother in the church offends us, is it right for us to forgive him whether he comes and asks us to or not, or must we hold it against him until he comes and asks our pardon? Would it not be more Christlike to forgive him and try to love him as much as lieth in us, whether he comes and asks us to or not?

Answer: Christ never forgave anyone his sins until he repented of them, nor do we see how anyone can. Christ loved them while yet sinners, was anxious for them to repent, suffered and died to bring them to repentance. We should be like him; should love men, be willing to suffer so that they may be brought to repentance, and be kind, gentle, longsuffering to help them to turn; but there is and can be no forgiveness with God or man without repentance; and when a man sincerely repents, he will confess and ask forgiveness of whomsoever he has offended.

- by **David Lipscomb**,

from Questions Answered, Lipscomb and Sewell, Kurfees, pg. 260

Question: "Should I forgive a man even though he does not repent?"

Answer: Our Lord said, "*If thy brother sin, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him*" (Luke 17:3). Jesus forgives only those who repent (Acts 2:38), and He expects no more of us. It is, indeed, impossible to forgive one who does not repent since forgiveness is the acceptance of a relationship which existed before the sin. Unless the rebellious brother desires this relationship it is impossible to establish it. We must ever be ready to forgive and we must entertain no malice or bitterness in our hearts. But, we can forgive only when penitence is shown. Those who question this conclusion (and there are always those who thus do, not knowing the true significance of forgiveness), remember that the Lord's order is (1) if a brother sins against you, rebuke him; (2) if a brother repents, forgive him (Luke 17:3).

- by **Guy N, Woods**,

from Question and Answers Volume II, Freed-Hardeman, pg. 41

Things the Father of the Prodigal Son Did NOT Do

There are many things to learn from the famous parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15;11-32). Each of the three characters in the parable – the prodigal, the father, and the elder brother – provides us with essential instruction in spiritual matters. Few Biblical texts have served as the basis for more or more powerful sermons and lessons.

Our emphasis here is on the father, and specifically on some of the things he did NOT do. Consider:

- 1) He did not try to justify his son's sinful actions. Many parents make this critical mistake.

Even when their children have done horrible, devastating wrongs, some parents will make excuses for them. Some have even been known to change their position on basic moral issues if it so happens that their son or daughter has followed that sinful route. This, of course, only makes things worse.

2) He did not continue a normal relationship with his erring son. The reality was that their relationship had been severely altered, not by the father's choices, but rather by the son's. The father accepted this reality, as unpleasant as it was. There was nothing 'normal' in the family as long as this son continued in his sinful ways

3) He did not rush to bail his son out of the trouble he had gotten himself into, and he did not enable him to continue in his sinful lifestyle. Although it's not stated in the text, it's not hard to imagine that the father would likely know where his son was – may well have known about the horrid conditions his son was suffering in the pig pen. But, he did not go there. He did not send some much needed cash to ease the suffering. He did not take any steps to lessen the miserable consequences the boy had reaped by his bad choices. Unfortunately, we see way too many parents these days that, by their actions, actually make it possible for the children to continue in open rebellion to the will of God.

4) He did not forgive and restore his prodigal son until the son repented and sought his forgiveness. It's clear that he was willing to forgive. It's obvious that he was anxious to forgive. He made it easy for his wayward son to seek and receive forgiveness. But notice carefully that he did not forgive the prodigal until the young man "came to himself", humbly returned, and asked for reconciliation. This is the pattern taught throughout the Scriptures, and we must follow it.

5) He never gave up hope for his lost son. As the son was nearing home, "when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him." It has been noted that the father must have been constantly watching and always hoping that he would see his son on the horizon. No loving parent can give up hope for a child gone astray.

The father of the prodigal son serves as a great role model for us today. Of course, we believe he is a sort of 'shadow' of our perfect Heavenly Father. Let us strive to be more like Him.

- by Greg Gwin