



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Exodus 3: 13-22

“The Name of All Names”

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for Thy word and we thank Thee for the writings of Moses which give us some of the fundamental revelation of the word of God and we thank Thee for the portion that we are to look at tonight because it is a revelation of the name of God. And we know how important that was for Moses and for the nation and how important it is for us. We thank Thee for the illumination that the Holy Spirit gives us and we pray, Lord, that you may teach us and guide us in this hour. We commit the time to Thee in Jesus' name, Amen.

[Message] The subject for tonight as we continue our series of studies entitled "From Egypt to Canaan" is ‘the name above all names,’ and we are turning to Exodus chapter 3 and I AM going to read verse 13 through verse 22. This is the section that we will be looking at tonight. And in the 13th verse we read,

“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? And God said unto Moses, I AM who I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel,

the Lord 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 forever, and this is my memorial unto all generations. Go, and gather the elders of Israel together, and say unto them, the Lord 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.

(Incidentally, that expression "I visited you," means, "I have exercised and manifested concern for you") And I have said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt unto the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, unto a land flowing with milk and honey. And they shall hearken to thy voice: and thou shalt come, thou and the elders of Israel, unto the king of Egypt, and ye shall say unto him, Jehovah, the God of the Hebrews, hath met with us: and now let us go, we beseech thee, three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to The Lord our God. And I AM sure that the king of Egypt will not let to go, no, not by a mighty hand. (Now, that may be rendered in a different way and it's a rather technical question because it involves not simply the Hebrew text, but also the great translation of the Old Testament, and it could be rendered, "He will not let you go except by a mighty hand," but since our purpose tonight is not to deal with details like that, we'll pass it by with just that notice) "And I will stretch out my hand, and smite Egypt with all my wonders which I will do in the midst thereof and after that he will let you go. And I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians and it shall come to pass, that, when ye go, ye shall not go empty. But every woman shall borrow of her neighbor, and of her that sojourneth in her house, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and ye shall put them upon your sons, and upon your daughters; and ye shall spoil the Egyptians."

The passage before us, as one might expect in the light of the occurrence of this very, very interesting statement by God that his name is "I AM," is very important

theologically. It affirms the divine self-existence and that is the basis of who He is and what He does. There is only one self-existent being in the universe and that being is God. He is the only person who has His existence from Himself. Every one of us has our existence from Him. The whole creation has its existence from Him while He does not have anyone from whom He exists. He is the self-existent God. Now because He is the self-existent God, that becomes the ground of his immutability. The reason that He is a being who does not change is because He has no need, whatsoever, for change. And so, consequently, this self-existence is the ground of His immutability, it is the ground, of course, of His self-sufficiency, and when we talk about his sovereignty we are talking also about something that is related to His self-existence. He is sovereign because He is self-existent. So this is the fundamental affirmation of the nature and being of God.

Mr. Tozer has said, “A God who must be defended is one who can help us only while someone is helping him.” And we do not have such a God as that. He is a God who is perfectly capable of defending Himself. He does not need any help from anyone else, and this has so many practical applications for us that I AM sure you can think of a number of them yourself. Because if you have God, the one whose name is "I AM," you do not have need for anything else. So, this is very important theologically because it is an affirmation of His divine self-existence.

It is also important because it affirms the divine covenantal faithfulness that flows out of His self-existence too. Because He is self-existent and because He is immutable, He is faithful to His promises and He can keep them all. Not only can keep them all, but has determined that he will keep them all. He is the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob. We have here in this particular context, the term, 'the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob' mentioned couple of times and then later on when God says to Moses, "Now I want you to gather the oldest together and then I want you to go to the king and you are going to ask to leave," he says, “And you shall say unto him the Lord God of the Hebrews.”

Now, that expression in verse 18 "the Lord God of the Hebrews" marks out God with reference to those who are not his covenant people as over against those who are. Those of who are his covenant people speak of the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, but those who are not his covenant people do not understand that. 'And so when you speak to them of God to say the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, it wouldn't make any sense to pharaoh. If you do, you would have to sit down and explain all of that. So, when you speak to pharaoh, just say the Lord God of the Hebrews,' and you can see here the distinction that is made in this context between the God who is the faithful God of Abraham and his seed and the God who is still God but who is known by those outside as simply the God of the Hebrews.

When we read the English translation of the Old Testament and particularly in the older translations, the name that is given of the Lord is often found in our translations under the form of Jehovah. Jehovah is a term that is derived ultimately from the term "I AM." In fact, when you say Jehovah, you are really using a term that is a nonsensical term. The Hebrews did not pronounce the covenant name of God. If I were to write it here, it would be written something like YHWH. They did not use vowels. They did not write with vowels. They just wrote with consonants. They pronounced their words and they used consonants when they pronounced them but they never wrote the vowels. The language was a language of consonants only. Consonants written, vowels added in their speech.

Now, one of the commands that Moses was given was that they should not take the Lord their God's name in vain. And so it was not long before in Israel there arose a practice of never pronouncing the name of God because they did not want to be guilty of taking the Lord's name in vain. So, they would never pronounce the name for God, the covenant name for God, the great four-consonant name called the tetragrammaton, the four-lettered word. They would not pronounce that at all. When they came to that word in the text, such as here and other places, they would then use the other term, which

means Lord, "Adonai." So every time they would come to this term, they would say "Adonai." In this way, they would not be guilty of taking the name of the Lord in vain.

Well, it was not long before the vowels of the other Lord, "Adonai" were put with the consonants of the holy name, the tetragrammaton, and the combination of the two, the consonants of the revered holy name of God, and the vowels of the name that they could say put together and the result was "Jehovah." And as you can see Jehovah is the consonants of the tetragrammaton and the vowels of another word for God, that's nonsensical. But that is what came into our English texts, "Jehovah."

Now, as you know, most people when they talk about the Lord God now, and particularly among the scholars, they will speak of the God of the Hebrews, the covenant-keeping God as "Yahweh". That is an attempt to put vowels which they think might have gone under the four characters, the four consonants and which they think the Hebrews may have originally said, "Yahweh" or perhaps "Yihweh", but "Yahweh" has become common. "Yahweh," we do not know was what they said either.

In fact, we do not really know what they called the covenant-keeping God but we do know something that is very important and to know exactly what they called him would not help us one bit. We know the root of the term "Yahweh". We know that it comes from the verb "to be" and we are almost certain that it means simply, "I AM." That was the name, 'I AM', or perhaps 'He is', or perhaps 'He causes to be,' but you can see all of these are built upon the verb 'to be'. So we will just say it's "He Is" or "I AM." That's the name.

Now, Jehovah, it's all right to call him Jehovah if you like, if that's the way you have come to know Lord, because while that's nonsensical, we are not sure of the others either and we are talking about the same person. "Yahweh" may be best, but those of us who grew up reading the King James Version, we find a sort of emotional attachment to "Jehovah" because that is the way we were first taught to speak of the one who is the covenant-keeping, faithful God, "Yahweh" or "Jehovah." So, if I back and forth use the

two terms, we are talking about the same thing. They are distinguished in many of their English versions by capital L, capital O, capital R, capital D. That is a reference to "Jehovah" or "Yahweh" or the covenant-keeping God. Capital L, little o, little r, little d is often the rendering of Adonai; the word that means Lord sometimes refers to the Lord but often means simply, master; like lord, sir.

All right, that is just by way of introduction to what we will be involved in, in this book because this will come up again. For example, if you turn over to Chapter 6, and read verse 3, you read here, "and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, as God Almighty," Elohim, "but by my name Jehovah I was not known to them." So Jehovah or Yahweh as the case may be.

Now, of course, you can see from this that what we have here in the revelation of the name of God as "I AM," Moses has not really given a name because you wouldn't think of an individual having a name, "I AM." So when Moses asks God what His name is, he says, "I AM who I AM." Now, that is an absolute name, "I AM who I AM." I will say more about it in just a moment. So God does not really have a name in the sense of something that defines him. He is. Now he has a relative designation. He is the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Absolutely, it is impossible to define God. Relatively, we may say, "He is the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob."

Now, if you will think for a few moments later on, I AM sure you will realize why God answers Moses as He does. Oh, I don't mean everything, you won't understand it all. I certainly don't. But you'll understand why he couldn't give Moses an answer to this question like I AM and then the definition of God. Well, we say this passage is important theologically, but it is also important practically, that is, it's a passage that touches our daily life very, very closely because it tells us that God's name is "I AM" and that name is really the whole of the Scriptures, because the whole of the Bible is nothing more than an elaboration of the name of the Lord God because His name includes all that He is and all

that He does that characterizes Him. As the Germans like to say, God's name, or the Scriptures, are [German indistinct]. That is an expanded name of God. So if you want to know who God is, read the Scriptures. The Scriptures reveal who he is and outline what he has done.

Now, in our preceding study a couple of weeks ago or so now, we studied Moses' vision which was given him, the burning bush, and then God speaking to him out of the burning bush and Moses was called to perform his redemptive ministry for the nation Israel and that was followed by some divine promises that were given to him in verse 11 and verse 12. "And Moses said unto God, "Who am I that I should go unto Pharaoh that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" And he said, "Certainly, I will be with thee and this shall be a token unto thee that I have sent thee. When thou has brought forth the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God upon this mountain."

So, God is preparing Moses for his great work of deliverance. He has given him the vision of himself and the burning bush. He has given him the mission, the call, and that is followed by divine promises which are designed to upgrade him and help him, and now the deliverer is ready to begin his work. Of course, he does not understand yet all that is going to happen to him, but God is telling him in his own sovereign way what He is going to do with him.

Now Moses, the first thing that he does is to say to the Lord God, "Now Lord when I go back to Egypt and I speak to my people and I tell them that I AM going to be the one to lead them out of bondage into the Promised Land according to the promises that were given to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob, they are going to say, "What is the name of this God that you are talking about?" So he says, "When I come unto the children of Israel they are going to say the God of your fathers has sent me, and I AM going to say the God of your fathers has sent me unto you and they shall say to me, "What's his name?" "What shall I say unto them?"

It seems a strange question in so many ways because didn't they know who the God of the fathers was? What is Moses suggesting by this? Well, I am not sure I understand everything that is suggested by this. What seems to be suggested first of all is, they had forgotten a whole lot about the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And so now, he is so strange to them that Moses can anticipate that they are going to say, "What is the name of this God that you say is leading us out of the land of Egypt?" After all, they have been down there for a lengthy period of time. They have been under Egyptian bondage.

You can see a church begin and in 40 years a church would no longer be a believing church. I can understand how this might have happened to the children of Israel. They had a great tradition but the tradition was no longer meaningful to them. The church at Ephesus had the ministry of the Apostle Paul and 40 years later, the Lord Jesus speaks to them and says, "You have left your first love." So it is possible for people who have had ministry from the Apostles or from an Abraham or from a Moses, within almost one generation, to forget all about the spiritual things that are really important. So perhaps that's involved. There's something else that may be involved too. In Genesis, as you read through when various things happen and God reveals himself in some special way, often a new name of God is suggested by that.

Now, we can give you a number of illustrations. I will just give you one so that you will understand what I am speaking about that in Genesis, chapter 16 when Hagar has her difficulty and she is finally cast out and she goes out into the wilderness, we read in verse 13 "And she called the name of the Lord that spake unto her, Thou God seest me." In other words, out of this experience that she had with the Lord God, a new name for God, a new description of him, is given, so perhaps Moses is asking for that. Now God is going to give his response. "Moses, you have asked what shall I say unto them? All right Moses, I AM who I AM."

Now, it's actually a two-fold response, but the first one is the revelation of the absolute name. What's signified by "I AM who I AM?" In the first place, there is an affirmation of the divine personality. It is just so common to us that we do not find this to be so startling that God is a person, but you must remember that we are living in the day in which we have had many thousands of years of unfolding of the divine revelation and we are able to hold in our hands the sixty six books of the Old Testament and the New Testament, and we are able to read them and ponder them, and so for someone to tell us that God is a divine person, well, of course, he is a person.

But now if you think about the gods with whom those people had to do, things were different. On the statue of the Egyptian god, Isis, there was written, "I am the thing that is and was and shall be." Now, that sounds almost like biblical language does it not? "I am the thing that is, was, and shall be." That is very much like the description that the Lord gives himself in the Book of Revelation, "I AM he that is and was and is to come", but notice, "I AM the thing" -- not a person; "the thing" -- and so God is looked at as some kind of impersonal substance. So the very first thing that we learn from "I AM who I AM" is that God is a person, and therefore all of the characteristics of personality belong to the Lord God.

The second thing that you can learn from his name is the divine eternity. He is independent of time. "He is who he is". He does not say, "I was this." "I AM." He does not say "I shall be this." He says, "I AM". Now, God's use of tenses, past tense, present tense, future tense, all of these are accommodations to us. "He is," so it is not I was or I shall be, "I AM."

Now, of course, he understands what we know in our experience as past, present, and future, but so far as God is concerned He is beyond time. He is independent of time. Time only has reference to events that transpire in certain orders, but He is who He is. So He has nothing to learn, He has nothing to acquire, He is nothing to become. He is.

That's something that will really blow your mind. Does it not? To really try to grasp what is meant by this becomes such a burden to us that we hardly know how to respond to it.

Now, the third thing that is suggested by this is the divine ineffability. There is no equivalent for God. "Moses, you have asked, 'What is my name?' I AM who I AM." Suppose we want to put a little equation on the transparency and we put God equals, what would we put on the other side. Now, we would just put a blank. There isn't anything we can put. The minute you start saying God is this or God is that and affirm that He is simply that, you have limited God. Even the fact of a definition of God is impossible. What does definition do? That defines, identifies, and limits and so consequently, God cannot be defined. If you say God is, then only a blank. That is what the Bible says.

In fact, Isaiah says it twice in the 40th chapter of his book. In verse 18 he says, "To whom then will you liken God? Or with what likeness will you compare unto him?" And then in verse 25, "To whom then will you liken me or shall be equal, sayeth the Lord God". So you cannot define God. We can say certain things about Him but that is not a definition of him. We can say He is gracious, loving, He punishes sin, all of these various things but these are not definitions; they are descriptions of things that characterize Him. One further thing this name signifies. Not only is He a person, not only is He an eternal person, not only is He an ineffable person, one you cannot describe, indescribable, but He is a God who is constantly active. "I AM who I AM." It's present tense; it's activity so far as the Lord God is concerned.

Now, if you will look at Scripture, you will see that He has been active in creation. He has been active in redemption. He is active in divine providence. He is active in carrying out all of His purposes, but He is the active God and He has further described this "I AM who I AM" by what is said out in holy Scripture. In other words, we and Moses in heaven are still learning the answer to the question, "what's your name" and in fact, we will never have the answer to that question because He is the infinite God and He will

further define and describe Himself, I guess I should use the word describe, He will further describe Himself as the ages of eternity unfold. That's something to blow our minds. He is like the dark side of the moon, beyond us really. We can never fully grasp what He stands for. In fact, someone has said Jehovah, Yahweh; whatever we may want to use for His name is really a shorthand for all God's dealings of grace. In fact, he really, to be accurate, should say, Yahweh is a shorthand for all of God's activities whether of grace or judgment, for they are just as true of God as the other.

But now Moses also is given the relational name. So we read in verse 15, "And God said moreover unto Moses "Thus shall thou sayeth unto the children of Israel, the Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob has sent me unto you. This is my name forever. This is my memorial to all generations." Isn't it interesting that God should say that this is His name forever? It is His memorial unto all generations. He is the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob.

So the covenant and the covenantal promises made in Genesis chapter 12 and verse 3 and expanded as the word of God unfolds are the fundamental covenantal promises that mark out the people of God from all of the individuals whoever have set their set foot upon God's world. This is His relational name. And so you learn from this is not only is He the transcendent God who is above all things, but He also is an imminent God. He is in the midst of all of the activity in life that transpires upon the earth.

Occasionally, when we point out Scriptures say that God is in all things, people sometime say, and often have students say this, "If you say that God is in everything that He is actually even in this instrument here, then in what way does your doctrine differ from pantheism for pantheists contend that God is in everything? And I must, as a Christian and a Christian theologian and teacher and, in fact, just as a Christian who understands the word of God, I must say that God is in this because the Scriptures say

that, and furthermore there can be nothing in this universe to which God is not related in which or where He is absent.

Now, of course, I will point out that He is not in this instrument here in the same way in which He may be in heaven or the same way in which He may in the believers' life but He is in this. Well then how does my doctrine differ from pantheism? Well, of course, the pantheists have hit upon some things that are true. God is in a tree. I remember hearing one of the missionaries from South America one time speaking to one of the pagans with whom he had to deal with, and he said he was trying to get over the idea that God was a person, and he said it was very difficult because they did not think of God as a person and when they did think of God as a being, they thought of him as enclosed in various things like trees and otherwise. And he was talking to one of the men and he said something like, "Well, when you look at that tree there, what do you think about it?" And the pagan fellow said, "I think if I go over and knock on that tree and I say 'Are you in there,' I think he will answer me." That is all the information he had evidently about his god. Well he had a pantheistic kind of doctrine. We who are believers acknowledge that God is in everything, but we also say that He is over all. He is not only imminent, but He is transcendent and, in fact, these things have come into existence by His creative power. So He is an imminent God as well as a transcendent God.

Now, Moses has just had that magnificent vision of the burning bush, the thorn bush. I suggested to you in our studies of it that the thorn bush was probably representative of the Nation Israel and that the point that God wanted to make to Moses was that the Lord God represented by the fire is in the midst of his people insofar as he is bound to the accomplishment of His purposes with regard to them. And so when Moses saw that bush on fire that was designed to be the first step in the full unfolding of the fact that God was with the nation and He would fulfill all of His words to them. I would

think also that it does show to some extent what God is with reference to His whole creation. It does mark Him out as very interested in everything in his creation.

I like what Wordsworth is said to have said. Wordsworth was one the great English poets and as you probably now even better than I, he loved the lake country of England because he was a great lover of nature, and that is a beautiful part of England, and, in fact, he has been called the poet priest of nature. And he describes, I think in one of his works, how he was looking at a primrose that was growing out of a rock and he kept looking at it, admiring its beauty and finally it became so such an impressive thing to him that he wrote down with reference to it, "Thou hast become to me court of deity". In other words, in the simple primrose, he could see the hand of the creative God.

Blake, who also has written some outstanding English poetry said, "When you look at the sun and you see a yellow disk in the sky, I hear someone crying out holy, holy, holy." So in other words a lot depends on the approach with which you come to the things of the created world. So the Lord God is saying to Moses, "Moses, I AM the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob and I AM in and involved in all of your activities." Susan Ferrier once said, "My deepest wish is that life to me may never lose its halo." And it will never lose it if we recognize the fact that God is imminent in all of our experiences and particularly in the experiences of us who are Christians.

Now, Moses is also told that he is to make a report to the elders. It is always good to report to the elders. You notice He doesn't say, "Now you go back and tell the elders how you are going to do this and do that and tell them to knuckle under." It's evident that even in this early stage, the Israelites were led by a body of men. So, Moses is told, "Go and gather the oldest of Israel together and say unto them 'The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and Jacob appeared unto me saying, 'I have surely visited you and seen that which has done to you in Egypt and I have said I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt unto the land of the Canaanites,' and then in verse, 'Up to a land flowing with milk and honey. And they shall hearken to thy voice

and thou shall come thou and the eldest of Israel and to the king of Egypt and you shall say unto him the Lord God of the Hebrews has met with us and now let us go we beseech thee, three days' journey into the wilderness that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God.' So Moses is told, he is now in Midian, he is to go back to Egypt, he has to go to the elders and he is going to tell them the message that the Lord God has given to him.

And Moses is told the kind of response that he is to expect to receive. "And they shall hearken to thy voice and thou shall come, thou and the eldest of Israel to the king of Egypt, and you shall say to him, "The Lord God of the Hebrews had met with us, and now let us go we beseech thee, and I AM sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go." So the divine foreknowledge and foreordination are speaking here and pharaoh is said to be going to say "No, you cannot go." But God goes onto say, "I have some things that I am going to do, I am going to stretch out my hand, I am going to smite Egypt with all my wonders which I will do in the midst thereof and after that, he will let you go. And furthermore, he will let you go and he will cause the Egyptian women to give to the Jewish women jewelry and other valuables. He is going to cause the Jewish women to have value and favor in the eyes of the Egyptians." In other words, He is going to work some mighty miracles both in the physical sense and also in the personal sense.

What were the miracles that God worked? When you look at the miracles in the Bible, George McDonald described them in this way, "The miracles of Jesus were the ordinary works of his Father, wrought, small and swift that we might take them in." In other words, there were really nothing unusual about them, just the fact that they were done in such a hurry. And one can illustrate this by the feeding of the five thousand. And when our Lord created all of that food on the spur of the moment to feed the five thousand, he was only doing in just a moment or two what the farmer and the miller take a year to do. So the miracles, well George McDonald said, "They are the ordinary works of our Father, wrought small and swift that we might take them in." So, he is going to

work miracles and he is going to bring the children of Israel out because the covenantal promises must be fulfilled.

Now, I would like to suggest to you as we close that the significance of the name, "I AM who I AM," is seen only in Jesus Christ in its fullest sense. You may remember that at least three times, the Lord Jesus claimed this name for himself. He said he was the "I AM." If you will turn over in your Bibles to John chapter 4 and verse 26, we read these words, "The woman saith unto him, I know that Messiah cometh,' which is called Messiah or Christ, 'when he is come, he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am." I AM. He is the covenant-keeping God.

Turn over to chapter 6 and verse 20, and the story of the walking on the water, and we read in verse 19, "So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they see Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the ship and they were afraid. But he saith unto them, It is I; be not afraid." He claims the name I AM. Then if you will turn to Chapter 8 and verse 58 the Lord Jesus in this very familiar text says, "Verily, verily I say unto you, before Abraham came to be, I AM." And of course, there are other utterances of our Lord; similarly in the garden when they asked, "Is he Jesus of Nazareth?" He said, "I AM." And those soldiers went back and fell on the ground. They were in the presence of the eternal God.

And then, if you will think for just a moment of how this term, "I AM" is used through the Old Testament, you will find there is gathering use of it in unfolding the redemptive power of the Lord God. And in the Book of Isaiah, particularly you will have God saying, "I AM he" over and over again and the Hebrew text *aniyhu*, I AM he, beside me there is no one else." "I AM he," "I AM."

And then ultimately the Lord Jesus comes on the scene and what characterizes His language? "I AM." "I AM the Bread of Life." "I AM the Light of the World." "I AM the Good Shepherd." "I AM the way, the truth and the life." "I AM the true vine." "I AM the resurrection and the life." And in fact, this use of the term "I AM" is designed by our Lord

to cause those who are familiar with scriptural things to make the connection, that he is the one who spoke with Moses out of the burning bush, who spoke to the fathers, spoke to the prophets, has spoken through John the Baptist and now speaks through the Lord Jesus in his ministry on the Earth.

The Apostle Paul, in Philippians chapter 2, will describe the ministry of the Lord Jesus and he will say as a result of his death, that God has highly exalted him and given him a name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Yahweh, is Jehovah, is Lord to the glory of God the Father. So this is the Yahweh who has dealt with the Nation Israel.

Now in belonging to him, we have the greatest of covenantal security. The Lord Jesus, in one of his discussions in the last days of His ministry here upon the earth, made reference to this Exodus chapter 3 passage and I am going to close with a reference to it, so turn with me to Matthew chapter 22. Matthew chapter 22 is a chapter in which we have the questions that were asked our Lord just before his crucifixion.

You remember he dealt with the Pharisees and now he is dealing with some questions of Sadducees, who are asking him, these fellows had discussed spiritual things so often, they knew all the questions to ask the person who gets up and tries to teach spiritual things, they have all the trick questions, they have all the difficult questions, they have managed to gather them all together, the same kind of thing that human beings do. You get up and teach the word and, you teach the word, you may teach the word in the power of the Holy Spirit and then you open it up for questions and someone will say, "What about the heathen?" It's human nature; we have marvelous ways of fending off the application of Scripture to ourselves. "What about the heathen?" Or you may finish a lesson and someone will say, "Well, do you really believe in divine sovereignty as you are talking about. Do you mean that God has reprobated some to hell as well as chosen

some to heaven?" All the difficult kinds of questions and so the Sadducees were well fortified and we read in verse 23 in Matthew 22:

"The same day came to him, the Sadducees which say that there is no resurrection. And they asked him saying, "Master Moses said that if a man die having no children, his brother shall marry his wife and raise up seed unto his brother. Now there was a seventh brother, and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and having no issue, left his wife unto his brother. Likewise, the second also and the third unto the seventh. And last of all, the woman died also."

Now, this is for the Pharisees, but it is applied to our Lord, because the Pharisees believed in the resurrection, but now they are going to see how our Lord will do with this question. Obviously, the Pharisees haven't done very well, because this question is still with them. Now in the resurrection, whose wife shall she be of the seven, for they all had her? And our Lord answered by saying,

"You err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God, for in the resurrection may neither marry nor given in marriage, but are the angels of God in heaven." (So in the first place, the question is ruled out since they don't understand the Scriptures, and therefore they have forgotten the fact that we don't have marriage in heaven. There is no need to for the race to be propagated in heaven. But, He goes on, "As touching the resurrection of the dead, Have you not read what was spoken unto you by God saying, 'I AM the God of Abraham, The God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. God is not the God of the dead but of the living.'"

Now, I submit to you, and I think I have mentioned this two or three weeks ago, so we will just go through it just a minute. I will submit to you that it is possible that our

Lord meant by this, "I AM the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob," and since he is the God of the living and not of the dead, the implication is that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are still living. And perhaps his proof rests upon that. He is the living God and they are living because they have trusted in him. So, it may be that he means that for them death is nothing more than a transition, it is not a condition, they are still living and therefore we may believe in the resurrection on that basis.

But I would like to suggest to you that the fact that they are living does not necessarily mean that there is a bodily resurrection. And that's what makes me think that there is more in this than that which some have seen in it. In other words, the argument is not based upon the "I AM the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac the God of Jacob," as if "I AM their God and therefore they are still living," though that is true. The argument is based upon the covenant. Now, when he says, "I AM the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob," they know that that means that He is the one who gave them those promises.

And what were those promises? Well, those promises were, Abraham would have a great name, Abraham would be given a land and Abraham and his seed would dwell in that land and that all the families of the earth would be blessed in Abraham's seed. Now if Abraham has died and if Abraham's body has been placed in the grave and all of Abraham's seed down through the years, the faithful believers have died and their bodies have been placed in the grave, how they going to live on the land?

Well, they can only live on the land by resurrection. In other words, the Abrahamic promises contained within them the promise of the resurrection of the body. You have to have that in order to have the Abrahamic promises fulfilled. So Jesus said, "If you want to see that the Scriptures teach that there is a resurrection of the body, just reflect that God said to Moses in Exodus 3, "I AM the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God to Jacob." They belong to me by covenantal relationship and the promises will be fulfilled to them and those promises must include resurrection of the body. "I AM the

God, not of the dead, but of the living." In other words, the argument that our Lord makes is not based on the present tense. It's based on the possessive case, that he is the God of the living. They belong to him, and the promises will be fulfilled to them.

No wonder Solomon said: "The name of Jehovah is a strong tower. The righteous runneth into it and is safe." If your relationship to the Lord God is the relationship of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and if your trust is in the name of Yahweh, as he is revealed in the word of God, you are absolutely safe and secure both now and forever for your life is in the hands of him who is. What a great God! What a powerful and mighty God we do have! Let us close with a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father we are grateful to Thee for this magnificent chapter, which we have only failingly expounded. Who can expound, I AM who I AM? This Lord, we shall come to understand better and better as the centuries of the future fly by but now we worship Thee. We thank Thee that our hope rests in the God of the ancient covenant, confirmed by and ratified by the blood that the Lord Jesus shed on Calvary's cross. We acknowledge, Lord, our only hope is in Him who has ratified the covenant in His blood and who, through the Holy Spirit has made it personal for all of us.

We worship Thy name. We give Thee praise. And O our great "I AM," our Father God! Bless richly, each individual here who has faith in Christ, and for those who may not bring unto Thyself for Jesus' sake. Amen.