



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of Dan Duncan

Exodus 3:13-22

Exodus

"The Name of God"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Good morning. We're continuing our study in the book of Exodus, and so if you have your Bibles, turn to Exodus chapter 3 and we'll finish the chapter beginning with verses 13 through 22.

"Then Moses said to God, 'Behold, I am going to the sons of Israel, and I shall say to them, "The God of your fathers has sent me to you." Now they may say to me, "What is His name?" What shall I say to them?' 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."' And God, furthermore, said to Moses, 'Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, "The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has enterprise me to you." This is My name forever, and this is My memorial-name to all generations. Go and gather the elders of Israel together and say to them, "The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, has appeared to me, saying, 'I am indeed concerned about you and what has been done to you in Egypt. So I said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Amorite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite, to a land flowing with milk and honey.'" And they will pay heed to what you say; and you with the elders of Israel will come to the king of Egypt and you will say to him, "The Lord, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us. So now, please, let us go a three days' journey into

the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God." But I know that the king of Egypt will not permit you to go, except under compulsion. So I will stretch out My hand and strike Egypt with all My miracles which I shall do in the midst of it; and after that he will let you go. I will grant this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and it shall be that when you go, you will not go out empty-handed. But every woman shall ask of her neighbor and the woman who lives in her house, articles of silver and articles of gold, and clothing; and you will put them on your sons and daughters. Thus you will plunder the Egyptians.'" "

Let's bow together in a word of prayer and ask the Lord to bless our time of study. Let's pray.

[Prayer] Father, we thank You that You've given us an opportunity again this morning to gather together as a people, Your people, purchased by the blood of Christ, purchased from the foundation of the world, and we thank You for that redemption and we thank You that, having given us life, You have given that which sustains that life, You have given us the nourishment of the scriptures, and we pray that as we consider the text before us, that You might bless us and that You might build us up in the faith. May this be an enjoyable time of study, a time in which we reflect who You are, Your greatness, and what that means to us, because You have entered into an eternal covenant with us and You have made wonderful promises that You will keep and that You are able to keep, so we pray that as we reflect upon the truth that's before us You might bring things to mind, give us great encouragement, and deepen our understanding of Yourself, that we might serve You with boldness, with consistency, with a sense of confidence.

We pray for the needs of this class and the needs of this assembly as a whole and remember those whose names are listed on the calendar of concern and remember other loved ones whose names are not mentioned that have great difficulties and are in physical need with different illnesses. We ask that You would, if it please You,

bring healing. If that's not Your will, Father, we pray that You would give encouragement and help those in such need to look to Christ, the author and perfecter of faith and to be encouraged by Him. And we pray that You'd bless each of us with that, that we might be sanctified and made more and more like Your Son.

We pray to that end now, Father, that You would bless us as we look into the scriptures, and instruct us. We pray that we would be edified by what we consider this morning and that in so doing we would glorify you. We pray these things in Christ name. Amen.

[Message] Our lesson this morning is the name of God. I'm not a great student of Shakespeare. Like most of you, I've read a few of his plays. You can't grow up and – at least the public schools when I did – and not have read at least one or two of his plays. But really, a person living in the English-speaking world and doesn't have to study a great deal of literature to be familiar with some of his famous lines. And we hear them quoted frequently, even though we may not realize that it's Shakespeare that we're hearing.

One of those well-known lines is in Romeo and Juliet, when Juliet asks of Romeo, "What's in a name that which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet?" In other words, a name doesn't tell us everything about a person. And in that particular play, Romeo happened to have the name of Montague, who was the enemy of Juliet's family, the Capulets, and so she's falling in love with this young man. She considers his name and realizes he's a member of the enemy. But what's in a name? It's just a name. It doesn't tell you anything about the character of a person. It doesn't mean that he's bad because he has that name. A name really has no significance. It's the person that counts.

And in the western world that's true for the most parts. Names are merely titles. They're labels, they're means of identification, and they keep people or things from being confused with other people or things. But to a Hebrew, a name was more than a label. It was more

than a title or a designation for convenience. For them, it was also descriptive of the person.

It's been said to the Hebrew name is shorthand for character. It's intended to reveal the nature of the person, intended to reveal their character, say something about them. And so it's very significant. You see this, for example, in the patriarchs: Abraham – it means father of a multitude. We know that that's very significant with Abraham. It says something about him, about his place in history, about who he was and his purpose; Isaac – means laughter. And we see that name in light of the fact that Sarah, when she hears the promise, that she, who's past the age of bearing children, will have a son, she laughs. She laughs in disbelief. But then some nine months later she laughs again and this time with faith and with joy in the fact that this child has been born to her and he is the fulfillment of the promise. And he is a child who carries with him all of the hope of the covenant. And so his name has significance; and then there's Jacob, whose name means usurper. It tells us something about him. He was a deceiver until he's changed by the Lord and he changes his name to Israel.

So names have significance and we see that in the Bible, but we also see it in our own literature and perhaps a good illustration of this is from Bunyon's *The Pilgrim's Progress*, because the names of all of his characters are significant. That is, they're descriptive of those characters. There's Christian and Evangelist, Faithful, Hopeful, Pliable, Mr. Worldly Wise Man, and the list goes on. All of the numerous characters have names that describe who they are and what they represent.

That's a Hebrew principle and we see it in our passage this morning, which is why Exodus chapter 3 is a very important chapter in the Bible. It's here that the meaning of the Lord's name is revealed. What's in a name? Well, a great deal is in a name when it's the name of the Lord. And so this will be given, this will be revealed, with very practical effect.

It happened while Moses was shepherding his father-in-law's sheep. One day he had led them in the wilderness to Mount Horeb, which we also know as Mount Sinai, where unexpectedly God appeared to him in the burning bush. And He said to Moses, "Come now and I will send you to Pharaoh so that you may bring my people, the sons of Israel, out of Egypt."

It was a calling for which Moses had been prepared over the past 80 years of his life. God had been dealing with him in a variety of circumstances to bring him to that point when God would call him to do His great task – 40 years in Egypt as a prince. He'd learned a number of skills that would be useful for him in his minister; 40 years in the wilderness as a shepherd; and now the preparation was over and he was to be used of God in a mighty way.

It was a great privilege. He was to serve God, and in so doing he would be lifted out of obscurity. He would be placed on the field of history. He would be given honor. He would be given fame. Few men in all of history are known so widely and so well as Moses. That's all because he was called out of obscurity into this great ministry. And yet when God speaks, Moses doesn't rejoice. Moses face doesn't light up. In fact, his face falls and he resists the call.

He says, "Who am I?" In other words, "I'm not worthy. I'm not qualified. I'm not capable for this task to which You've called me." Now that was a realistic response and that's quite a change from what we had seen in him some 40 years earlier. He'd learned some lessons about his inability through his failure. And so we see that expressed in this resistance. He evidences some humility.

He wasn't sufficient for the task and he knew that. And so God gives him assurances. He's called him to this task, and so now God shows him that he will be sufficient for him, because God is going to be with Him. He says in verse 12, "Certainly I will be with you, and this shall be the sign to you that it is I who have send you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God in this mountain." So He gives him a great deal of encouragement here. In

fact, no greater encouragement could be given than the promise "I will be with you."

But Moses wasn't completely encouraged. And in verse 13 he asks what he should say to the people if they should ask him for the name of the God who had sent him to them. Well, Moses knew that the people wouldn't blindly follow him and that's why he asks this question. After all, if 40 years earlier he couldn't muster their support while a prince of Egypt with all of the prestige of the royal family behind him, he didn't feel he could gain a following now, some 40 years removed from that situation – 40 years absent from his people as a Bedouin out of the desert. They would make inquiries very naturally. They'd want to see his credentials. They'd want evidence for his authority. And they'd want to know the name of the one who sent him. And so he asks God, "What shall I say to them?"

Now Moses didn't mean by this that the people of Israel had no knowledge of God, of the God of their fathers, may suggest that their knowledge had become somewhat dim over the past 400 years, that they'd grown somewhat cold. But it doesn't mean that they had no knowledge of God, nor does it mean that they had never heard the name of God. They had, but they'd also heard other names and titles of God. For example, El Shaddai was the name He had revealed Himself to the patriarchs, and in other ways as well.

And so Moses anticipated that they would want to know the special name of God and what it meant, and primarily that. What His name revealed about Him as their God and what it said about His relationship with them. God has made this promise to Moses and to his people that He will be with them.

Well, who is this God? What is He like, this God who will be with them? In other words, they want to know the significance of God's name and how that significance applies to them. And so in verses 14 and 15, God gives Moses His name and then He explains the meaning of that name. He begins with the explanation of the name in verse 14. "And God said to Moses, 'I Am Who I Am.'; He said, 'Thus

you shall say to the sons of Israel, "I Am has sent me to you." That's the meaning of His name, that's if we want to give a definition of it. It's "I Am Who I Am," which may be one way of saying you really can't define it. You want to know who I am? I am who I am.

But that has all kinds of significance and it's shortened to simply "I Am." And that's a verb in Hebrew and it's the basis for the personal name that is given in verse 15 and translated "Lord." But "Lord," or its Hebrew equivalent, is not the actual name of God. That's not His personal name.

The name of God that He gives in verse 15 is often pronounced Jehovah. That's the name that most people are familiar with. But that's probably a mispronunciation. The reason is due to the fact that the original Hebrew text did not have vowels written in the words, just consonants. Now, when they pronounced the words they pronounced them with vowels. So if they would read the text, they would read it with vowels that they spoke that the language of Hebrew. They spoke it with vowels, but they didn't write the vowels. They simply wrote consonants.

It wasn't until much later, after some centuries of the Jews speaking Aramaic or other languages in which they had not spoke Hebrew, and when they were beginning to lose the pronunciation, beginning to forget how to pronounce Hebrew, that Jewish scribes developed a system of vowels called vowel points and wrote them under the consonants so that if you were to pick up a Hebrew Bible and you were to look at the text, you would see the consonants and then underneath you'd see little markings, and those are the vowel points that were added many, many centuries later.

So originally the Lord's name was spelled with only consonants, represented by the Latin letters YHWH. It's often referred to as the tetragrammaton, which means "the four letters." However, after some time the Jews stopped pronouncing the name of God and they did this out of a fear of violating the third commandment of taking the Lord's

name in vain. Instead, they pronounced another word in its place, the word "Adonai," which means "my Lord" or "my master."

And eventually they added the vowels of Adonai under the tetragrammaton, the four letters YHWH in order to remind the reader to pronounce Adonai and not to pronounce the Lord's name, because in so doing they may violate the third commandment, so they thought. In fact, some Jews have taken this practice to the point where they don't even pronounce Adonai anymore. They simply pronounce the Hebrew "HaShem," which means "the name." So they've gone a step further with that.

But the result of this is the actual pronunciation of the Lord's name has been lost. We don't know what it sounded like. But Christians who were unaware of this substitution of the vowels of one word for another read the vowels as if they originally belonged to those four consonants, the tetragrammaton, which resulted in the English form "Yehowa," or "Jehovah." And that form was adopted by some English Bibles and so it's become accepted and many people use that today. And I think because of the common usage and the familiarity we have with it, it's an acceptable use, but we should remember that that's not the original pronunciation.

Many students of the Bible, many of those who've studied very carefully the language of Hebrew have come to the conclusion that the proper pronunciation is probably something like "Yahweh," which is very similar to the Hebrew verb, "I am," which is pronounced "ehyeh." So from "ehyeh" to "Yahweh."

But in our text it's written "Lord." And we know when the name of God is being referred to because, at least in the New American Standard Bible, it's spelled with all capital letters and those represent the phrase, "I am who I am," or the simple statement, "I am."

And for us what's really important is not the pronunciation of the name, but its meaning. He is the "I am." He is the eternal God, the God who always is, who is self-existent, who has His being and His existence in and of Himself. He's not dependent on the creation for

His existence. He's independent of time. Theologians speak of God's aseity, meaning His self-existence. He is from Himself and it's the ground for all that He is. It's very fundamental to understand this aspect of God, that He is of Himself, that He is self-existent. Because He's self-existent, He's eternal. He has no beginning, no end. And so because He's eternal and because He's self-existent, He never changes. He's unchanging. He's not dependent on creation and doesn't change with creation. He's independent of time and so He's not subject to the changes of time. He is eternally the same and He is forever the "I am," the self-existent, eternal, unchanging God.

All of this was illustrated to Moses in the burning bush, as we studied it last week, with the fire that burned without consuming the bush. It burned independently of it. It burned independently of it because it had the source of its energy in itself, not in the bush. It was independent. It was self-existent.

Malachi evidently reflected on this passage in Exodus when he wrote some centuries later, "For I, the Lord, do not change. Therefore, you O sons of Jacob, are not consumed." Now, we suggested last week that the bush, this humble bramble bush, this thorn bush, represented Israel. And the flame in it signified God, signified His holiness. And the bush was not consumed because God was in the midst of Israel, intends to save them, intends to deliver them, intends to purify them as fire purifies, but not to consume them, because His purpose for Israel was deliverance. It was salvation. And so that bush signified something else. It not only signifies God's transcendence, His independence of His creation, the fact that He is different from it, that He is separate from it, and that He is self-sufficient, that He is self-existent, but it also signifies His imminence. That is, that He is among His people. He is within His people. And He is personally involved with His creation, personally involved with Israel.

And so while He is transcendent, He is above His creation, independent of time and space. He is also involved with His creation. He's also personally involved with His people. As Paul states in

Ephesians chapter 4, "He is over all and through all and in all." So He's above it. He's not the creation. He's separate from it. But at the same time He's in it. He's very much involved with it. He is omnipresent. He is everywhere, while at the same time not being the creation. And so we aren't pantheists in our theology. We don't equate God with the universe, but we do know that God is everywhere. He is omnipresent and yet separate from it. He is the creator and the sustainer of the universe.

And so Moses was to tell Israel that God's name is Jehovah, Yahweh. His name is "I am." His name is the self-existent one, the eternal, unchanging God who is not some impersonal force, who's not some unmoved mover, but the personal God who made a covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who is in the midst of His people and can give help to them in time of distress.

That's what makes this exchange between God and Moses so practical. In contrast to the idols of Egypt and Canaan and throughout the ancient world, God truly exists. They're just images. They're just the product of man's imagination and can do nothing. He exists. He is, as He says, and so He can act, and He's unchanging.

As one writer puts it, "The Lord is above moons." His love for His people, His purpose toward them doesn't change. He doesn't vacillate in His purposes and intentions. He doesn't make promises over and then over the course of time begin to have second thoughts and think, "Oh, I didn't realize this people was going to turn out this way," and begin to think, "Well, perhaps I'll not keep the promise that I made with them. They're not quite what I thought they'd be." God doesn't do that. He knows the end from the beginning and He doesn't change His mind. He doesn't change His promises or His purposes and His intentions. He's independent of creation. He's independent of time. His life exists independently of these things and so is not shaped by them, is not affected by them as our lives are. He sovereignly rules over everything and He will use the creation that He has created, that

which He's made, in the deliverance of His people and the fulfillment of His promises.

So throughout the book of Exodus, we will see the unfolding of God's name. It becomes clear to us all that is met by "I am" and it has very practical effect.

Moses did really have no greater authority than that, and so with that authority the Lord commands him in verse 16 to go from Midian to Egypt with the message of deliverance. He instructs him first to assemble the elders of Israel. There's a proper way to do things. In fact, if you think back when 40 years earlier he went to Israel the first time, he didn't go to the elders. He didn't go to the authorities. He acted on his own and that was not a good idea and so the Lord tells him now, "Go to the elders, those who have positions of leadership, the heads of the families and the clans and the tribes of Israel, and say to them," in verse 16, "The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, has appeared to me, saying, 'I am indeed concerned about you and what has been done to you in Egypt.'"

The authorized version renders this "I have surely visited you." And the word that's translated there, "visited," has a wide range of meaning in Hebrew. It can mean to comfort with aid, or it can mean to afflict with suffering and judgment. It also carries the idea of paying attention to or making close examination or observation of something or someone. And really, that may be closer to the idea here, so that what the Lord is saying here is He has given close examination to their situation. He knows their need, He's seen it thoroughly. He understands the situation.

And yet it does seem to carry with it the idea of deliverance, that He sees them, He's examined them with the intention of visiting them with deliverance, with salvation, from this oppression that they were under.

It's a message that would have reminded them, reminded the elders of Israel, of Joseph's dying words in Exodus 50:24, where Joseph says, "God will surely take care of or visit you and bring you

out from this land." It's the same word that's used in Exodus, that's used at the end of Genesis. So if they were listening carefully and they understood the promise that Joseph had made, they would have realized that this word that Moses brings back to them signaled the long-awaited prophecy that it was about to be fulfilled.

And in verse 17 He assures them that he would bring them up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanite, the land flowing with milk and honey. And then the Lord assures Moses of a good response. He's concerned that they won't respond to him, that he'll go and it'll be another failure. The Lord said, "No, I'm going to be with you. I'm going to take care of you. I'm going to give you success." And now He assures Moses that that will be the response. There will be a good response from these elders. And He instructs him with the elders to then go to Pharaoh and say, in verse 18, "You will say to him, 'The Lord, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us. So now, please, let us go a three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God.'"

Now that's not perhaps the message you would expect him to give. Or rather, you might think that he would go and say, "Let my people go." We would expect him to demand that Pharaoh free the slaves. But the implication of this request seems to be that they'll go out into the desert, they'll worship there three days, make sacrifices, and then they'll return.

The suggestion – or some have suggested because of that implication, that what this is a ruse or a deception by Moses by which Israel would make its escape. In other words, they'll ask for permission to go out for just three days, worship, and come back, but then they'll get out and they say, "Just keep on walking. Let's just not look back and he'll never know the difference and we'll get away this way." But that's really impossible. God would not command His servant to lie, and everything that He said here indicates that He doesn't need to do that. He's the "I am." He's the eternal, self-existent,

God of the universe. He doesn't need to try to carry out His plans by means of deception.

What this is a test to expose the real character of Pharaoh. If he would not grant the lesser request, then surely he would not grant the more difficult, the greater request, of complete release of the slaves. The request itself was not unreasonable. It was not unusual, for that matter. There are ancient Egyptian records that date to about this time in which workers were allowed off from their labors to go and sacrifice and worship their gods for a period of three or four days. And so Pharaoh's rejection of this reasonable request would expose his true character.

God, of course, knew Pharaoh's heart. He knew that he would refuse the request, and informs Moses of this in verse 19, where He says, "The king will not permit you to go," and adds, "except under compulsion." Literally, however, what the Hebrew texts reads is, "Not by a strong hand." That's why the authorized version translates this last clause, that "he will not let you go, no, not by a mighty hand." And I prefer that reading so that rather than stating how God will achieve Israel's release from Egypt, the Lord is stating the degree of Pharaoh's unwillingness to let the people go, as well as show the basis for God's judgment on Pharaoh. He was an implacable rebel. And the judgment that would fall on him would not be falling on some innocent party, but one who merited the judgment. He resists the will of God and he resists it fully and completely. Not even by a strong hand will he let you go.

But it also foreshadows the conflict. The king of Egypt, considered a God by himself and by his people, perhaps the greatest king of his day, certainly representative of human strength, of human power, would resist God's will completely. To his full strength he will resist God, but he will fail and he'll be crushed by God, as the Lord explains in verse 20. "So I will stretch out My hand and strike Egypt with all My miracles which I shall do in the midst of it; and after that he will let you go."

It all demonstrates the foolishness of resisting God's will. If the greatest power on earth, the great expression of faith, Pharaoh, could not thwart God's purposes, who can? Well, no one can. Resistance to God only occasions a demonstration of His power and glory. These verses provide an example of the omniscience of God, the omnipotence of God. Really, when you think about this passage, it's a very theological passage. Speaks of the aseity of God, His self-existence, the eternity of God, speaks of His omnipresence, His omniscience. All kinds of aspects are brought to play in this brief passage. In fact, this very brief name, "I am." It brings all of this to mind and all of it is born out. And we might think, "Well, that's just theology. It's interesting, but what's so significant about it?" Well, it brings out the great significance of theology and learning all of this. All of this is brought out in this name.

As long as Israel remembered, Israel will be encouraged. As long as Moses remembered it, he'd be encouraged. But when they forgot, and Israel surely would forget what the "I am" represented, the self-existent, eternal, unchanging God who is omnipresent, who's everywhere, who's omnipotent, when they forget that, then they fail.

It's very significant to remember these things, not only for them, but just as much for us. He never changes. He's the same yesterday, today, and forever. And so what He reveals of Himself here and what He will reveal throughout the book of Exodus, throughout the Bible, is for us and for us to remember that we serve the self-existent God who's eternal, who's unchanging. And His purposes don't change toward us and is able to affect all that He brings to pass. So this was to be a great encouragement to Israel, a great encouragement to Moses. And in light of that there may be some other purpose here as well, because the Lord is telling Moses something about the engagement that he is about to enter into with Pharaoh. He's about to have a difficult conflict with the king of Egypt. And the Lord's words about the king's resistance serve as a kind of warning to Moses to be prepared for a series of disappointments.

He's saying in effect, "Moses, you're not going to go into the throne room of the Pharaoh and stand before Him and say these words and He's immediately going to let you go. And it's going to be an easy and quick success." It's not going to be that at all. There'll be a series of disappointments. And so you're not to despair. The mission would require patience, and that patience would come with the knowledge that God is in control, knowledge of who He is. So again, it's very practical to know who God is, to realize that and act upon it and live in light of it. He knows the end from the beginning. He carries out His predetermined plan and so He's encouraging Moses with these words. He's saying, "Realize it's not going to be an easy conflict. The contest that you have with Pharaoh, you're going to go back and go back and go back, be a series of meetings with him, and he's going to resist you. He will not let you go, no, not by a strong hand. Your words, your miracles, are not going to change his heart, but I'm going to change it and I'll give you success. You just be patient."

And further, when they leave, when Israel comes out of Egypt, they would not leave empty-handed. We read in verses 22, "but every woman shall ask of her neighbor and the woman who lives in her house, articles of silver and articles of gold, and clothing; and you will put them on your sons and daughters. Thus you will plunder the Egyptians." Well, this is the fulfillment of what the Lord had promised Abraham back in Genesis 15:14, where he stated that He would judge the nation, whom the Israelites served, and afterward they will come out with many possessions."

Here it's described as plundering the Egyptians, or stripping off the Egyptians. It's a military expression. Pharaoh goes to war against God and His people and the result is the Egyptians are plundered. And notice who plunders them – the women. Again, as we saw in chapters 1 and 2, the women have the prominent role against Pharaoh. It's the weak who plunder the strong, because this is God's victory and that's the way God likes to achieve His victories. He likes to take the weak things of the world to confound the wise and the strong, and it shows

that He would triumph so completely that the women and children would carry off the treasure of Egypt. That's how great His victory will be over the king of Egypt.

In fact, all the Israelites would do is ask of the Egyptians and the Egyptians would gladly grant the request. The slavemasters would enrich the slaves, and that's an occurrence that, in human terms, is highly implausible. But the text makes it clear that this is not something we're to understand in human terms and the implausibility of it underlines the fact that this is not a human achievement. This is a divine achievement. It's God's work.

As God explains in verse 21, He would cause the Egyptians to be favorably disposed toward the Israelites. Literally, He will this people grace in the eyes of the Egyptians. And that's what really does take place. This is a work of grace on the part of God. He works in the hearts of these enemies, these implacable foes of Israel.

Some have seen in this enriching of the Israelites compensation or back pay for their years of slave labor. So it was a justified payment, but it was a payment the Egyptians made, not because it was just – at least that wasn't their motivate – it was a payment they made because God made them willing. That's the sovereign power of God.

What is in a name? Well, if the name is the Lord, the "I am," everything. He is the self-sufficient God. He is self-existent. He is sovereign over the visible and the invisible, over the tangible elements of creation, as well as the intangible thoughts and intents of the heart. In Egypt He would not only manipulate nature in these wonders that He will perform with all of the plagues that He brings upon that land, but He would change the attitudes and the thoughts of the Egyptians. He'd cause them to willingly enrich their enemies. That's sovereign control. That's the creative power of the Lord, the "I am."

Now last week we suggested that the one that is speaking to Moses out of the burning bush was the pre-incarnate Christ. He's described as both the angel of the Lord and as God. So he's identified as God. At the same time he's distinguished from God. So if we want

to put that in New Testament terms, He is God the Son, but not God the Father. He's of the same essence of the Father, but He's different in His person.

Well, we have further support of this identification from our passage here, because frequently in John's gospel, the Lord identifies Himself with that expression, "I am." John chapter 4, while speaking to the sinful woman at the well, he said, "I who speak to you am He." Literally, I am I who speak to you. When He came to the disciples later on in chapter 6 on the Sea of Galilee, it was at night. There was a terrible storm on the sea and He comes walking to them in their immortal terror. And He says to them, "Be of good cheer. I am." And then to the Jews in John 8 who challenged His authority, He said, "Before Abraham was, I am."

As one writer has stated throughout His earthly ministry He was filling in the meaning of the great words "I am." I am the bread of life. I am the light of the world. I am the door of the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I am the resurrection and the life. I am the true vine. Jesus Christ is the "I am" that's referred to here.

Paul understood this. Philippians chapter 2, we read, beginning with verse 9, "Therefore also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in health and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

So He is this One and He is the Deliverer of Israel who spoke out of the burning bush and explained the name to Moses. He's the redeemer of the church who has enriched us as He did when He brought Israel out of Egypt. Paul writes in Ephesians 4:8 when Christ triumphed at the cross, "And ascended on high/He gave gifts to men." So when He brought us out of the slavery of sin, out of spiritual Egypt, He showered His gifts upon us. He enriched us.

So if you are a Christian, you are rich, rich beyond your understanding. You've been blessed with every spiritual blessing in

the heavenly places in Christ. Do you realize how rich you are? Sometimes we forget that. I don't think we ever fully know it, but we're very rich. For in Him we've been redeemed forever and we're His possession. He can never lose us. We've been sealed with a Holy Spirit, given a spiritual gift so that we have been equipped to serve Him. The Spirit of God lives within us. He's given us abilities. We've been adopted into His family. The list goes on what we could say are the blessings that are ours.

And the God of the burning bush, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the same yesterday, today, and forever, who is the same one that we see here in the book of Exodus, is with you. He's in us and He's imparting His power to us. All that is signified in the name. It's working on our behalf. He is working on our behalf. He is with us, He's in us, and that should be a great encouragement to us.

But if you're not a Christian, of course there is no encouragement in that. But you do have the invitation to come to Him. He doesn't demand that you pay penance. He doesn't demand that you do a certain number of good works or that you live out your life in a certain way to obtain that salvation. He simply says receive it. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you'll be saved. Believe in the "I am." That's all one need do, is accept the gospel of Jesus Christ, and in so doing you enter into that relationship with the God that we see here, who is self-existent, self-sufficient, eternal, holy, and has a concern for His people and extends that power to them. If you never believed in Jesus Christ, then I invite you to do so. Let's bow in a word of pray.

[Prayer] Father, we do thank You for the truth that's set forth here and we have taken a very brief look at the meaning of the name "I am." So much more that can be said about it, and of course as we study through this book that you've given to us, the book of Exodus, we will see an unfolding of the meaning of that name as you act out your power and your person and your work in history. And we are comforted to remember that You don't change and You're the same today as you were then, and Your promises are as sure to us as they

were then and we thank you for that and pray that You'd help us to live in light of that, to live a life of boldness and confidence, in light of who we are because of who You are. Bless us with these things. We pray in Christ name. Amen.