

The Great Name of God

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[0:00] The Gospel of John, chapter 8, we'll begin reading in verse 48 and read through the end of the chapter. The Jews answered him, aren't we right in saying that you are a Samaritan and demon possessed?

I'm not possessed by a demon, said Jesus, but I honor my father and you dishonor me. I'm not seeking glory for myself, but there is one who seeks it and he is the judge.

I tell you the truth, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death. At this, the Jews exclaimed, now we know that you are demon possessed. Abraham died and so did the prophets. Yet you say that if anyone keeps your word, he will never taste death.

Are you greater than our father Abraham? He died and so did the prophets. Who do you think you are? Jesus replied, if I glorify myself, my glory means nothing.

My father, whom you claim as your God, is the one who glorifies me. Though you do not know him, I know him. If I said I did not, I would be a liar like you.

[1:09] But I do know him and keep his word. Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day. He saw it and was glad. You are not yet fifty years old, the Jews said to him, and you have seen Abraham.

I tell you the truth, Jesus answered, before Abraham was born, I am. At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds.

Well, good morning. Wonderful to be back with you. After four years of not seeing many familiar faces, but it's also a joy to see many new faces here.

How God is working here in this part of his kingdom, his vineyard. And it truly has already been a blessing to visit with you. I begin every Old Testament class that I teach with my students by reading Luke 24.

We're not going to read it this morning, but Luke 24 is the passage of the disciples on the road to Emmaus. Remember that text. And Jesus there gives this master class on how do you understand the Old Testament.

[2:16] Testament, he says, it's all about me, the prophets and the Psalms and Moses. They all find their fulfillment in Jesus Christ. And so I mentioned that because our text this morning is an Old Testament text.

We're going to be looking at Exodus chapter three in a moment. But also to be reminded that the whole scripture is the Christian canon, right? Not just the New Testament, but all of scripture testifies to Christ.

And it is a benefit, it's a blessing to we as the people of a God today. And so Exodus three, we'll look at it in a moment. Every time we come back on furlough, just for a few months, we have to remember new names and meet a lot of new people.

In our church in California, we went back and one of the young persons that had grown up over the four years we were gone, walked right past us. First week, my wife and I didn't know who he was. And the second week, he walked past me again and he told my wife, it's nice to have you here, Mrs. Mabel. And she didn't know who it was and said, well, thank you. And finally, we figured out this little kid that had grown up now a young man and looked totally different.

[3:23] And so we had to apologize to him. Didn't recognize who he was. They changed over time. In addition to that, going and visiting new churches with new people. More names to remember.

Remember, every semester, I have to memorize about 100 new names of students. And sometimes I get them mixed up. All these new names to hold on to. I have a girl named John. You believe that? I have a student named Genesis. I have another student named First John. We tease these guys all the time. And we even have popular nicknames.

One of our girls is named Bubbles. And we have all these nicknames and names of people. And I have one student. His parents named him Elohim. You believe that? Elohim is where we get a word for God in Scripture.

And so his parents named him Elohim. You all are familiar with well-known names in our society. Whether it is a fashion designer, a famous athlete, or celebrity, names often evoke a response from us, don't they?

[4:26] You like it or you don't like it. And this morning we're going to look at the great revelation of the name of God. This great I Am passage from Exodus chapter 3 verses 13 through 15.

And we'll read it in a moment. But just a few points of consideration before we begin into our text this morning. The context of Exodus. The book of Exodus is a book that many of you know fairly well, I believe.

You're familiar with how the book of Genesis ends with the death of Joseph. Correct? And as Joseph dies and reminds the people, a little small family living in Egypt, he says, Take my bones back to the land of Canaan, the land of promise.

Joseph was aware of the covenant promises that God gave to Abraham. And as you end the book of Genesis, this little 70-member clan of Jacob are living safely and protected in the land of Egypt, aren't they?

That famine had come and they are there protected. And yet when you begin reading the book of Exodus, it picks up there with that theme of Joseph is now dead. And yet the situation is very different, isn't it?

[5:32] The population of the Hebrew people has exploded. So much so that the people living in Egypt are fearful that they're going to take over. Or if there is another war and someone comes to attack the Egyptians, the Hebrew people will align themselves so that they can overthrow the people who have been oppressing him.

There are many Christians here in the United States that are fearful of the immigration problems that we experience in this country. Our government is not enforcing immigration properly. In the Philippines, if I stay beyond my time of stay, I'll get in trouble and I have to pay a fine.

They're stricter and more consistent with their policies on immigration and citizenship than this country is, which is amazing. And you have all the technology that they don't have. And yet here we find that same fear.

The Pharaoh is fearful of a possible attack upon his people and he's fearful of losing power. And yet Genesis ends and Exodus begins with these promises that God had made, swore he had sworn to Abraham.

And so we begin the book of Exodus and the people are no longer protected. They're slaves, aren't they? They're living in a land and they're being oppressed. And Exodus 1.8 tells us that a new Pharaoh rose over Egypt that did not know Joseph.

[6:49] Probably there was a foreign overthrow of power and this is a new Egyptian dynasty that comes into power. That is why he didn't know Joseph. Many years have taken place since the end of Genesis.

The Egyptians, they were fearful of this exploding population. And the Pharaoh made a terrible edict. He proclaimed essentially baby male genocide, didn't he?

You start to kill off these little Hebrew baby boys so that they can't get out of control and take over our land. And yet Moses in the providence of God has really a miraculous birth.

He is rescued from a terrible situation. He should have died and God providentially saves him from death. And he uses him. He trains him in the courts of Egypt.

Moses really is a prince of Egypt. Acts 7 is a very helpful passage that reminds us that he was mighty in words and power and deeds. He was trained in all the wisdom of the Egyptians.

[7:53] Moses survived because God planned to use him as that human agent of deliverance, didn't he? To deliver the people out of Egyptian slavery. So unique was the role of Moses in the history of redemption that according to Acts chapter 7 and verse 35, Moses is called a redeemer.

That's the role that he played. He was the redeemer of Israel on a human level in the Old Testament. The same word that is used for Jesus Christ in the great redemption that he accomplished later in history.

And so in the book of Exodus, the word deliverance or redemption often comes to summarize the whole content of the book. After the book of Exodus is written by Moses and for generations to

follow the prophets and the Psalms, they declare so many things about that great redemptive event, the Exodus from Egypt.

They celebrate it, they proclaim it, and they're familiar with it. And on Wednesday night, if you return, we're going to look at how Isaiah picks up that same imagery as the people are once again locked under Babylonian captivity.

And another new Exodus has to take place to deliver the people of God. And so it shouldn't surprise us that throughout the Old Testament, there are many passages that contain imagery of the Exodus long after the Exodus was accomplished.

[9:16] We'll look again at that in a few more days. Another point to consider is that Exodus 3.1 to 4.17, it's all one unit. You can go home this afternoon or read it, chapter 3 up to 4.17.

It all goes together. It's the call of Moses, these great promises. And this is where we see the revelation of God's name. Some believe for the first time. And when God reveals a new name or something of that magnitude, it's always accompanied by new revelation in great acts.

And so we should pay particular attention in Scripture when a new title or name for God is given. It often will be accompanied by great acts of God's power to redeem and to save His people.

And yet Moses has given this amazing information. No one else has given it to him in chapter 3 of Exodus. And as he hears the revelation of God's name and all these promises, God says, I will redeem you from the people in the land of Egypt.

Moses begins to ask a couple of questions. And I understand his questions. We'll look at it in a moment in verse 13, in verse 11 and so on. They're understandable.

[10:26] But as you read through that whole unit up to 4.17, he asks a total of five questions. And those questions, especially the last three, begin to reveal a heart of doubt.

Here he has been given an amazing new revelation from God. And he responds with unbelief. He doesn't want to do what God has called him to do. Specifically in 3, 1 through 6, God appears miraculously in the burning bush.

It doesn't burn. It's not consumed. In the Gospel of Mark, Jesus rebukes the Sadducees and says, the burning bush is evidence of the resurrection. You should have known that. And yet here Moses, he is now a shepherd and he's out with his sheep on the west side of the mountain.

He sees something he's never witnessed before. A bush is burning. It is not consumed. And Moses knew this was unusual. So unusual, he knew he finds out that he's standing on holy ground.

A visible manifestation of the invisible God. He encounters God in the bush and God will call him there in the next few verses. In 3, 7 through 12, Moses is commissioned by God.

[11:40] He's called at the burning bush. He's now commissioned. He is the one, the human man that is called to deliver the people of Egypt. And Moses is getting scared. He's beginning to doubt what God is calling him to do.

In 3, 10, God said to Moses, I am sending you to Pharaoh. That is your duty, your occupation, your calling in life. And the implications are simply staggering.

Moses, you are going to be called to go back and speak to the king and say, Let my people go so that they might worship me. And keep in mind that the promise to redeem Israel from Egypt, it's not new, is it?

Abraham knew about that. Jacob knew about that. And Joseph knew about that. As far back as Genesis 15 verses 13 through 14, we have the promise made to Abraham that redemption would come from Egypt.

And so Moses, I think, knew that. I don't think that he is confronted with new information at this point in his life. Jacob also knew the same promise. It was carried on down from patriarch to patriarch, father to son.

[12:46] In Genesis 46, God told Jacob that he would make a great nation out of these people and he would redeem them out of the land of Egypt. And that's what Joseph communicated before he died.

He is a ruler of Egypt and he says, I don't want to die here. I will die here, but I don't want to be buried here. And so they put his bones in a coffin, Acts 7 tells us, and they would take his bones back and bury him in the land of promise.

And Acts 7 is very helpful in confirming some of these things that we're reading this morning in Exodus chapter 3. And here are a couple of questions for you to think about in your mind as we read our text.

Look at Exodus chapter 3, verse 13. Moses said to God after this revelation, If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, the God of your fathers has sent me to you.

They ask me, what is his name? What shall I say to them? God said to Moses, I am who I am. And he said, say this to the people of Israel. I am has sent me to you.

[13:48] In verse 15, God also said to Moses, say this to the people of Israel. The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob has sent me to you.

This is my name forever. And thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations. And that is a text we look at this morning in the revelation of God's name.

If you think about these questions that Moses is going to ask, and again, you have to read the whole chapter to consider that. Even up in verse 11, Moses said to God, Who am I that I should go? And then later Moses is going to say to God, Basically, who are you? Who am I? Who are you? We're going to talk about the meaning of that as we look at this text. Why did Moses ask the question in verse 11, Who am I?

Did he forget his name? Did he forget his identity? Is that why he's asking? And my thinking is he is not asking because he forgot who he was. And that helps us understand the I am statement that comes later.

[14:50] When Moses says, Who are you? What do I tell them when they ask me, Who is it that is sending you to us? And so in either question, it's not just a matter of identity.

It's much more than that. And out of these five questions, you can look at them. And notice the progression of unbelief in the heart of Moses as you move on in the passage.

Here's another question for you to ask in your own mind. Is this the first time that God reveals his name to someone in Scripture? There are a lot of different opinions on that.

Is this a new name for God? Or did they already know it before? And if so, can you put your finger in the verse right now, in your mind, in your study, which verse reveals the name of God?

There are typically three responses that come out of this. And Christians point to different verses here. In Exodus 3, 13, 14, and 15. Three reminders before we get into our text this morning.

[15:50] The first is this. These three verses and the heated controversy that has ensued throughout generations, Jewish rabbis and even Christian pastors and theologians. A sea of ink has been spilt on these verses.

First of all, what does it mean? How do you translate it? What is the name of God that is revealed? There are many diverse views and there have been many heated controversies over these three verses in the Old Testament.

Another point to keep in mind as we study our text is to look at two verses. Now with me, Genesis chapter 4, verse 26. Let's look at that verse, be aware of it.

And then I'm going to show you another verse from Exodus, which seems to show us some apparent contradiction. In Genesis chapter 4, verse 26. This is before the flood, the line of Seth. The Bible says at that time, people began to call upon what? The name of the Lord. That is all capital letters. I'm assuming in your Bible. L-O-R-D.

[16:51] That is where we get the name Yahweh from, correct? And so translators have capitalized that so that you know when you come to that name, that is God's name in Scripture. It is not the small capital or the small letters.

L-small O-R-D. It is all uppercase L-O-R-D. And your translators today, our translators today, have done that to help us understand that. That isn't in the original manuscripts.

It's all the same. And so that is something we do to help people understand the name of God. Now look at Exodus chapter 6, verses 2 through 3. This seems to say the exact opposite.

God is speaking to Moses and he says, I am the Lord, Yahweh. I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob as what?

God Almighty. That is El Shaddai. But by my name, the Lord, Yahweh, I did not make myself known to them. And the question is, how do you explain that as a Christian?

[17:50] Many people point to these two texts and say, see, there's a contradiction in Scripture. You can't trust your Bibles. He was known as Yahweh generations prior to Moses.

And yet Moses, he also writes, he's the author of both verses, isn't he? I mean, Moses wasn't very sharp in his thinking. He makes a mistake and you can't trust your Bibles. I don't think that's the truth at all.

When you come to Exodus chapter 6, he makes himself known in a new sense. This is the redeeming covenant Lord who saves his people. And that is one of the focuses we want to emphasize this morning.

Why does God reveal his name to us? God reveals his name to us, to you, for the purpose that you might trust in him and to know that he redeems his people from sin.

That is one of the main reasons why he has revealed his name to us. It isn't just to give us information. It is to cause us to worship him and to adore him. Knowledge of God should strengthen our faith.

[18:51] Verse 13. John Piper preached a whole series of messages on the names, the titles of God. And his springboard passage was Psalm 910.

And that passage says this, Those who know your name put their trust in you. To know God's name is designed to fill us with trust, with faith in our great God.

It's to help us to worship him because he has redeemed us from our sin. Two things to consider all of your questions, all of my questions about God. They should be asked with humility.

Correct? We don't ask information about God just to fill our minds up. That isn't the purpose of why God reveals things to us. And Moses says to God in that verse 13, If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, The God of your fathers has sent me to you.

And they ask me, what is his name? What shall I say to them? That's a fair question he's asking. I don't think at this point that the text tells us that Moses is asking in an arrogant fashion.

[19:53] He is asking a legitimate question that you could ask or I could ask to the people as he goes. He hasn't seen him in 40 years. Will they remember him as he goes back and tells him the great deliverance that God is going to accomplish?

I don't think that God is trying to trick Moses. And Moses isn't trying to trick God by saying, who are you? Who am I? That isn't the point. Of the text. Moses didn't forget who he was as a person.

I think when Moses asked these questions, he is asking something more significant. What is the meaning of your name? What is the new revelation that will accompany the giving of your name to me as a human being to deliver your people from bondage?

And again, it's a reminder that all of our knowledge of God, we are dependent upon God to reveal himself to us, aren't we? Apart from scripture, special revelation, people in this world will not find God.

As a Roman Catholic Church would teach in other churches around this world. The Catholics teach that a good Muslim that has never heard the gospel, but is sincere in his heart, a good moral person.

[21:00] They can go to heaven apart from scripture, apart from special revelation. And there are many people, there are many Christians today that think things like that. God reveals himself to us and we are dependent upon that information given to us.

God does not reveal information about himself so that curious skeptics can accuse God of injustice. You see that all the time here in this country, even in the Philippines, Larry King live.

He has a way of asking questions that undermine the Christian faith. He does it all the time. Have you ever seen him when he's interviewing Bill Mayer? Bill Mayer is an atheist. He's a Jewish man. He thinks all religion is just foolish. And they ask questions that mock the Christian faith. They make fun of the name of Jesus and the name of the Lord. They should not do that.

They are descendants ethnically of Moses. And they use information about God to turn it against him and try to disprove the existence of God. Professors in college classrooms around this nation and even in the Philippines do the same thing to their students who are Christians.

[22:09] They try to belittle their faith. And some of these professors are great intellectuals and they understand Christian doctrine fairly well. And they raise it in order to attack God.

But they're not asking questions with humility, are they? They are raising questions to create doubt in the lives of our young people. So why does Moses ask this question?

Verse 11, who am I? Lord, who am I? In the military when we lined up to eat chow. Early in the morning we had to stand at parade rest.

And when we came up to the lady that was recording our name, check off our name to eat breakfast, lunch or dinner. We had to bark out our last name in our last four digits of our social security number.

And some of these guys were so nervous they would forget their name and they would forget the numbers there to call out. Moses doesn't forget who he is. That isn't why he is saying, who am I? [23:03] He is asking, I think, because he feels inadequate with the task that God is calling him to do. Who am I, Lord, that you would send me? He wasn't asking for new or factual information that he forgot his ID card or something.

Moses is asking something far greater. He knows his own life. And I think Acts 7 confirms our thinking here. Moses could easily reflect back on the day when he, in his own power, his own pride, his foolishness, in Exodus 2.11, he tried to redeem the people of Israel, the Hebrew people, in his own power, in his own strength.

That is what was in his mind when he saw the Egyptian and the Hebrew fighting. And he killed the Egyptian, didn't he? The next day he sees two of his own countrymen fighting and he tries to right the wrong.

And they say, are you going to kill me like you killed him the other day? And Moses fled for his life. He fled to Midian. And for 40 years in self-exile, he's reduced to a shepherd.

And he now is considering going back to the people of Egypt. And he was probably aware that they will know me as a murderer. Lord, who am I to be set apart, to deliver your people?

[24:18] He knew his past. He knew his failures. In fact, in Acts 7.25, it even tells us what was going on in his mind. He supposed that his brothers, the Hebrews, would understand that God was giving them salvation, what?

By his hand. But they did not understand. Moses, at that point in his life, was filled with human pride. He knew the promises of God. He knew many things about God.

But in his own strength and flesh, he tried to deliver the people of Israel. And it was a complete failure, wasn't it? Can't you now appreciate why he asked that question?

I might ask the same thing. Lord, I don't want to go back and do that. I already failed at that. Don't send me back. The people might reject me. Another reason, the possible explanation, is to think about the fact that many of the Hebrew people were not worshiping God at that point in their life. They were in bondage and slavery, and many of them, I believe, were captivated by idolatry. And so they go back and, of course, they're going to ask the question, who is sending you? We have all our Egyptian gods that we worship.

[25:25] And Moses is going to say, the great I Am has called me to deliver you from Egypt. And so there are many good reasons why Moses asked that question. But I think he asked it in humility, in genuine humility.

Secondly, all of our learning about God should be accompanied by faith. What good does it do, my brothers, if you have all the knowledge of God in the world, but you have not love? Didn't Paul say something about that in 1 Corinthians 13?

Just mere knowledge about God is extremely dangerous if it doesn't transform our lives. We need to be reminded of that over and over in our lives as God's people.

And I believe that Reformed Christians are some of the most intelligent Christians I've ever met in my life. They usually know Scripture, and they know it well. They know doctrine well, and that is wonderful.

And yet there can also be a sinful arrogance among some of us. We know so much that we always look down on other Christians that aren't like us. That is dangerous in our thinking about God.

[26:28] One professor, Pastor Aaron and I, he would often remind us about the danger of studying Scripture in seminary. You're learning all these new things about God. Knowledge puffs up.

And there is a tendency, without the transforming work of the Spirit in our life, to take that knowledge and to use it just to win an argument. And I don't think God is honored when we live like that.

We gain knowledge of God as revealed in His Word. And we learn from other men in the books they've written, in the lectures that they give, to submit our lives to the Word of God.

And we ask questions, and they should be accompanied with faith and humility. All of our learning about God should be accompanied with humility. That isn't what Moses did. He learns this amazing truth about God.

And before you get to 4.17, he is saying, Lord, send someone else. I don't want to go. He rejects the revelation of God in a sense, doesn't he? He learns some of the most precious truth about the

name of God, and he doesn't want anything to do with it.

[27 : 28] It's almost as if he would rather continue on being a lowly shepherd than going back and performing this role that God has called him to do to deliver a whole nation, millions of people from Egyptian slavery.

Our knowledge of God is based upon His self-revelation of us. And the challenge for yourself and for myself as we study Scripture all the days of our life, is the more we learn about God, the more we should love Him with all of our hearts, our soul, our being.

It should humble us and draw us closer to God. The more we know about God in Scripture, the more accountable we are before Him. You know far more truth than many Christians around the world.

You are more accountable to God in the way you live your life, to those around you. God intends that our knowledge of Him be received with belief and with faith.

And it's sad that Moses went through a period in his life, he learned some incredible truths, and yet he responds with a heart of unbelief ultimately, doesn't he? And God was angry, Exodus 4 tells us.

[28 : 34] He was angry that Moses would ask these questions and object to Him. Even pagan people like the Egyptians, they understood the concept of knowing the name of their God.

The concept of knowing the name of their God was very practical in their lives. It affected the way they engaged in false worship. Here's a simple application for all of us.

All of us probably feel like Moses sometimes. We feel inadequate, don't we? And that's a good thing to feel. God calls you to a ministry in this church or to witness to your neighbor or to someone that is hostile to the gospel, and you may feel inadequate.

That's fine. That's good. Moses understood that. He was an ordinary sinner like you and I, and to think, God, you could ever use me in this way? Yet Moses apparently focused too much on his inadequacy.

That is something that you and I can do as well. He wasn't focusing on the sufficiency of the God that made this promise that says over and over, I'm going to use you to redeem my people.

[29 : 38] We can apply that in very simple ways in our lives in this church. Maybe there's a ministry in this church that needs help, and you're a member of this church, and maybe you feel inadequate.

Maybe you should also remember that God is sufficient to sustain you in the task that He would call you to. Every member of every Christian church should be using their spiritual gift in their church.

There are many ways. If you say, I don't know what to do, maybe you could talk to your pastors, to the deacons, and say, how can I help in this church? I can do one thing every week. Yes, I feel inadequate, but God is sufficient.

He will sustain me in what He has called me to do. For some of you, it may be as simple as joining a church. Maybe you've been attending here for years, and you've never committed yourself to church membership.

You've never been able to have the faith, the courage to place yourself under the leaders of this church. God can help you make that right decision. But we should not possess a heart of unbelief when we learn things about God.

[30 : 41] We learn about God. We ask in humility. We believe and learn in faith. All of us are prone to wander and leave the Lord God we love. In verse 14, God reveals who He is.

That's what we begin to study. God said to Moses, I am who I am. And He said, say this to the people of Israel. I am has sent me to you.

And this is where the controversy begins. These are three words in Hebrew. I am who I am. And they're translated into this all capital phrase in English. In my understanding, although scholars differ in how you translate that, that is not the proper name of God.

And we'll come back to that in a moment. Again, some questions to consider as we study verse 14. What exactly is the name of God in this text? Where do you find it as you read it?

And second, is this a new name for God? Or is it something that Moses may have known before? Is God just repeating something that was already known? We should appreciate in the ancient world the importance of knowing someone's name.

[31 : 46] You find examples of this throughout Scripture. It was important to know someone's name often in the Old Testament. Isn't the person's name often associated with their character and even their destiny in Scripture?

Maybe not every name, but many names are like that. Names of unbelievers, even then and today, are often associated with their gods. Islamic people and other people, they often name their children or their surname contains the name of a god they worship.

And so knowing a person's name sometimes tells you what religion they are. It tells you what god they serve. Often conquering kings would defeat another king and they would rename that king.

That's in Scripture a number of times. Pharaoh Necho, when he killed godly Josiah in battle, he placed one of his sons, he removed one, put him on the throne, and what did he do?

He renamed him, didn't he? We'll look at that again tonight in Daniel chapter 1. But renaming someone was equated with being superior over that person. Israel often renamed cities that they conquered.

[32 : 53] Maybe they renamed them in honor of the god that they served, but they would rename it. It shows your superiority over that person militarily, but also religiously.

Naming is an act of authority in Scripture that carries great significance. When did Adam name his wife Eve? When is it recorded in Scripture? Did he do it before the fall or after the fall?

After God comes, they have broken covenant and God announces the first gospel promise in 315 of Genesis. And then God begins to unfold the curse that would be upon all creation.

What was Adam's response? He responded to what one scholar called Adam's amen. Then he said, My wife's name shall be named Eve, the mother of all living.

The fact that he named his wife Eve was a great testimony of his faith, that he believed in the promises of God. That's a fascinating part of Genesis. Consider Genesis 32.

[33 : 51] Remember Jacob in that wrestling match that he had all night? With a strange person. He didn't know who it was. Someone stronger than he. And over and over he is begging, Tell me your name.

Tell me your name so that you might bless me. God blessed Jacob as he wrestled with him that night. But he never told him his name, did he? Jacob left that place and he knew he was wrestling. He was struggling with God. He was renamed by God to Israel to show God's superiority and power over him. And God blessed him.

But when Jacob woke up in the morning, what did he say? In Genesis 32, 30, I have seen the face. I have seen God face to face. And yet my life has been delivered. Judges 13, the parents of Samson, And they went through the same thing, don't they?

They want to know the name of the angel so that when the things came to pass, they would know who to bless, who to honor. And so knowing the name of a God or knowing the name of God is very important in Scripture.

[34 : 53] And sometimes God renames people, human beings, to testify of the great redemptive work in their life. He renames men and women in the Old Testament. And even in the New Testament, we find people that are renamed.

John Piper, in the sermon that I read, tells us that when he and his wife were about, when his wife is about ready to give birth to their children when they were born years ago, they prayed to God and said, Lord, whatever we name this child, may the name be their character and destiny.

You parents ever do that? Remember the days when you were planning names and thinking about what to choose for your children? Some of you went to Scripture and maybe God used the Scripture and you said, I'm going to name my daughter this, I'm going to name my son this, so that God would use that name to reflect the character in His grace.

It would reflect their destiny. I don't know many people that name their sons Judas or Esau today. We name people after godly men and women, don't we? We want our children to experience the redeeming grace of God.

We want their destiny and their character to have something to do with the name that is given to them. And I think that is exactly what the father of Noah was thinking in Genesis chapter 5.

[36 : 06] Noah means rest. He was longing for the day when God's people, a little family in that day, would know rest in the promises of God. The point here is that Noah never named God.

Noah never woke up someday and said, I'm going to name God. That is a blasphemous thought.

God reveals names of Himself to us. He doesn't have a name that is given to Him by anyone else.

He is eternal. And here God is revealing His name to Moses. And that is very significant. As we look at Moses' question, the name that he's asking about God here is much deeper than just knowing the name.

It's about new revelation. Moses wants to know, what is the significance of your name? He already knows the great promises of God to deliver the people out of Egypt.

He says, what does your name mean? What is the essence of your name? In verse 14a, I am who I am is not the proper name of God in my understanding.

[37:08] It's just preparing us. It's almost defining it until it comes later in this text. But when I first opened this passage and I put my finger, I put my finger on that phrase.

That's God's name. But that isn't God's name in our text. These three words in Hebrew is a verb or two verbs there. That isn't a proper name in the text.

There are some complicated issues in this part of Scripture. First of all, how do you translate it? And then once you figure out how to translate it, what does it mean? Those are the two big things to look at in this text.

And some of them are technical, but the practical application, if you can hold on to the technical language, it is greatly helpful for your godliness. It is helpful in your life as a Christian.

We'll look at a few technical things before we get to some of the applications in a moment. We do know in Scripture that we read in Exodus 6 that up to this point in the history of God's workings in the patriarchs and their families, that God was known as El Shaddai, God Almighty.

[38:14] We know that. The patriarchs knew that name. And yet here, Moses is giving something new here. And he's given this explanation. It's really a preparatory comment before the proper name comes in the next part of 14b.

Before the name is actually given, and I believe the name is I Am, and then verse 15, Lord, that becomes so synonymous with I Am that instead of saying I Am in Scripture, when every time you see the word Lord, that is I Am.

That is the proper name, His holy, covenantal, personal name. It isn't generic like Elohim. Did you know that Elohim, it's plural for God?

It could be referring to the God, the Creator. It also is used in Scripture to refer to human beings that act as judges or kings in this world. Sometimes it is used of angelic beings who are serving the purposes of God.

And would you even believe at times this even refers to Baal and the false gods of this world. The context tells you what Elohim means. It could refer to many different things.

[39:20] It often refers to the God that we believe in. But the point is, Yahweh, Lord, I Am, it could never refer to anyone but God Himself, divinity, deity. It's never applied to an angel or a false god or a human being.

It always applies to God and His eternity and His unchangeableness. And so Moses is given, I Am. Tell them, I Am has sent you.

This explanation, I Am who I Am, in some ways, when you come to I Am and Lord, that's just a shortening of that verb phrase that comes through in verse 13.

I Am who I Am. This explains a divine name. In fact, throughout this passage, you may not realize that there's a rhyming of words. We call it punning assonance up to this whole discussion of Moses and God.

The I Am, it's almost preparing you up from verse 10 and following of the explanation of this name of God. It associates God's name with being, not in a philosophical, abstract sense, but God is always with His people in a sense of revealing revelation to them.

[40:28] He is with His people. He is present with His people. And it's almost as if God, here in verse 14a, defines His name, explains His name, before He gives it in verse 14b, I Am.

It's fascinating that God would do that. And I believe when you see this phrase, I Am who I Am, it's clearly meant to allude to His name in 14b, I Am, and even Lord, in verse 15.

It appears that God is involved in the mysterious yet simple wordplay as He reveals His name to Moses throughout this section. In fact, something very interesting in verse 12, when it says, I will be, that's the same word in Hebrew that is here translated, I Am who I Am.

Some commentators can't figure out how to translate this. I Am who I Am, I will be who I will be, I will create what I will create. That's just a sampling of how people have tried to grapple with this text.

But it clearly underscores God's continued blessing and presence with the patriarchs and the descendants who would inherit the promises of salvation. In fact, the word, the name I Am, it comes from the same root of I Am who I Am.

[41:42] And what a beautiful teaching in Scripture is we begin to see the revelation of God's name here in Exodus chapter 3. God is active in history.

He is there to help His people and He's going to redeem them from Egyptian bondage. God reveals His name and then the great Egyptian Exodus is going to take place. When God reveals His name, things, great things are going to happen in Exodus.

In 14b, God reveals His name, His personal name to Moses. I think this is where we see His personal name. And so the new information here, the new information in the Pentateuch up to this point is I Am.

It seems too short, but that's the name of God that is given. This is the only place in the Old Testament where this name is given about God. It never appears in the pages of Scripture in the rest of the Old Testament.

In fact, the I Am statements in Isaiah, which we'll look at Wednesday night, is grammatically a different set of words. It's not the same word that appears here. And again, this is a fascinating part of Scripture.

[42:49] Exodus 6.2, which we mentioned earlier about that apparent tension when God said to Moses, I am the Lord, the I Am, there is a different word. It isn't the one that we hear in this, that we're looking at in our Bibles here, the I Am of Exodus 3.

This is the great I Am statement, the name revelation in Scripture. The most important text in the Old Testament to reveal the name of God. It couldn't be referring to humans.

It isn't referring to angels. It isn't referring to the gods of Baal. It is referring to the great eternal I Am. And it's revealed to Moses as a shepherd in the desert.

God says, tell the people of Israel when they ask you that question, just say, I Am has sent you. And that's all they need to know. The I Am that will act and deliver them from the bondage of Egypt. And so I think that answers the first question. Hopefully now you can take your finger and put your finger in your text of the proper name of God as you find it in Scripture. One reason why all this is important is because there's something called the Documentary Hypothesis.

[43:57] You don't have to know and remember what that is, but what it means is this. Very popular amongst many Christians today. It's been around for a long time and it simply says Moses did not write the Pentateuch.

There are actually four authors that wrote it. It's also known as the J-E-D-P. Four sources. It's called Source Criticism. It is a view of people in this world.

It was made popular by someone named Julius Wellhausen. They reject Mosaic authorship for the Pentateuch. They think this was written after the exile. That's what was actually completed.

I believe Moses wrote this, but the point is when they defend their view here, they believe that this is the first time that this word appears in Scripture of God's name.

I'm not convinced that it's the first time, but the funny thing is they point to the word Lord, which we have already seen appears in Genesis chapter 4. They miss the point. I am is the new name that is given.

[44:56] It isn't just the name Lord. And so, there are people today that hold that view and in promoting their view, they actually miss the name of God in their interpretation.

They've got the wrong name in their thinking. In verse 15, God's name reveals His purpose. He reveals again His name not just to make, satisfy our curiosity. He reveals His name to show us His purpose.

We read in verse 15, God says to Moses, say to the people of Israel, just as I said to Abraham and Jacob and Isaac, this is my name and I shall be remembered by this name forever.

Don't forget it. Parents, you have an obligation to teach your children about the name of God. We can never forget this important name of God.

Consider Psalm 105, the first few verses, O give thanks to the Lord Yahweh. Call upon His name, make known His deeds among the peoples, sing to Him, sing praises to Him, tell of all His wondrous works, glory in His holy name.

[46:03] Jewish tradition doesn't speak the name of God, do they? They don't speak the name Yahweh or Lord. Lord. There was some point in the history of Israel that we don't know exactly when, when they stopped pronouncing God's holy personal name.

They stopped pronouncing it for a variety of reasons. Even if you look at a Hebrew textbook, a grammar today at Westminster Seminary, when you come to the holy name of God, the four letters

that we know as Lord or Yahweh, they tell us don't pronounce it.

They say, instead of saying Yahweh, say Adonai. Why? Why do they do that? It's following a Jewish custom, a tradition. They took vowels from another word and plugged them into Yahweh so that you can't pronounce it.

And so every time a Jewish person would come to this holy name of God in the Old Testament, they knew, don't pronounce that word. And we know that those scribes were very diligent, weren't they? They would sometimes stop as they're penning Scripture and wash their hands and come back and write the holy name of God and then wash their hands again because they had such a reverence for the holy name of God.

Some of them, we believe, even took a bath before and after they would write the name of the Lord in Scripture. They revered the name of God to a very high degree. They wouldn't pronounce it because they didn't want to violate one of the Ten Commandments.

[47 : 27] We know that you don't have to speak God's name to violate that commandment, correct? We can think something wrong and we violated that commandment. I believe Moses called out to the name of the Lord and that through Jewish tradition they stopped pronouncing the name of the Lord.

Yes, they had deep reverence. We live in a day when people have the exact opposite tendencies. We don't revere any names of God, any titles of God, not like them anyway.

Our world doesn't revere the name of God. So we are challenged in living in a day when people belittle the name of God. They make fun of the name of God. And yet many of these Jewish scribes were incredibly diligent in their writing of Scripture.

Scholars tell us today that we don't know exactly how to pronounce this name. They're probably true, right, correct about that. The name Jehovah is not a Hebrew word. We sung about that in one of our hymns.

And that was the result of probably misunderstanding God's holy name. But Jehovah was invented by English translators in history. Nothing wrong with that. We know that that means Yahweh or Lord.

[48 : 41] So in many seminaries in many places today when they come to the name Yahweh in Scripture they won't pronounce it. They will simply pass it by and continue on and maybe that is why Matthew in his gospel says kingdom of heaven instead of kingdom of God.

He is writing to a Jewish audience and they wouldn't use or speak the name of God. I had a Jewish friend in college and his grandmother would write him a birthday card every year and she would say Mike G space D bless you.

She wouldn't use the name of God and the funny thing is she's got the wrong name there. She was supposed to use Lord or Yahweh. Jewish people continue to pronounce the name of God but they do not pronounce the holy personal covenantal name.

So here Yahweh or I am appears for the first time in Scripture the I am verse 14b we must remember in verse 15b the name of the Lord forever.

It's a holy name. It's his covenantal name his personal name that reminds us he has redeemed us and so when we come to the name of the Lord we are to trust in him and we are to remember that we have been redeemed from our sinfulness.

[49 : 49] It should fill us with awe and with wonder as we sing praises to God even this morning a blessing to the people of God. In Exodus 33 we come to realize that God's name explains who he is and what he does.

God's actions explain his name and his names explain his actions. In Exodus 33 Moses asked God to show him his glory and God responded in verse 19 he says I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you what?

My name the Lord and I will be gracious and will show mercy and on whom I will show mercy. This is one of the greatest passages in the Old Testament for beginning to understand the significance of God's personal name I am.

And I believe the authors of scripture just simply say Lord they never use I am again because it is so significant in their thinking. There are four simple applications or implications for knowing the name of God.

When we know God's name it teaches us that he is the all existent one. He is self sufficient in and of himself. His name reveals his lordship over us his authority over us.

[51:03] Again John Piper gave the illustration in his sermon of being invited to the White House by the President of the United States. Let's assume that Ronald Reagan was in power and you really like Ronald Reagan and you're invited by the President to go and to visit him.

We visited the Reagan Library a few months ago. A beautiful place. You would love it. You could spend all day there. There was an original copy of the Magna Carta written in Latin about 700 or 800 years old.

You can go in and look at the museum. There's a replica of his Oval Office just like it was when he left office. Imagine you won't go in and you receive an invitation for the President of the United States and you walk right past him and begin to look all through the White House.

Is that acknowledging who he is? That's not the right way to approach a President isn't it? But Piper challenges his church and his message that we know the name of God here. Sometimes we treat him like being invited to the President and walking right by him.

Being invited to the White House and walking right by him. We show him no respect, no honor in our lives. Because you know the name of the Lord, it should have a great impact on the way that you and I live our lives as believers.

[52:16] The name of the Lord teaches us that God is eternal. He was not created. He has no beginning. When Isaiah picks this passage up in Isaiah 40 and following, the gods of this world, the idols of this world, have genealogies, don't they?

They're named by their makers. Yet God doesn't have a genealogy. No one created him. He is the uncreated God, the eternal one. In fact, his name is so great that in some parts of the Old Testament, we simply said, we fear the name Hashem.

We fear the name of the Lord. Thirdly, the name of the Lord teaches us that he is immutable. He does not change. Aren't you thankful for that? God's name does not change.

We don't have to switch gods like the people of Egypt have done. They worshipped all those gods that the pharaohs imposed upon them and locked them down in idolatry. Yet today, they're not worshipping those gods.

They're worshipping another god, aren't they? They've changed their god, but our god is immutable. Malachi 3, 1, I do not change. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

[53:23] James 1, there is no variation or shadow due to change. Our names change from time to time. If a young lady gets married, her last name changes, doesn't it?

And sometimes things like that happen in our lives. And that's all good, but God's name doesn't change. He reveals information about himself through history, not because he is changing, but because he is revealing new acts of power in the history of his plan to save a people for himself. His name reveals that he is powerful and that he is present. At the exodus, when the people were delivered out of that terrible nation of bondage, the people that lived in Cain and heard, and their hearts trembled within them because of the name of the Lord, they knew that they were next. They knew that this nation of slave people was coming into their land and their hearts trembled and melted like wax. They knew that God's name signified his presence to judge people in their sin. God's name reminds us that he can be present to judge or present to save. Psalm 106 8 says, yet he saved them for his namesake, that he might make known his mighty power.

[54:36] To forget the name of God is tantamount to forgetting all of his redemptive and miraculous works in history. We must remember the name of the Lord.

His covenantal name signifies he has chosen people for himself. Jesus taught us in Matthew 6 that we still honor our Father in heaven, don't we?

When we begin to pray, our Father hallowed be your name in earth as it is in heaven. We continue in this great tradition today and Robert Rayburn makes an interesting note.

He says, nobody today that lives in Egypt don't worship those false gods today. Anton or Amon, all the gods of the flies in the river Nile and so on. If you want to see those gods today, you've got to go to Chicago and go to the Field Museum because that's where they're at.

They're not objects of worship today, they're objects of archaeological remnants from the past. And most people don't even know their names. You have to be an archaeologist, some kind of historian to know those forgotten names.

[55:38] How many people from Canaan are worshipping Marduk today and the gods of the Canaanites? Hardly no one. They've changed their gods, they're worshipping Allah. Yet, there are people today in the Philippines and here in Bremen that are still calling upon the same name that

Moses was given to him, the great I Am.

The singing this morning was wonderful. People here in a land far from where Moses lived are still calling upon the same name of the Lord. His name is worthy to be praised.

Psalms 8 tells us, O Lord, O Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth. 105, give thanks and call upon his name. Psalm 113, blessed be the name of the Lord.

Psalms 138, God has exalted his name forever. And there are many verses in the Psalms, they understand the significance of knowing the name of God. And so in Scripture we are given this name of God.

It is an important name which will be accompanied by further revelation and power in the history of God's plan for his people. And throughout the rest of the Old Testament, God's name, Yahweh, always refers to his divinity, to his deity, to his eternity.

[56:54] It's his covenantal name. And here this Memorial Day weekend, we remember many soldiers that have served or some that are still serving now. And we are thankful, aren't we?

We're thankful for those that have made sacrifices, they have given their life so that we can be free. Many of these people have died, they've sacrificed on the battlefield so that we can have freedom politically in our land.

And yet Jesus comes along and his sacrifice that he gives of his life is far greater than any soldier of any nation. He comes to deliver us from the bondage of sin and give us freedom in Christ.

He is the greater Moses that would come someday and he was born under circumstances. Very similar to Moses, wasn't he? He was born under circumstances when Herod found out about it.

He ordered another baby male genocide in this miraculous supernatural virgin birth. Mary and Joseph call his name Jesus for he will save his people from their sin.

[57:57] The name of Jesus was another new name in the history of scripture revelation. And when the name of Jesus was given and when we know what is promised about him would come to pass we are to expect a great miraculous redemption far greater than anything God used Moses to do in his day and age.

And so we come to our conclusion this morning that Jesus Christ and all these I am statements in the gospel of John. That's not an accident. And whether you are confused or clear about when Jesus says I am the bread of life, I am the way, the truth, I am the door, all of the I am statements in the gospel of John, they come to a head.

In John chapter 8, the passage we read earlier, Jesus is in a dispute with the Pharisees and other religious leaders, and they're arguing about Abraham and who their father is, aren't they?

And they're angry. They don't like what Jesus has been saying and you come into that text and are you over 50? You're not even 50, Jesus. You have a demon.

You're a Samaritan. I mean, how derogatory could you get? And before then, they didn't know the great I am was standing there. And Jesus says, before Abraham was, I am.

[59:12] And today, only Christians call upon I am in the name of Jesus Christ. We are the ones that carry on the great name of God through Jesus Christ.

And he has come and he has accomplished a mighty deliverance. He has come as a new Moses and he has delivered his people from sin. And if you're a Christian here today, we trust in the great I am.

Jesus Christ is our redeemer, don't we? Far greater. Moses needed a redeemer. John 8, 58, it comes to a climax and the Jewish people knew what Jesus was saying.

Some Christians today are confused and they say, well, I don't know if he was making a claim to deity there. We know that because of the reaction that occurs in the very next verse. The Jewish leaders, they knew their Old Testaments well.

When they heard Jesus say, I am, and he stopped, they picked up stones to stone him because they believed he had just committed blasphemy. And so to this day, they will not call upon Jesus.

[60:14] They do not believe he is the God-man that we believe and trust in. If you're here today and you've never submitted your life to the gospel of Jesus Christ, Paul tells us you can call out today in the name of Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.

When you call out to the Father in the name of Jesus, the great I am, God the Father can hear you, he can save you from your sinfulness. You submit to him the perfect king, the great eternal one, you will be blessed forevermore.

And for we that are Christians, we continue to call upon the name of the Lord, whether public or private. You cannot ban a person from praying the name of Jesus in public. When you have an opportunity to do that, pray in the name of Jesus. We cannot be silenced like that, which many of you are fearful of. You have opportunities, young people in college, you pray in the name of Jesus.

He is the great I am. And I pray that God would save many people here, our children, so that more people here in Bremen and this part of God's vineyard will call out to the great name of God.

[61 : 22] Heavenly Father, we thank you for your blessed son, Jesus Christ. We thank you that he comes in the New Testament and fulfills and transforms the great I am statement of Exodus chapter 3.

Lord Jesus Christ, the great I am, was sent to this earth to die for sinners. Lord, he is our redeemer, we trust in his work and what he has done for us.

And I pray, Lord, that you would give us hearts to praise the great I am all the days of our life. And I pray that you would save people here today that have not yet submitted to the great I am, your son, Jesus Christ.

And Lord, we pray that you have blessed this church in the years ahead. We ask all these things in the name of your son, Jesus Christ. Amen.