

Exod 03-03-16a

As we continue our worship this morning, let's take a moment before we turn our attention to the Word of God to turn our attention to our own souls, to examine ourselves, to ensure that we are in the faith, that we have acknowledged before God any sin that we might have committed, sin in our lives, sin in our thoughts, in our motivation, in our recent actions. We know from our study in Hebrews chapter 6 of those foundational truths that regardless of how we may err and come short of the glory of God, there is a remedy, there is cleansing available. The doctrine of baptisms, as it says in English, or the washings of teaching, as it says in Greek, that are available to us as a part of God's grace begin with the cleansing that is mentioned in 1 John 1.9 and in the Psalms and many other places in Scripture, where as we bring our soul before the Lord, we have our conscience sprinkled and we have our bodies washed with pure water.

It is our opportunity here to pause and lay aside the burdens and the cares of the day and of the week and avail ourselves of God's grace through His Spirit and through His Word. Shall we pray? Father, thank you for allowing us to continue to live in this age and in this time in which you have placed us. We know that in the reaches of eternity past, you chose each one of us to dwell in this generation, in this country and to be located geographically where we are at this moment.

Our resources are replete. We have so many ways in which to come to understand your Word. It has never before been available in such a multitude of translations, with such a multitude of commentary and a multitude of teachers, a multitude of ways in which to study.

We have electronic media. We have every conceivable means of having our souls nourished and brought to maturity through the ministry of your Spirit and the power of your Word. We pray this morning that our study and our fellowship together will move us toward that goal.

We pray that the Spirit will find our hearts and souls willing, like a well-plowed field in which to plant the seed of your Word so that it will grow and bear fruit that reflects your glory and brings joy to the heart of our Savior, who died to not only deliver us from the lake of fire, but to deliver us from this present evil age. We ask your blessing on us. Give us understanding and the ability to remember and heed the things that we find in your Word in the days ahead.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. For our scripture reading this morning, turn with me to Psalm 78.

Psalm 78. In the New King James Version, this psalm is titled, God's Kindness to Rebellious Israel. The Hebrew ascription at the beginning is a contemplation of Asaph.

Asaph, of course, was one of the choir masters, if you will, one of the music leaders in Israel in the days of David. And his work is well attested in the hymnal of Israel. You find many psalms by Asaph.

But this is a mass feel or contemplation. It was probably set to a tune that allowed one to dwell on the words. Some of our hymns really have a foot stomping, knee slapping kind of a rhythm to them, and you spend more time trying to keep up with the tune than you do really thinking about the words.

Other songs are set at a slower tempo, like Great is Thy Faithfulness, or Abide with Me, or Break Thou the Bread of Life, and some of these that really the music focuses your attention on each word of the song. And my suspicion is that when we get to the Millennial Kingdom and get the chance for the original artists to favor us with a rendition of these songs, and the tunes that went with each one of these are restored, we will find that the mass feels, the contemplations, have a slow and very beautiful tune that allowed the original hearers and singers in Hebrew to meditate on the content. So we have this ascription at the beginning of many psalms, and it gives us a little bit of preparation.

Even though we can't hear the tune yet, we know that this is something to meditate on, to go slow, and try to absorb the meaning of each line. So this masculine contemplation of Asaph in Psalm 78 begins this way. Give ear, O my people, to my law.

Incline your ears to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in a parable. I will utter dark sayings of old, which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us.

We will not hide them from their children, telling to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he has done. For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children, that the generation to come might know them, the children who would be born, that they may arise and declare them to their children, that they may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments, and may not be like their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation that did not set its heart aright, and whose spirit was not faithful to God. The children of Ephraim, being armed and carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle.

They did not keep the covenant of God. They refused to walk in his law, and forgot his works and his wonders that he had shown them. Marvelous things he did in the sight of their fathers, in the land of Egypt, in the field of Zion.

He divided the sea and caused them to pass through, and he made the waters stand up like a heap. In the daytime also he led them with the cloud, and all the night with a light of fire. He split the rocks in the wilderness, and gave them drink in abundance like the depths.

He also brought streams out of the rock, and caused waters to run down like rivers. But they sinned even more against him, by rebelling against the Most High in the wilderness, and they tested God in their heart, by asking for the food of their fancy. Yes, they spoke against God.

They said, can God prepare a table in the wilderness? Behold, he struck the rock, so that waters

gushed out, and the streams overflowed. Can he give bread also? Can he provide meat for his people? Therefore the Lord heard this, and was furious. So a fire was kindled against Jacob, and anger also came up against Israel, because they did not believe in God, and did not trust in his salvation.

Yet he had commanded the clouds above, and opened the doors of heaven, had rained down manna on them to eat, and given them of the bread of heaven. Men ate angels' food. He sent them food to the full.

He caused an east wind to blow in the heavens, and by his power he brought in the south wind. He also rained meat on them like the dust, feathered fowl like the sand of the seas. And he let them fall in the midst of their camp, and all around their dwellings.

So they ate and were well filled, for he gave them their own desire. They were not deprived of their craving, but while the food was still in their mouths, the wrath of God came against them, and slew the stoutest of them, and struck down the choice men of Israel. In spite of this, they still sinned, and did not believe in his wondrous works.

Therefore their days he consumed in futility, and their years in fear. When he slew them, then they sought him, and they returned and sought earnestly for God. Then they remembered that God was their rock, and the Most High God their Redeemer.

Nevertheless they flattered him with their mouth, and they lied to him with their tongue, for their heart was not steadfast with him, nor were they faithful in his covenant. But he, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity and did not destroy them. Yes, many a time he turned his anger away and did not stir up all his wrath.

For he remembered that they were but flesh, a breath that passes away and does not come again. How often they provoked him in the wilderness, and grieved him in the desert. Yes, again and again they tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel.

They did not remember his power, the day when he redeemed them from the enemy, when he worked his signs in Egypt and his wonders in the field of Zoan, when he turned their rivers into blood and their streams so that they could not drink. He sent swarms of flies among them, which devoured them, and frogs which destroyed them. He gave their crops to the caterpillar and their labor to the locust.

He destroyed their vines with hail and their sycamore trees with frost. He also gave up their cattle to the hail and their flocks to fiery lightning. He cast on them the fierceness of his anger, wrath, indignation, and trouble by sending angels of destruction among them.

He made a path for his anger. He did not spare their soul from death, but gave their life over to the plague and destroyed all the firstborn in Egypt, the first of their strength in the tents of Ham. But he made his own people go forth like sheep and guided them in the wilderness like a flock.

And he led them on safely so that they did not fear. But the sea overwhelmed their enemies, and he brought them to his holy border, this mountain which his right hand had acquired. He also drove out the nations before them, allotted them an inheritance by survey, and made the tribes of Israel dwell in their tents.

Yet they tested and provoked the Most High God and did not keep his testimonies, but turned back and acted unfaithfully like their fathers. They were turned aside like a deceitful bow. For they provoked him to anger with their high places and moved him to jealousy with their carved images.

When God heard this, he was furious and greatly abhorred Israel. So that he forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent he had placed among men, and delivered his strength into captivity and his glory into the enemy's hand. He also gave his people over to the sword and was furious with his inheritance.

The fire consumed their young men and their maidens were not given in marriage. Their priests fell by the sword and their widows made no lamentation. Then the Lord awoke as from sleep, like a mighty man who shouts because of wine, and he beat back his enemies, he put them to a perpetual reproach.

Moreover, he rejected the tent of Joseph and did not choose the tribe of Ephraim, but chose the tribe of Judah, Mount Zion, which he loved. And he built his sanctuary like the heights, like the earth which he has established forever. He also chose David his servant and took him from the sheepfolds, from following the ewes that had young he brought him, to shepherd Jacob his people and Israel his inheritance.

So he shepherded them according to the integrity of his heart and guided them by the skillfulness of his hands. This is a long psalm, but I wanted to read it in its entirety because, like the hymns that we sang this morning, it bears directly on our study in Exodus chapter 6. In this psalm, we have seen a rehearsal of God's deliverance, His patience with the people of Israel, their disobedience, their recalcitrance, their wandering and apathy, God's discipline that brings them back, and then they fall away. God's discipline brings them back, they fall away.

And yet, through all, God provides for them. He provides food for them, not necessarily the food of their choosing, but it is their necessary food. And when they insist on something else, God allows it to come.

But then, while it's still between their teeth, they are struck down. You remember the quail episode that we'll see not far into the future in Exodus. But here's the point.

If you turn back to Exodus chapter 6, you will remember that in the end of chapter 5, the people are getting real upset with Moses because he went in and told Pharaoh, let my people go for three days to worship. Which, by the way, I think the speculation about where is Mount Sinai, is it down Jebel Musa at the very bottom of the Sinai Peninsula? Is it one of the other mountains

that has been conjectured? The most recent theory that has some aspects that favor it is a mountain that's actually in the northeastern area of the Sinai Peninsula, which has a pillar of 12 stones, similar to what the Bible says was set up by Moses. It has a large area where a huge number of people could encamp.

There are signs of encampment in that great plain. But people have difficulty figuring out, well, where exactly was this? And to understand it, we would have to know the typical routes of travel about 3,500 years ago in that area. Because if you look on a map of the Sinai Peninsula, where Midian is on the other side of the extension of the Red Sea that goes up in that direction, and then you have the other extension going up the other way, it looks like the long way around to stay close to the coast and go all the way down and all the way back up.

Why not just cut straight across? Well, it's a horrible arid desert now, but we don't know exactly what the conditions were like in those days. Most of that region, the climate was different, the average annual rainfall was different in those days, and what is now desert was actually able to sustain nomadic life in ancient times, 3,000 to 4,000 years ago. The children of Israel lived out there 40 years.

At any rate, the clue we have is that when Moses goes to Pharaoh and communicates the word of the Lord, let my people go a three-day's journey into the wilderness, where would they be going? What direction? What had God told Moses at the burning bush? This will be a sign to you. You will worship God on this mountain. So what is the distance from the border of Egypt to Sinai? It's a three-day journey.

It would take the people three days to get there, and if you look at how much ground they actually cover, which we'll see here not too long ahead, the mass of people can't travel near as far in three days as Moses on foot or as Aaron on foot was able to do. They get about halfway down the eastern shore of the Red Sea in three days to arrive at the springs in Gedi and various other things. There are notices that we'll see in Exodus that tell us how far they got, but you've got a couple of million people trekking down that way with all of their flocks and herds, and you can't travel nearly as quickly as a single man on foot.

I say all of that to say this. Pharaoh rejected Moses' request, who Moses himself is speaking for God, and Pharaoh's response is not only to say no but to greatly increase the hardship on the Israelites. The principle we saw last time is that it often gets darker and darker and darker right before the dawn, just at the time we think we have been stretched to our limit.

If there was ever a period in my life when I experienced this, it was my military career, especially the first four years when I was a midshipman. I was sure that I could do no more, I could learn no more, I could remember no more, I could go on no more, and yet, despite the fact that I concluded that in July of 1975, I actually graduated in May of 1979 or June of 79, four years later, having thought the whole time that I couldn't go on another day and another step, and somehow the grace of God sustained me for four entire years. That is often our experience.

All of us can think about times when we were sure we could not continue, and yet we have. Well, the people say, you have brought great trouble on us, Moses. We were better off before you came, and they're already starting to kind of fade, and the program isn't even underway yet.

But think about it. Think about that we know in hindsight what they're going to be going through as they travel in the desert and face enemies of various sorts, stresses of various sorts, and if they can't trust God in this relatively... I mean, it was a serious thing at the time. They were in slavery, they were in bondage, they were working under great hardship, and now the straw is no longer delivered and they have to find it themselves.

Well, this is a pretty egregious thing if you're a brickmaker, but it pales into insignificance when you're facing armies of armed opponents when you are out in the desert and there is no water, and God is giving the people an additional little faith test here. What do you do before you work out? Stretch? Warm up? Do a few calisthenics? At least that's the conventional wisdom. I read something recently that said it's all a waste of time.

You never know what it is that can be believed when it comes to what you should eat and how you should exercise. But most people warm up so that you don't get cramps, you don't get shin splints, you stretch, you get some blood pumping in your muscles before you call upon them to convey your body great miles of distance or push a couple hundred pounds of weight around. You warm up.

Well, this is a warm up. God just doesn't take the children of Israel cold out of Egypt and then start facing them with all these tests. They get some warm up tests.

They've had a warm up in calling on God in their time of oppression. And their oppression gets worse. Well, this is getting the circulation going.

Are you going to trust God or not? Let's get in the habit of saying well, God hath said I will deliver you with a mighty hand. I will take you to a land flowing with milk and honey. You believe it or not.

If you believe it, then you'll shut your mouth and find some more straw and keep the bricks going and watch for the deliverance of God. But it's a hard thing. And the people in Israel understandably were unaccustomed to looking to God for this kind of deliverance.

It's a kind of a new thing. It's a new aspect. Well, in case you think I'm just sort of making this up, look at Exodus chapter 6. You remember, because Moses goes to God and he says Lord, why have you brought trouble on this people? Why have you brought trouble on this people? Moses knows where the trouble came from.

He doesn't say Lord, why has Pharaoh brought this trouble on the people? Lord, why have I brought this trouble on the people? The people say Moses, you've brought trouble on us. Moses says Lord, you brought it on them. Why is it you have sent me? Since I came to Pharaoh

to speak in your name, he has done evil to this people.

Neither have you delivered your people at all. And Moses sounds a little sassy here, doesn't he? He's kind of saying Lord, all that big speech you gave at the burning bush, well, I came here and did exactly what you said. And look at what happened.

You have not delivered your people at all. So, in chapter 6, the Lord said to Moses Moses, you'll stand right over here. I've got a giant thunderbolt that is about to turn you into your individual discreet atoms.

The Lord is patient and gracious. And he says to Moses Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh. For with a strong hand he will let them go and with a strong hand he will drive them out of his land.

And the idea here is we remember that the hand is the symbol of power and strength of your activity. The hand was anointed with blood in the consecration of the priests in the consecration of the cleansed leper. You remember that blood was applied to the earlobe to the thumb and to the toe i.e. your head, your hand and your foot.

And it speaks of of course the earlobe is what you take in you sanctify it and consecrate it. You cut off things that lead to bad thinking. You don't mill around in crowds.

Like I wouldn't go to France and listen to all the French talking about what a bad thing it is for us to pick on Iraq. I would not sit and watch television that constantly tries to make immorality and carnality of all kinds and sorts normal and the object of humor and light-hearted banter about people engaging in all forms of despicable behavior. And yet the media treats it as though well, don't you see this is normal? Don't you see it's fine for a girl to live with a homosexual man, will and grace? The commercials for that show I've never seen the show but the commercials alone turn my stomach.

And yet this is a popular comedic offering on television. And this has been going on for a long time. You have the friends who sleep with each other and other people and get married to lesbians and all kinds of gross unnatural behavior is treated as normal and humorous.

Well, what is this? It's what you take in with your ear. That's what the ear symbolizes. What do you allow to come in through the gate? People that expose themselves to this kind of thing on a regular basis, it will corrode your thinking.

Anything evil that you constantly expose yourself to, if you do not flee youthful lust, if you do not get away from things that defile, look at our verse on the wall, finally brethren, whatsoever things are, and you don't see evil and sin and immoral anywhere in that list from Philippians. Well, same thing with the hand. What does the hand represent? This is the strength.

This is what you do. Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Whatever you put your hand to do, God says, I will bless when you're walking in the narrow way.

So here he says, Pharaoh is going to let them go with a strong hand. What does that mean? He is going to put his energy into getting these people out. It's not just a matter of granting permission and Yul Brynner sitting on the throne and thinking about it and his poor dead son and then kind of waking up out of a funky mood and saying, wait a minute, where did those Israelites go? He says, he is going to be actively saying, you all get out of here.

With a strong hand, he will let them go. With a strong hand, he will drive them out of his land. Now there are some who look at this and say that this is God's strong hand on Pharaoh because God has said over and over, with his strong hand, he will deliver the people and that this is God's hand.

There is nothing in the Hebrew text to distinguish whose hand this is. It says a strong hand. So I think if you say, well, is this God's hand or is this Pharaoh's hand? The answer is yes.

God's strong hand is on Pharaoh and Pharaoh's strong hand is going to push the people out of the land. Both are true. He will drive them out of his land.

I favor slightly that this is Pharaoh's hand, especially because of the way the second phrase is constructed in Hebrew. With a strong hand, he will drive them out. The normal connection of ideas here would be that what do you drive things with? You drive it with your hand.

God could have easily said, with my strong hand, if he wanted to distinguish his own. So I think that God's hand is mashing Pharaoh and Pharaoh is pushing on the people to try to get that pressure off of him. Now look at verse 2. This is one of the famous verses in the Old Testament, especially in the Pentateuch, when it comes to buying stock in companies that manufacture ink.

Because this verse has generated more articles and more books and more controversy and more speculation. Especially in the last 125 or 130 years. Exodus 6, verse 2, has been the tinder under the cooking pot that lit it all into flame.

God spoke to Moses and said to him, I am the Lord. You wouldn't think that this would be that big a deal, but it is. God spoke to Moses and said to him, I am the Lord.

What's interesting about this verse is you remember that God has already made his formal introduction and shown his ID card. I got in so much trouble with my friend in the Marine Corps, Don Geving, because although the circumstances were serious, we had a good visit back right after the Oklahoma City bombing. He had an office in the Murrah building that was destroyed.

Thank the Lord he was not there at the time. He was out performing his duty of supervising recruiters. But many in his office were there and several were killed, including a lieutenant that I knew there.

But I was down there with him afterward and we were picking through the rubble of that building with the commandant of the Marine Corps. As we traveled from the hospital to the

building and to one place and another with the commandant, we were with him all day long. I don't know if you know how it is, but after the newness of that wears off and we've been with General Gray for a number of hours, conversation can range far and wide and one thing led to another.

The upshot of it is I asked the commandant if I could see his ID card. Never seen an ID card for a commandant before and I wondered if it had some kind of magic chip that led him into secret places in the Pentagon or had some kind of holographic foil for the Joint Chiefs or something. And so he showed me his ID.

So I basically carded the commandant of the Marine Corps, which is not probably something you should do. But that card identified him. Every active duty Marine, every reserve Marine, and Navy and Army for that matter, Air Force even, have an ID card.

It identifies them. It has their name in their social security number. It says who they are.

God has already given his ID card to Moses at the burning bush. What did he say? Moses says, Who shall I say has sent me? What shall I tell them when they say, what's his name? What did he say? Do you remember the Hebrew word? Yeah. I am.

This is the first person, Sakaal active, from Hawa or Haya, depending on how you want to vocalize it and how back you go. It's an archaic noun. As you can imagine, the verb for to be is going to be one of the oldest ones in history.

And in fact, it's the first word that's ever spoken. The first word that's recorded in the Bible as having been spoken is let there be. And it's from this very same verb.

Let there be what? Light. This is the form of Haya. Well, Yitya says, I am the Lord.

How did we wind up with Yahweh and from that the mispronunciation based on the vowel points of Adonai and the German pronunciation where you take the Y and make it a J. So instead of YH, you have JH. And because Germans can't say a W, think about Colonel Klink or someone. Can he say water? He can't.

He says water. All of their W's are V's. And so the W turns into a V and you get JHVH.

You put the vowels from Adonai, which is the way the Masoretes pointed the Tetragrammaton, which was a holy word never spoken. So anytime a scribe ran across it in vocal presentation in reading the scriptures, he would substitute Adonai where it said Yahweh. Well, the A and the O there is where we get Jehovah from the Germans, which is a non-word actually, but it has served its purpose for a few hundred years.

But we know now that God's name is Yahweh. Well, how does that relate to YH? Well, here in verse 2, God spoke to Moses and said to him, I am the Lord. Ani Yahweh.

YHWH. That is the third person form of this same verb. If you looked at this in some other

context, you would say He is.

This is an archaic form from Hayah. When you say it in the first person, you say YH. I am or I will be.

The imperfect form. Here you have Yahweh. It's He is.

So you're talking about someone in the third person. So, if He had used the verb twice here, He would have said YHWH, which would be kind of tough to say rapidly. But many times, the verb to be is understood, especially if you use a pronoun like ani, which is emphatic.

God says, I myself am He is. I am He is. If that makes sense.

Well, why all of the dead seas have spilled ink over this verse? We'll go on to verse 3. I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob as God Almighty, but by my name Yahweh, I was not known to them. Your King James and New King James and most other English translations distinguish the appearance of the Tetragrammaton, YHWH, or Yahweh, in the Hebrew text by putting the word Lord, which is sort of respect to the Masoretes who would say Adonai. Yahweh, of course, doesn't translate to Lord.

Adonai would, from Aramaic, actually. But this is LORD in small caps. If you've never noticed it or not, when you look at your Bible, you'll see that LORD is in small caps.

Any time you see that particular configuration that represents the Lord's name, the Tetragrammaton, the unspoken name of God in later Jewish tradition, that's what's used here. It says, I am the Lord. I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as God Almighty, but by my name LORD, I was not known to them.

Well, this is where the issue arises, because, if you look back in Genesis, we do have Yahweh being used. What is this other name that is mentioned here, where he says, I was known to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as God Almighty? You may or may not have a footnote, depending on which Bible you use here, but this is El Shaddai. God Almighty is El, El meaning God.

It's not like El Sid or something. It's not a Spanish name. El Shaddai is God, and Shaddai is translated Almighty.

Now, you may have heard the song El Shaddai, El Shaddai, and you've heard a lot of people in modern days say, well, in fact, I don't often ask for a show of hands, but just indicate to me in some visual way. Have you ever heard Shaddai translated other than Almighty? Have you heard that it means something different? The many-breasted one? That is a more modern application. You think, well, I seem to have sort of a gender issue.

Since God is presented in the masculine, how would He be the many-breasted one? They say, well, this is euphemistic for the fact that He does lots of providing. He is the great provider. But, I don't care how you slice that.

It's just weird. Now, there are actually ancient Canaanite statues and ancient Canaanite deities that show a goddess of fertility with rows and rows of breasts. Like, I don't know, 15 or 20 breasts all on their chest.

Now, this would be that sort of a multiple. The Hebrew word for breast is Shadd, S-H-A-D. And so, they say, well, see, Shaddai, more than one.

He's the many-breasted one. Well, let me lay that to rest so that we don't have to revisit it anymore. That is not the etymology of this word.

Modern liberal scholarship to the contrary. They derive this from a... In fact, this term has been explained a lot of different ways. There is an Arabic term called Shaddau, S-A-D-D-A-U or Shaddu, S-H-A-D-U that is derived from a Babylonian word for mountain.

And another common liberal interpretation of God Almighty, as we find it here, is that it was an evolution of religious thinking and belief in these nomadic tribes and that they used to be up in the mountains and so they had the God of the mountains, the God of thunder, the God of storms. He's up on high. Where does Moses meet God at the burning bush? He's up on a mountain.

He's the God of the mountains, the God of the heights. so William F. Albright is one of the foremost Old Testament scholars of the last generation. This is the view he held.

And I'll give you a little quote from one of his followers and contemporaries. When the Hebrews left Mesopotamia, they brought with them a religion which in many respects was like the nature religion of the Fertile Crescent. Apparently their chief god was known as Shaddai, or El Shaddai, which means the one of the mountains.

A mountain deity or storm deity usually known by the title Baal among the Canaanites. Of course, Baal in Canaanite means Lord. In fact, in Old Semitic it means Lord.

You even have Baal in Hebrew. But this came to be used as the idea that he was some sort of humanly conceived mountain god, one of many in the land. But it does not hold up in the light of Biblical evidence.

First of all, it assumes that monotheistic religion evolved. The funny thing about that is, look at all of the history of religion down through the ages. How many religions have evolved to having only one god? None.

There are no monotheistic religions except the Judeo-Christian and its derivatives. Islam, as much as one might hate to admit it, is actually derivative from Judaism. They would refute that and probably put a jihad on me for saying so.

But think about it. Muhammad in the 6th century would not have come up with Islam if there had not been a Bible. If there had not been an Abraham, Isaac and Jacob recorded in Scripture.

Because they had no independent witness to those facts. It is derivative. Just like Mormonism and all the Latter Day Saints and these that come and knock on your door.

A lot of the cultish offshoots are derived from Christianity. They very much lost something in the translation. So, the point here is you have to believe in some sort of evolution to monotheism which is unparalleled anywhere in human history.

Because a belief in a single god did not evolve. In fact, it was revealed. And that is why it stands out from all the other religions.

And why did this not happen anywhere else? Why did not you wind up with just one god in Canaan? Or just one god in Egypt? Or just one god amongst the Hittites? Or one god amongst the savage tribes up in the north? It did not happen anywhere except in Israel. And there is no attribution anywhere in the writings of ancient Israel of there ever being more than one god. Well, there is a couple of other minor views, but this idea of Shaddai meaning the many-breasted one actually was never very widely held until it got published in the Schofield Bible.

And, the Schofield Bible, that thing was so popular, and rightly so, but if there is ever anything that is amiss in it, why it gets propagated unto the ages. You can still buy Schofield Bibles all over the earth. And this is what really popularized the El Shaddai many-breasted one idea.

It is in the old Schofield Bible, signifying nourishment and strength, and that this is how God revealed himself to the patriarch. Why do we care about this? Why is it so important to know the difference between these names? Well, God spoke to Moses and said, I am Yahweh. I am He who is.

I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as El Shaddai. And by my name Yahweh, by my name He is, I was not known to them. Well, we have a little bit of a problem with this because you can go back to scriptures like Genesis 17-1, when Abraham was 99 years old, the Lord, Yahweh, appeared to Abraham and said, I am El Shaddai.

Walk before me and be blameless. You have both names used in that one verse. It doesn't say El Shaddai appeared to him and said, I am El Shaddai.

It says, Yahweh appeared to him and said, I am El Shaddai. So did Abraham not know that that was Yahweh? You go to Genesis 28-3 where you have El Shaddai used and you say, now see, here's the patriarchs being used with El Shaddai. But you also have Yahweh used over and over again in the Genesis account.

Anytime you have that LORD in all caps. So we know that they did know him by this name. Jacob, when he's blessing his descendants says, may the Lord bless you.

May the Lord be with you. May the Lord multiply you. And he uses Yahweh.

So unless there's been a word substitution and we don't have an exact quote, the patriarchs did

know God by this name in the sense of knowing that name. So what does this verse mean? I was not known to them. Just even in English, you can see this.

Look at verse 3. By my name Yahweh, I was not known to them. He doesn't say they did not know my name Yahweh. Never heard it.

This tetragrammaton thing is being sprung on you for the first time here at the bush in Exodus 6. He says, I was not known to them by means of that name. In other words, what that name represents was not fully revealed to the patriarchs. The patriarchs saw God with an emphasis on what is represented by Shaddai.

Shaddai is from Shaddad which is a verb that means to be strong to be mighty. And almighty is a good translation of it. God almighty is El Shaddai.

The patriarchs saw God in his strength even when he delivered them it was a deliverance by might, a deliverance by intervention, a deliverance by a revelation in a dream or by causing a destruction or granting a victory. But what does Yahweh signify? I am. I continue on.

It signifies presence. It continues not just deliverance like, oh I see you have a problem. I'm going to reach down.

I'm going to intervene and pop you out of Egypt or I'm going to pop you out of a famine or I'm going to pop you out of a military conflict with the kings of the plain. I'm going to pull you out of Sodom before I destroy it. I'm God almighty.

I can do things by my might. Where is the sense of presence? Where is God walking with Abram day by day by day? He walks with him for a brief time and says I'm going to go look down at Sodom. Where is his presence? Where is the I am aspect of the Lord with the patriarchs? That's all about to change, isn't it? Who's going to be in the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night? Who is going to dwell in the sanctuary and in the holy of holies and maintain a presence? He's not the I was.

He's the I am. This is the basis of Jesus' argument that we saw recently in Luke. He is not the God of the dead but of the living.

He is a continually present God. He is not a God who intervened at times past and then went off and got busy elsewhere. We're going to explore this a little more in detail when we come back, but here's the main idea for our first lesson.

God has many aspects. God has many attributes. We may read about them.

We may have an academic understanding of them, but we will come to experience them, to know here. He says they don't know me by that name. I had students at Wakefield Academy who didn't know that I was a major in the Marine Corps Reserve.

They didn't know me by that name. They knew me. They might have even seen that I had that

rank assigned to me in some of my correspondence, but they had not seen me in uniform, marching troops or giving orders or managing a platoon or a company.

They didn't know me in that role. They didn't know me exercising those functions. It doesn't mean I didn't have them or that they didn't know I bore the title, but they had not seen... Patty didn't know until she came down to the drill center one time when I was finishing up giving orders to my platoon, and when she walked in, she didn't know who was talking because in my military voice, I didn't sound the same.

She did not know me in that role, although she was well aware when she packed me off the drill in my uniform. This is the idea. The children of Israel are going to come to know God in a way they have not known Him before.

It's not that they never heard the tetragrammaton. It's that the kind of deliverance God is going to invoke and the kind of presence He is going to maintain is unique. That is the kind of presence and the kind of deliverance that is available to us.

God is still the great I Am. He is still the ever-present God. We have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

If we are obedient and have God's Word and keep it, we have the indwelling of the Lord Jesus and the indwelling of the Father. All three members of the Trinity are said to be with us. He is with us.

I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. He didn't say that to the patriarchs. He says it to national Israel.

He says it to Joshua. He says it to in his role as Yahweh. That is the role in which we enjoy fellowship with God.

Do not think that God is far off. He is near. He is with us.

He is the I Am. We are going to explore this in a little more detail when we come back, but let's pause here and take our break.