

I Am Who I Am...I Will Be With You

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[0 : 00] Good morning, everyone. It's great to see you all. For those of you who are new or visiting, my name is Sean. I'm one of the pastors at the church. It's my joy and privilege to preach God's word to you this morning.

We recently started a sermon series in the book of Exodus. Please turn with me to Exodus chapter 3. We will go through chapter 3, verses 1 to 15. Exodus, if you're not familiar with the Bible, is the second book in your Bible, Genesis chapter 3, starting verse 1.

Let me pray for the meeting of preaching about prayer. Father, we humble ourselves before your word again.

Because in it you speak to us. You reveal yourself to us. In it we meet, encounter our Savior, Jesus Christ, who lived and died and was raised for a salvation.

We want to know you more and to love you with our whole heart. So we do pray that by the power of your Holy Spirit, you would work that miracle in us.

[1 : 38] To know and love you. To submit ourselves to you. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian. And he led his flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.

And the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the mist of a bush. He looked, and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed.

Then Moses said, I will turn aside to see this great sight. Why the bush is not burned. When the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, Moses, Moses.

And he said, Here I am. Then he said, Do not come near. Take your sandals off your feet.

[2 : 48] For the place on which you are standing is holy ground. And he said, I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.

And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. Then the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters.

I know their sufferings. And I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey.

To the place of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the other Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. And now, behold, the cry of the people of Israel has come to me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppressed them.

Come, I will send you to Pharaoh, that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt. But Moses said to God, Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?

[4 : 07] He said, But I will be with you. And this shall be the sign for you that I have sent you. When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain.

Then Moses said to God, 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? 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. 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. This is God's holy and authoritative word.

[5 : 21] I don't know if you've ever had the embarrassing experience of running into a friend or an acquaintance and then just completely blanking on their name. A lot of nods here.

So, you should know their name, but you can't remember it in that moment. So, you're using all kinds of roundabouts to address them without awkward having to ask them for their name again. Or maybe, you know, this happened to you. If someone else has done this to you, it's painfully obvious that they don't remember your name. They just keep saying, Oh, hey, brother. Hey, sister. Hey. Whatever way they can, the boy is saying your name. And these experiences are embarrassing to us because our names are important to us.

Our names embody our identity. We who we are. It represents us. So, whether it's true or not, failing to remember a person's name communicates disinterest, perhaps even disrespect.

[6 : 25] This is why whenever you go to Starbucks, the barista asks you for your name so he or she can write it on your cup. And if you have a name that's difficult to spell, they probably ask you, Hey, how do you spell it?

And there's a reason why the baristas do that because they are trained to do that. Not merely to give the right coffee to the right person, but to make the customer feel valued. There's a reason why business schools teach their students how to remember other people's names.

By making associations with the sound and with other things that they know about those people.

Dale Carnegie, the 20th century American writer and lecturer, was onto something when he wrote in his bestseller, *How to Win Friends and Influence People*.

The average person is more interested in his or her own name than in all the other names on earth put together. Remember that name and call it easily, and you have paid a subtle and very effective compliment.

But forget it or misspell it, and you have placed yourself at a sharp disadvantage. The name sets the individual apart.

[7 : 36] It makes him or her unique among all others. Remember that a person's name is to that person the sweetest and most important sound in any language.

If that's the case for us, and we're just mortals, one of 7.753 billion people like us, how much more significant is the name of the only God?

The one who has no peer, no equal. In a mere two chapters, Moses covered 80 years of his life, but here in this arresting passage, the narrative slows way down.

And we get a detailed book that one moment in a day, when Moses was personally introduced to the Lord God and learned his name. And we learn here from his name that the sovereign Lord is ever present with us to deliver us from our slavery.

That's the main point of this passage. The sovereign Lord is ever present with us to deliver us from our slavery. We're going to first look at God's holiness, then God's nearness, and then finally God's name.

[8 : 53] Verse 1 sets the scene. It says, Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian. And he led his flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.

So we know from Exodus 7.7 that Moses was 80 years old when he confronted Pharaoh. So another 40 years has passed since he's been exiled from Egypt. Most of us here haven't lived 40 years.

So that many years and more have passed with Moses, from a worldly perspective, wasting away in the Midianite wilderness. He has grown accustomed to this new way of life.

He's the former prince of Egypt. He's long in the past, a distant memory. He is now a weathered shepherd. He knows the wilderness of Midian like the back of his hand.

He has a wife now, Zipporah. He has two kids, two Gershom and a Lizer. Here he is, as usual, has spent his day wandering around the wilderness, taking his father-in-law's sheep around to find a good patch of grass to feed them.

[10 : 05] And he unwittingly stumbles into Horeb, the mountain of God. This is the same mountain that is sometimes referred to as Mount Sinai. Horeb might refer to the more general region in Sinai, too, the specific mountain.

And Moses didn't anticipate this at all. God is about to interrupt and change his life forever. He says in verses 2 to 3, When we see the word angel, it's natural for us to imagine a figure, human-like figure, clothed in white with some wings flapping in the back, because that's how our culture usually depicts angels.

But the word angel in Scripture, in both Hebrew and Greek, simply means messenger. And this messenger of God can appear in various forms. He's a spiritual being sent by God.

But here, the angel of the Lord is something more than that. Throughout the Old Testament, the expression angel of the Lord occurs 48 times.

And often, this mysterious figure is so closely identified with the Lord God himself that the lines are blurred. For example, in Genesis 16, it says that the angel of the Lord appeared to Hagar.

[11 : 36] But a few verses later, it says, Hagar called the name of the Lord who spoke to her. Hagar, you are a God of seeing. For she said, Truly here I have seen him who looks after me.

In Genesis 22, when Abraham is about to sacrifice his only son Isaac in obedience to the Lord, the angel of the Lord again appears. It interrupts him and stops him in his tracks. And he says, Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him.

For now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me. In Genesis 31, Jacob recalls that the angel of God appeared to him in a dream and spoke to him at Bethel.

And this is what the angel of God said to him. I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar and made a vow to me. The same thing happens when the angel of the Lord appears to Gideon in Judges 6 and to Samson's parents in Judges 13.

In these passages, the angel of the Lord is nothing less than the appearance of the Lord God himself. And this raises the question, why then is the Lord referred to as the angel of the Lord?

[12 : 56] The Old Testament maintains this tension to convey two very important truths. On the one hand, God reveals himself to his people and sometimes appears to them in very personable and visible ways.

On the other hand, God is so transcendent and glorious that no man can see him in his fullness, in his full essence. For example, in Genesis 16, 13, I mentioned Haggad said, she saw God.

Genesis 32, 30, Jacob says, I have seen God face to face. And yet we know from Exodus 33, 20, you cannot, God said, you cannot see my face for man shall not see my face and live.

Even in the New Testament, 1 Timothy 6, 15, 16, it says, God is the blessed and only sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see.

So by using the expression, angel of the Lord, and the Lord, side by side, the biblical authors are conveying these two realities. The angel of the Lord does not exhaust all there is to know about the Lord.

[14 : 21] However, he is nevertheless a true and real representation of him. We can't be sure because scripture doesn't explicitly say this, but some people think that the angel of the Lord in the Old Testament is the pre-incarnate appearance of the Son of God.

The appearance of Jesus, before he took on human flesh. The angel of the Lord, as I mentioned, can appear in various forms, and here he appears in the form of fire.

It says in verses 2-3 that he appeared in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. But Moses was greatly intrigued by it because even though the bush was burning, it was not being consumed.

Fire is often used to depict God throughout the Old Testament. Remember the pillar of fire, that God appears in the wilderness to guide Israelites, to give them light. And I think there are several reasons for the biblical author's penchant for this use of the fire.

And the way God appears to people in fire is that first, to the naked eye, fire is immaterial. It doesn't have a body. It's incorporeal. It doesn't have flesh.

[15 : 32] And for that reason, it is an apt representation of God who, according to Isaiah 31, verse 3, is spirit, not flesh. Second, fire produces heat.

It burns. In describing God's fiery jealousy for his people and his righteous judgment of the wicked, scripture repeatedly calls God a consuming fire.

Fire consumes the dross and defines the gold. The Lord consumes his enemies and defines his people. Third, the fire produces light that illuminates.

1 John 1, 5 says, God is light. And in him is no darkness at all. The Lord shines his face upon us. In the presence of God, there is nothing hidden.

Everything is known. Everyone is known. And with the light of his wisdom and salvation, the Lord enlightens us. He enlightens our ignorance. He illuminates our darkness so that we might know him and serve him and walk in his ways.

[16:42] So it says in verse 4, when the Lord saw that Moses turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush. Moses, Moses. And he said, here I am.

This is a standard pattern in scripture, when God appears and addresses someone. In Genesis 22, 11, the Lord appears to Abraham and calls out to him twice, Abraham, Abraham.

And he replies, here I am. Same thing with Jacob in Genesis 46, 2. And in both of those instances, God intervened at very critical junctures of these patriarchs' lives to directly guide them and to influence them.

And so he does here, he does the same thing here with Moses. And in the New Testament also, we see the same pattern with Jesus when he calls out Luke 10, 41.

Martha, Martha, you're anxious and troubled about many things, but one thing is necessary. Or in Acts 9, 4, when he cries out to Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting?

[17:45] When someone's addressed by the Lord twice like that, there's a sense of earnestness and urgency. Moses. Moses. Moses didn't know God.

As you'll see later, he asked God for his name. Sure, he had the Hebrew parents, but he was adopted by Pharaoh's daughter, as you recall. He was raised in the Egyptian court.

He knew that the Israelites were his people, but he didn't really know their way of life. He didn't really know their God. He knew of him, but the Lord knew Moses. He knew his name.

And God introduces himself to Moses in verse 6, saying, I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Moses, in that address, is instantly known by God and connected to the covenant promises that he had given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

And notice it doesn't say, I am the God of your fathers, like usually it says. It's like the God of your father, Moses. Your father, Moses, Amorim. The singular.

[18:54] Remember, Moses has been dealing with that identity crisis of sorts over the past chapter. We saw that he grew up as an adopted princeling in Pharaoh's court.

Acts 7.22 tells us that Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and he was minding his words and deeds, and yet Moses did not quite feel like an Egyptian, like he belonged to the Egyptian palace.

He still considered the Hebrews, the Jews, his people. And after he murdered an Egyptian, Pharaoh, his adopted grandfather, tried to kill him. And so Moses was rejected by the Egyptians, but he was also rejected by his fellow Hebrews.

He scoffed at him and said, Who made you a prince and a judge over us? You may be an Egyptian prince, but you're not our prince. So when Moses fled Egypt as a future and ended up in the wilderness of Midian, Jethro's daughters called him an Egyptian.

Among the Egyptians, Moses felt like a Hebrew, and among the Hebrews, Moses felt like an Egyptian. Here's a man dealing with imposter syndrome. A man caught between two identities, a phony.

[20:17] His name was Ab Moses, drawn out of the water, a son of nobody, a fatherless one, a found one. But look at what God says to him.

He knows his name, Moses, Moses. He says, I am the God of your son. The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.

God's saying to Moses, I know who you are. You are mine, and I am your God. Moses was just looking for grass, but God was searching him out.

God had a plan for him, not to just be a shepherd of sheep, but to be a shepherd of the nation of Israel. Perhaps some of you are not yet followers of God, followers of Jesus, and you might have your own plans for your life, but I can tell you that God has a plan for you.

You are living your life without reference to God. You are pursuing your own purposes and priorities, but do you know that God has created you for himself? Do you know that you are known by God?

[21:45] And do you hear the voice of the Lord calling your name? But after calling out Moses, Moses, God said something unexpected.

Usually, when someone calls out your name and gets your attention, you expect that person to walk over to you or at least motion you to come closer to you.

Hey, come. I want to talk to you. Hey. But that's not what God said. Look at verse 5 with me. Then the Lord said, Do not come near.

Take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground. In many cultures, including the ancient Near Eastern culture, taking your shoes off, like taking your hat off, communicates respect.

It's a sign of humility. But there's something more than that going on here. It's not just about showing respect. God gives the reason why he must take his sandals off. He says, For the place on which you are standing is holy ground.

[22 : 50] The ground beneath the flame of the Lord has been made holy by the presence of the Lord. In the Old Testament, God's people were taught to distinguish between what is holy and what is common.

Between what is clean and unclean. And the holy place, the tabernacle, the temple, the holy vessels used for God's worship and sacrifice, and God's chosen holy people were specially set apart for God.

They were consecrated for Him. That's what it means to be holy, set apart. And because the holy God has graced this plot of land with His presence, it's no longer common, ordinary ground that anybody can just walk on.

God is holy. And that means He's not like us. One theologian describes God as holy other.

That means He is not just a superlative version of humanity. He's not merely quantitatively different from us. He's not just more of the same.

[24 : 01] He is qualitatively different from us. He is different altogether. He's not like us. He's set apart from us. He's not common like us.

For this reason, God cannot let Moses approach Him on His own terms. Moses must take his sandals off. The initiative lies with God and not Moses.

This is the same reason why we begin our worship each Sunday with the call to worship. To acknowledge that God's sovereign initiative is what allows us to come gather in His presence and worship Him.

The first words of our worship is not our words, it is God's words who calls us to Himself. God is not someone we can speak to or approach glibly or flippantly.

He's not someone we can trifle with. He will not be mocked and He cannot be fooled. God says, Be holy for I am holy.

[25 : 09] Leviticus 11 in Acts 1.13 says, God is up purized and to see evil and cannot look at wrong. He is the one who dwells in unapproachable light before whom all our hidden sins and shortcomings, all of our faults and foibles, all of our past, present, and the future are nakedly exposed before His light and fire.

He's the consuming fire who will condemn sinners and consume all unrighteousness. And if you are playing or flirting with sin in your life, if you are taking God for granted, if you are not honoring God as holy, you should tremble and fear.

He said in verse 6, that's exactly Moses' response. Moses hid his face for he was afraid to forget God.

Moses knew instinctively that if he saw the Lord, he would perish. That's God's holiness. God is not only set apart from us, but that He's the God who draws near to us.

And we see that in verses 7 to 12. Remember at the end of chapter 2 how he said that God heard the groaning of Israel, God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob, God saw the people of Israel and God knew those verbs are repeated here.

[26 : 51] And in chapter 2 God remembers His people and here He begins to intervene on behalf of His people. And so it says in verses 7 to 8, that the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Asia and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters.

I know their sufferings and I have come down to deliver them out of the hands of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey.

Notice the repetition of the pronoun I. It demonstrates God's personal commitment to His people. I myself will do this. I will fulfill the promise I made to Abraham to bring my people out into their slavery in Egypt.

The Lord who dwells on high comes down to lift us up out of our slavery. And this quality. This reminds us again that God is not detached from us.

He's not disinterested in us, in our plight. Our God is not distant, isolated from our sin and evil and wickedness of this world. He draws near to us and He intends to dwell with us.

[28 : 07] God says Canaan is a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey. Honey is rarely mentioned throughout the Old Testament, actual honey from the bees. And the word used here for honey is related to the Arabic word which refers to date honey.

It's the sweet syrup produced from grapes, figs, and dates, and fruit of the carrot tree. So that's most likely what's in view here. Milk represents the best fruit of animal husbandry, and honey represents the best fruit of horticulture, the two things that Israel thrived on.

And Canaan was a different kind of land. It didn't have a prominent source of fresh water like the Nile in Egypt. And so from a purely agricultural standpoint, it was actually not good land.

But that was exactly God's point. God was bringing them to a land where they will have to depend on Him, where He will dwell with them and provide for them.

It says in Deuteronomy 11, 9-12, it's the land that the Lord swore to your fathers to give to them and to their offspring. It's a land flowing with milk and honey. For the land that you are entering to take possession of is not like the land of Egypt from which you have come, where you sowed your seed and irrigated, like a garden of vegetables.

[29 : 25] But the land that you are going over to possess is a land of hills and valleys, which drinks water by the rays from heaven, a land that the Lord your God cares for.

The eyes of the Lord your God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year to the end of the year. The promised land was designed to make the Israelites dependent on him.

It was the most suitable land for cultivating that trust in relationship with him. When God brings us into relationship with him, when he saves us, God's goal is not to make us self-sufficient independent people.

He instead takes us to a place of dependence and surrender, for that's where true freedom is found. Because that's the proper relationship between creator and creature, between father and children. And amazingly, to do that, God says he will use Moses. He says in verse 10, come I will send you to Pharaoh, that you may bring my people, the children of Israel out of Egypt.

[30 : 36] But Moses objects in verse 11, who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt? From Moses' perspective, this is a very sensible objection.

Think about it, he's a fugitive from Egypt, a criminal wanted for murder. In the previous chapter, Pharaoh tried to kill him, so he says, who am I that I should go to Pharaoh?

Moreover, Moses was rejected by the Israelites themselves. And so Moses asks, who am I that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?

I'm neither the prince of Egypt, nor the prince of Israel, I'm just the lowly Midianite shepherd. Who am I to do any such thing? You've got the wrong meaning.

But Moses is also completely missing the point. Because what did God say to him earlier on? I have surely seen the affliction of my people, I have heard their pride, I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them.

[31 : 47] God said, I will do it. He's not sending Moses to do it on his own. So God's answer to Moses in verse 12 is simple but powerful.

He says, but I will be with you. Notice what God doesn't say to Moses. He doesn't say, hey, Moses, stop doubting yourself.

Be confident. Choose confidence. He doesn't say, hey, Moses, you're actually very qualified for this.

Remember, you were instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians. You were actually quite mighty in words and deeds. God doesn't say, Moses, this won't be as hard as it sounds.

Pharaoh, he talks a big talk, but he's soft. You start applying some pressure, and he's just going to crumble. No, God neither pumps up Moses, nor belittles the task before him.

[32 : 53] He simply assures him, I will be with you, and that's enough. The exodus of Israel from Egypt will not be about Moses, and his competency will be about the Lord and his might.

And after this exchange, Moses realizes that who am I was the wrong question. So he changes his question. He asks God, who are you?

If you're the one that's going with me. In verse 13, he says, then Moses said to God, if I come to the people of Israel and say to them, the God of your father has sent me to you, and they ask me, what is his name?

What shall I say to them? Names, especially in the ancient Near East, were not merely things that people called each other, not a moniker merely, but something that represents the person's

character and identity.

And throughout Genesis, God revealed himself to his people with various names and titles. He revealed himself to them as El Elyon, God Most High.

[34 : 01] In Genesis 14, 18 to 20, he revealed himself to them as El Roy, God Who Sees, in Genesis 16, 13, and as El Shaddai, God Almighty, in Genesis 17, 1, and as El Olam, in God Everlasting, in Genesis 21, 33, these names all reveal various aspects of God's character, his nature, and so when Moses asks God for his name, he's not just trying to figure out what he's calling.

He anticipates that the Israelites will ask him, what is his name? Moses, what do you know about our God, the God of our fathers?

Can you tell us his name? Do you know his character, his nature? How can you assure us from what God has said to you that he will indeed deliver us? And God gives a magnificent answer in verses 14 and 15.

I am who I am. Say this to the people of Israel. I am has sent me to you. 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 him. This is my name forever, and thus I am to remember to all generations.

[35 : 25] The patriarchs, as you will see in Genesis 15, 7, if you have seen Genesis 15, 7, 20, 13, already were aware of this name. They addressed him as such, the Lord. But as Exodus chapter 6, verse 3 makes clear, they never understood the fullness of this name.

God never unpacked for them the full significance of this name as he does here. So this is a defining moment in history of Israel and indeed in the history of the world, when the Lord God discloses his actual name.

name is rendered in our English translations as the Lord. But that's not what the Hebrew word for the Lord.

The Hebrew word for the Lord is Adonai, which some of you guys are familiar with. But that's not what it says there. The Lord is in all caps to indicate that this is the four consonant name of God, sometimes called the Tetragrammaton, because it's four letters, four consonants.

It occurs almost 7,000 times in the Old Testament. But then why does our English translation say Lord instead? That's because around 300 BC became customary among the Jews when reading the Old Testament to substitute the title Lord, Adonai, for the name of God.

[36 : 55] Just out of sheer reverence for God, lest they take up God's name in vain. So the name that God revealed to his people became an ineffable name, an unutterable name.

And eventually the knowledge of the name's pronunciation was forgotten and the vowels from Adonai were added to the four consonants which led to the hybrid form Jehovah.

Jehovah. But the original pronunciation was likely closer to Yahweh or Jehovah. Archaeologists have discovered inscriptions with various forms of this name, including short and abbreviated ones. So a lot of Hebrew names contain the name of the Lord. Isaiah is one of them. His Hebrew pronunciation is Yesh, Yesh, Yesh, Yesh, Yesh, Yesh, Yesh, Yahu. That's Isaiah.

Yahu saves. But the greater weight should be given not to the name's pronunciation but to its actual meaning. The name of the Lord is not a magical incantation that you need to say just right to get the right thing to happen.

[38 : 09] To use illustration, the original name that I was given at birth in Korea was Shin-hyun. Most of you, even if I pronounce that name for you a hundred times, will never be able to pronounce it correctly.

So when my family moved to the U.S., because of my dad's job, his Korean-American boss met with me and our family, and he asked me what my name was, and I said, my name is Shi-hyun, and he said to me, Shi-hyun, Shi-hyun, Shawn.

You should go by Shawn, because no one would be able to say her name otherwise. And when I was naturalized as a U.S. citizen, I made Shawn my first name, and my Korean name, my middle name, and I answered to both.

They're both my true names. There are 51 million people living in South Korea who can pronounce my name perfectly, but none of them know me like you all know me.

And that's what's more significant. Not can you pronounce God's name, but do you know him? Do you know his name? Do you have a relationship with the living God?

[39 : 29] And there are several things that God's name reveals about himself. First, his name means I am, who I am, which can also be translated, I will be who I will be.

The Hebrew tense used here has a timeless sense, so it can be used to refer to the past, the present, or the future, and you see examples of that all throughout Scripture. And that is completely intentional.

It communicates the fact that God never changes, and he is the same yesterday, today, and forever. God, and what a comforting thought that that is.

He is, he was, he is, and he will be. This is what theologians call God's immutability. He does not change. Another way to describe that is that God is faithful.

He is always true to himself. He is always faithful to his character. He never deviates from who he is. Fallen human beings can fold under the pressure and act out of their character.

[40 : 40] They can act in a way that is inconsistent with their convictions. I have done that. But God never does that. He is always true.

He is always faithful. And that means he is always reliable, always trustworthy. Human beings are faithful. They change.

They are for you one day and then they are against you the next day. They go back on their word. But Jehovah never goes back on his word. He never changes.

Second, I am who I am, means that God is absolutely sovereign. Theologians call this God's aseity. He is independent. He is self-existent. All of creation has a derivative and dependent existence. Because we have been created by God and are sustained by God, but God is self-existent.

[41 : 44] He does not owe his existence to anything or anyone else. He does not owe his allegiance to anything or anyone else. He is not subject to anyone else.

Yahweh defines himself. we are defined by others. Yes, human beings. We're defined by other people and other things. Who gave birth to us? You're so-and-so's son, so-and-so's daughter. What schools did you go to? He's an alumnus or a graduate of this school. What generation were you born in? Is generation Y, generation X? Where do you work? But young God is self-existent and independent and for that reason God is the only truly sovereign being in the entire universe. Because to be sovereign means to have supreme authority, to rule oneself, to have no other authority higher than oneself. But there is no such human being on earth.

Xi Jinping is not sovereign. He is not sovereign. Vladimir Putin is not sovereign. Joe Biden is not sovereign.

[43 : 03] None of them is truly independent. But the Lord is not accountable to anyone else. He is not beholden to anyone else.

He is not confined by anything else. He owes no one anything. That's what it means to be God. I am who I am.

Third, I am who I am means that God is present with us. The words and phrases I am who I am, I am, Jehovah, all play on the Hebrew verb to be, which is connected to God's promise to his people in verse 21.

I will be with you. God's name contains a promise that he will be with his people.

It captures the promise of Isaiah 43 that we said about in that first song. Fear not for I have redeemed you. I have called you by name. You are mine. When you pass through the waters I will be with you.

[44 : 14] And through the rivers they shall not overwhelm you. When you walk through fire you shall not be burned and the flames shall not consume you. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.

It contains the promise of Psalm 23 verse 4. Even though I walk through the valley and shadow of death, I will fear no evil. Why? For you are with me.

If you have entrusted your life to God, if you have confessed the name of Jesus and clasht your allegiance to Him, you are never alone.

God says, I will never leave you nor forsake you. Even when your own father or mother forsake you, the Lord will not forsake you.

In the midst of your darkest hours and hardest seasons, I don't know what you're all going through, but God does. And in the midst of those things, even before seemingly insurmountable obstacles that seem to pile on in front of you, in your relationships, in your work, in your own personal struggle for holiness, you are not alone.

[45 : 35] God is with you. The great I am. the Lord is I will be who I will be.

God makes himself known to us by his acts of deliverance. And so he says in Exodus 75, Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord when I stretch out my hand against Egypt and bring out the people of Israel from the mountain.

And so likewise, we get to know the Lord like never before in his ultimate and ultimate act of redemption through his son, Jesus Christ.

Remember in Genesis 15, 13, God promised Abraham that after 400 years he will bring his people out of their oppression in a foreign land.

People refer to the time period between the end of the Old Testament and the beginning of Jesus' life as the 400 years of silence. God intervened in the time of Moses and so Jesus comes as the Son of God intervened and said in John 1, 8, no one has ever seen God, the only God, who is at the Father's side.

[46 : 49] He made him known. In other words, Jesus is the only God who makes his Father known to us.

In Jesus, the Word made flesh, we see the invisible God. God. There's a reason why Hebrews 1, 12 says of Jesus, you are the same. Your years have no end.

Hebrews 13, 8 describes Jesus as the same yesterday and today and forever. These are all allusions to the name of the Lord. There's a reason why Revelation 1, 4 says that Jesus is the one who is and who was and who is to come.

And in Revelation 1, 8, the Lord Jesus says, I am the Alpha and Omega who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.

The Lord God has come to us in the flesh in Jesus Christ. That is unbelievable. that's why Matthew begins his gospel by telling us that Jesus is called Emmanuel, which means God with us.

[48 : 17] And guess how Matthew concludes his gospel? The very last verse, Matthew 28, 20, Jesus' promise, behold, I am with you always to the end of the age.

If there's anything you know about our God, you should know that he is with you and that he will never forsake you. John 8, 58, Jesus says to the Jews, truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.

And they understand exactly what he is saying because they pick up stones and try to kill him for blasphemy. Remember the statements of the gospel of John.

What did Jesus say? I am the bread of life. I am the light of the world. I am the door. I am the good shepherd.

I am the resurrection and the life. I am divine. I am the way and the truth and the life. And no one comes to the Father except through me.

[49 : 34] Apart from Jesus, we should cower and tremble in fear and never dare to approach the Lord. We should hide our faces and flee for our lives because he is the consuming fire.

we're sinners. We are unworthy. We deserve eternal punishment in hell. But Jesus came down to us.

Jesus took our place and he died for our sins on the cross. And then he rose victoriously from the grave. The great I am did that for us so that even though he told Moses do not come near.

Now he tells us James 4 8 draw near to God. Hebrews 4 16 says let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in times of need.

this is not a fringe aspect of his character.

[51 : 03] This is his name. This is who he is. He's the one who is with you. He's the one who was and is and is to come.

And if you put your faith in Jesus you will never be destroyed. Let's pray. Lord, thank you for revealing yourself to us.

what grace, what condescension, what mercy that the great I am, the Lord God would come down to us.

second person of the treaty, the Lord Jesus Christ, our King, Lord, help us to remember your promise.

Walk with you always to keep in stead with your spirit. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[52 : 23] Amen. Amen.