

THREE DIMENSIONS OF THE WORD OF THE CROSS

Peter Hay, prepared for word ministry, 27 June 2021

Transcription of recording, slightly edited

Introduction

Hello, everyone. In our last session, we considered the separating effect of the word of the cross in our lives and our families, and in the church.

Over the next couple of weeks, we will continue to look at how we relate to the cross. We will consider how, through the word of the cross, we obtain the promised blessing of sonship that Paul described as 'entering Christ's rest'.

So, let's begin this series of lessons by reminding ourselves of God's Everlasting Covenant. This will be familiar to most of you, but it would be good to just 'step' these blocks out.

The Everlasting Covenant – I will be your God

The Everlasting Covenant is the desire of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit to create, and then to bring to glory, a multitude of sons who are born of Their life, and are joined together in Their fellowship.

The communication of this desire is summarised in the Scriptures as, 'I will be their God and they shall be My people'. Gen 17:7. That statement occurs throughout the Scriptures. We will consider some of them.

In that statement, the Lord was speaking to Abraham, and gave him the covenant of circumcision.

He made the statement, 'I will be your God', and connected it specifically to the Everlasting Covenant. The Lord said that that is the covenant.

Other Scriptures include Exodus 6:7; Ezekiel 36:28; Jeremiah 7:23; Jeremiah 31:33. That is where the connection of that statement is to the New Covenant.

And the fulfilment of the Everlasting Covenant is at the beginning. This is the beginning statement. This is where we come from – from Their desire for a multitude of sons.

Its fulfilment is so beautifully articulated at the conclusion of the book of Revelation. 'Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.' Rev 21:2 to 4.

'And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God".' Rev 21:3. This is a beautiful statement.

Understanding the name of the Lord

Now, to understand how God communicates and joins us to His Everlasting Covenant, it is important that we understand His *name*.

The first person to whom God revealed His name was Moses. Moses was not the first person who interacted with God, of course, but he was the first person to whom the Lord revealed His name. And we know that this happened at the burning bush.

Now, the burning bush is a fire, isn't it? This is important in understanding how the Lord reveals, or makes known, His covenant to us.

'And God said to Moses [speaking from the burning bush], "I AM who I AM".' This was in response to Moses asking God what His name is.

'Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, "I AM has sent me to you".' Exo 3:14.

'Moreover God said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: 'The Lord [Yahweh] God [Elohim] 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 this is My memorial to all generations' ". Exo 3:15.

Three aspects of the name of God

This is an amazing statement, and there is a great deal that we could say about it. But we will focus on the reality that when the Lord revealed His name to Moses, there were three aspects of His name.

There is 'God'; that is, in Hebrew, *Elohim*.

There is 'the Lord', which is Yahweh.

And there is 'I AM'.

The way in which He reveals His name to us is the same way that He revealed Himself to Moses, and also the way that He revealed His name from the cross.

He comes and first reveals Himself as I AM.

And then, from I AM, we are introduced to Yahweh, where we see *Elohim*.

So He reveals God, Lord, and I AM, but these are revealed to us in a particular order: I AM, Yahweh, *Elohim*.

His name revealed as *Elohim*, three Persons

In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word for 'God' that is used in these passages is *Elohim*.

Elohim is the plural form of the word for God, which is just El – E, l – so *Elohim* literally means 'Gods'.

This reveals that God, *Elohim*, is three Persons, or three identities – the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

And They are co-equal. There is no hierarchy where the Father is the 'boss', and the Son is next, and then the Holy Spirit is subordinate to the two; that is nonsense.

It is three, co-equal Persons; *Elohim*.

Now, the name *Elohim* does not only reveal the specific and individual identities of the Godhead.

It also reveals the *infinite diversity of the capacity of God*. So, every capacity that could possibly be, which is infinite in expression, is captured in the name *Elohim*.

His name revealed as Yahweh, oneness of fellowship

The Hebrew word for 'Lord' is 'Yahweh'. The name Yahweh reveals the complete *oneness* of the *fellowship* of the Three.

They are one Spirit and one life. Their oneness is the *fruit* of how They live, which is by *offering*.

And this offering is not what They can give to each Other. The offering is that two *lay down Their lives* to reveal the other one; and each two does that for the other one of Them. The Scriptures depict this 'oneness'.

You can imagine that every time two of the Godhead are laying down Their life to reveal one, all you can see is the *one life* that They share, and the *one Spirit* which is being revealed by that one offering.

There are three identities but, when we look at the Three, we don't see three. We see one, because They are *completely* offering.

And Their oneness is because the three of Them are offering in a *particular* way.

This is difficult to express but, as soon as we see three, there is also one, because the way in which we see Them is that They are *offering*.

And when we see Their offering, we see three unique identities making the offering.

This *perpetual offering* is described, or depicted, in the Scriptures as a 'raging fire engulfing itself', and it is never exhausted or quenched. Eze 1:4.

Then it is revealed that that raging fire that Ezekiel was looking at was speaking about the Lord – the glory of Yahweh. Eze 1:28.

The point that is important to note is that when Moses spoke to God, God *spoke* to Moses *from a burning bush*. A *word* came from the Three, *Elohim*. But it also came from the *fellowship* of Their oneness, which is a raging fire, which was the great spectacle of the burning bush.

His name revealed as I AM, making Himself known to us

The third dimension of the name of the Lord is 'I AM'. I AM is the name by which Yahweh *Elohim* – or Lord God – makes Himself *known* to us.

That is what happened with Moses. God spoke to him *from the bush*, which is the fire of Yahweh's *fellowship*.

So, there is *Elohim* and Yahweh; and when He speaks, He reveals Himself as 'I AM who I AM'.

I AM is the name by which Yahweh *Elohim* makes Himself, His *fellowship*, and the three Persons of the Godhead, known to the sons and daughters of men.

Why does He do this? It is because He wants to *draw us to Himself*. That means that He wants us to participate in and to fully realise our participation in His Everlasting Covenant.

Remember, the Everlasting Covenant is His desire for a multitude of sons to be brought to glory, or to be born of His life and joined to His fellowship.

He comes and reveals Himself as I AM so that we can *meet Him and know Him* as Yahweh *Elohim*.

The amazing thing is that this revelation of I AM came from Their *offering* – from the burning bush; it is a *word*. He *spoke* from the burning bush,

saying, 'I AM who I AM', so it was a word *coming from* Their offering.

But that word was actually ministered *by offering*.

So, we have to *receive it in offering* too.

When Moses desired to know who was speaking to him, God revealed His name as I AM from the burning bush.

The burning bush represented *the fire of offering*. And God said to Moses, and He says to us all, 'I am here to meet you.'

He comes to meet us, and that is why He proclaims Himself as I AM. 'I am here to meet you and to make Myself known to you.' This is so beautiful, isn't it? God, who has created the heavens and the earth, comes and says, 'Here I am.'

It is like what happened in the garden of Eden. He came and met them as I AM, every day, at the tree of life. And I half suspect that the tree of life looked a little like the burning bush.

In the garden, He came and said, 'Here I am' - and there was no Adam and Eve, was there? They had hidden themselves.

So His statement, 'I AM', was then changed to a question, 'Where are you?'

And sometimes the Lord does come calling, 'Where are you', doesn't He? But the amazing thing about the cross is that He comes and says, 'I am here', so that you and I can be *joined to the fellowship of Yahweh*.

So, why does God first reveal Himself in this way? Why, 'I AM'? If His name is Yahweh *Elohim*, why does He reveal His name first as I AM?

It is because, as I AM, He is able to *meet us and to be met by us*.

Think about this: Yahweh *Elohim* is not bound by time. He obviously has no beginning and no end, so time is not a feature of His existence or expression.

But *we* are completely created, and in time. So, when He comes to meet us as I AM, He is meeting us in our time, and is connecting us to Himself, who is outside of time. This is why it is I AM, *right now*.

Without this initiative of Yahweh to make Himself known to us by revelation as I AM, it is

impossible for us, who are finite creatures, to know and interact with Him who is not only 'infinite'. He simply *is*; and He has no beginning and no end.

Do you see that I AM is the point of *connection* between where we are, and Him who is outside of time?

It is the proclamation, if you like, of the word that breaks in *today*.

The fullness of the Godhead in Christ, revealing I AM, revealing Their name

To bring Their Everlasting Covenant to pass, it pleased the Father, Son and Holy Spirit for all the fullness of the Godhead to dwell in the Son.

'For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.' Col 2:9.

This is how Yahweh reveals Himself to us as I AM. That is the revelation of His name.

We understand, then, that He comes so that we can come and meet Him, can be joined to the fellowship of Yahweh, and can *know* the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

How does He do that? He does it *through Christ*.

Moreover, the Son received from the Father, by the Holy Spirit, the 'name above every name'. That is Their name. He received it as His name, and the fullness of the Godhead was in Him, bodily.

So, we could say that when He was brought forth by the Father, the fullness of Yahweh, as the oneness of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit who are in agreement, was fully expressed by Him.

And this actually happened before the creation of the heavens and earth.

When He came in the flesh, He was the embodiment of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit - of Yahweh - in the flesh. The fullness of the Godhead dwelt in Him, bodily.

He also received Their name as His name so that, through the proclamation of His name - the Lord Jesus Christ - through His offering, everything that They desired and covenanted together is being proclaimed to us so that we can receive it and be joined to what They purposed for us.

This is the Everlasting Covenant that is Their discussion and desire for a multitude of sons who are in fellowship with Him. They are coming to

meet us through I AM, who is Jesus Christ, in whom the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily.

He reveals His name. And, as He proclaims, or manifests, Himself to us, we receive the word of Their covenant, which is *birthing* us, and also *joining* us to Their fellowship.

Christ made known as I AM on the cross, drawing us to the Father

Now, how does Jesus Christ make Himself known to us if He is the embodiment of the fullness of the Godhead?

He comes and reveals Yahweh to us.

How does He make Himself known to us so that we are joined to that one life and one Spirit?

Jesus gave us the answer. ‘Then Jesus said to them, “When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I AM”.’ Joh 8:28.

So, I AM is His *name*, and it *reveals His covenant*.

But we interface with it and we *know* Him as I AM when He was lifted up on the cross. The cross, then, is absolutely fundamental to us receiving Him as I AM.

Jesus said to them, ‘When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will *know*.’ Paul said, ‘I have forsaken everything that I may *know* Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I might attain the resurrection life in my mortal body.’

That *life* is the very life of Yahweh.

‘When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I AM [He], and that I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things.’

The Father taught Him by His word, and it is the word of the Father by which we are born. So whatever is being revealed by Christ reveals the Father.

This is the means by which we are being brought to the Father as His sons.

‘And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him. As He spoke these words, *many believed in Him*.’ Joh 8:29-30.

Coming, receiving and knowing Christ as I AM

Now, if you are a believer, you believe that Jesus is I AM. That is what John explained. When Jesus said those words, ‘many believed in Him’.

And to be a believer is actually to believe that He is I AM.

As we *receive* Him and *come* to Him, the implication is that we *know* Yahweh, and we know the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

But we can only know Him as we interface with the way in which He reveals Himself, or manifests Himself, which is *on the cross*.

Amazingly, the thief on the cross had this very revelation - and Jesus didn’t even speak a word to him!

The thief walked along with Him on the journey. He was probably in the court with Jesus where Pilate was; he was one of the criminals there. He certainly walked from there to the cross with Jesus. With the other thief, he blasphemed Him and cursed Him. And he saw Jesus being belted, abused and mocked.

But then, when Jesus was lifted up on the cross - Jesus said, ‘When I am lifted up, you will know that I AM’ - that man saw and interfaced with Yahweh. I AM was revealed to him.

How do we know that? ‘Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, “If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us”.’ Luk 23: 39.

That is a particular type of ‘gospel’, isn’t it? That is the gospel that ‘Jesus is going to make my life fantastic’.

This man believed a particular gospel about what the Messiah would be like, and he said that Jesus couldn’t be the Messiah, because this terrible event was happening. That is a false gospel. He was an unbeliever.

The confession of lordship; the fear of God

‘But the other answering, rebuked him, saying, “Do you not even *fear God*?”’

The point is that the fear of God was fundamental to his receiving this illumination, which was the revelation of I AM.

'Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward for our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong.'

Then he said to Jesus, "Lord". Now, no-one can say 'Lord', except *by the Holy Spirit*. It is the Holy Spirit who brings the revelation of Christ, or proclaims, the word of the cross by which we are drawn to see Him lifted up.

This man was literally lifted up with Him. He was on the cross and, as Christ was lifted up, He was revealed as I AM.

As this man saw Him as I AM, who did he see Him as? He saw Him as the Lord. He saw Him as Yahweh, Lord.

That is the confession of *the lordship of Christ*. The confession of the lordship of Christ is not merely that He is awesome and we are nothing.

The confession of the lordship of Christ is 'I am meeting I AM, who has come and met me as He was lifted up before me, publicly portrayed as crucified'.

Receiving the word of the Everlasting Covenant; our name as a son of God

This man said, 'Lord, remember me.' This means that he realised that his name as a son was in Jesus.

Why is that amazing? It is because, as I AM was revealed to him, the Everlasting Covenant desire of God for that man to become a son of God in fellowship with Him, was illuminated to him.

He saw the Lord; and what did he see? He saw that Everlasting Covenant desire, which is His name, in fellowship with the Lord. 'Remember me when You come into Your *kingdom*.'

And he received the word of the Everlasting Covenant, which is our name as a son of God, where we dwell forever in that fellowship.

Do you see that this is what that man was illuminated to? This is 'the word of the cross'.

That man touched the blessing that was promised to Abraham - not just touched it; he *embraced* it.

Receiving Him as I AM – receiving the messenger and their word of Christ crucified

Christ is lifted up and meets us as I AM through the ministry of His word through messengers of God who are part of an *aggelos* presbytery.

Through the proclamation of the gospel, which they *exemplify* in their own lives, Christ is publicly portrayed as crucified among their hearers.

Christ is not publicly portrayed because a messenger 'paints' a good picture or an effective picture of Christ.

Christ is publicly portrayed as crucified because those ones have received that gospel, and exemplify it. They demonstrate it, because it is effective in their lives.

Jesus said this is how we receive *Him* - by receiving the messengers and their word. Jesus said, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, he who receives *whomever I send* receives Me.' Joh 13:20. He said, in effect, 'This is how you receive Me. And this is how you receive the Father, who is the source of your name and your destiny as a son of God.'

'Whomever I send' is the one who proclaims the word of the cross through which Christ is *publicly portrayed as crucified*.

When you receive them and their message, you are receiving Christ who is lifted up as I AM.

And when you receive Him who is lifted up as I AM, what are you receiving? You receive *the word of your sonship*, which is from the Father. 'I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me.'

The threefold entry into the fellowship of Yahweh - the way, the truth and the life

Christ introduces Himself to us as I AM so that we may obtain the sonship that the *Father* predestined for us, in *Christ, by the Holy Spirit*.

So, when you see Him as I AM and He reveals, or manifests, or makes Himself known to you, it is not just that He is saying, 'I AM.'

He is saying, 'I am the Way, the Truth and the Life'.

That is the threefold entry into the fellowship of Yahweh where your sonship has its expression forever; 'I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.'

Through this statement, Jesus made known the threefold conditions for *birth* as a son of God, and for *entry* into fellowship with Yahweh, forever.

As we read through the Scriptures, we see this threefold provision of way, truth and life, everywhere.

For example, Jesus said that we must be born to *see* the kingdom, and then we are to enter the kingdom by being born of *water* and of the *Spirit*.

So then, 'seeing', 'water' and 'Spirit' correspond to 'way', 'truth' and 'life.'

The way, the truth and the life; faith, hope and love – entry and participation in the Everlasting Covenant

The apostle Paul said, 'Now abide faith, hope and love'. 1Co 13:13. He said, 'these *three*'. 'Now abide faith, hope and love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.'

Both the *entry* into the kingdom of heaven, and the *abiding* of faith, hope and love, correspond with the sequence of the way, the truth and the life.

Perhaps one of the most helpful explanatory statements about this threefold entrance that is revealed when Christ is lifted up and revealed as I AM, is in the first letter of John.

'Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who *believes* that Jesus is the Son of God?' 1Jn 5:5 -8.

We have read before that Jesus proclaimed that 'when you lift up the Son of Man you will *know* that I AM'. And, 'As He spoke these words, many *believed* in Him.'

So, 'Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who *believes* that Jesus is the Son of God?'

To be an overcomer in the world, we have to receive Jesus who is I AM and is being revealed as I AM through the word that is proclaimed by His messengers.

'This is He who came by water and blood - Jesus Christ; not only by water, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that bear witness in heaven.'

Remember, 'I am the Way, the Truth and the Life'.

I AM reveals the *entrance* into the fellowship of Yahweh, where we have our *participation* in that fellowship. That is our *access*.

It also reveals the contribution of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit to Their covenant purpose.

As John said, 'There are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit.'

The Father is the source of 'faith'. That is the 'way'. It reveals the *obedience* that we are to follow.

The Word reveals the 'truth'. This is the Son.

And the Holy Spirit is the One who manifests the 'life'.

'And these Three are *one*.' That refers to *Yahweh*. 'And there are three that bear witness on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three *agree as one*.'

Now, 'the way, the truth and the life' is the full and only provision for our participation in God's Everlasting Covenant. We cannot enter unless we are anchored, or secured, by this threefold cord.

To seek entry into heaven any other way is futile, and leads to corruption and damnation.

No-one can circumvent the way, the truth and the life. No-one can enter heaven except by coming through the Door, who is Christ.

So we have to understand how we interface with these three elements.

In the next session, we will particularly focus on the expression of the way, the truth and the life as they are expressed as *faith*, which is expressed through obedience; the *fear of God*, which is the purity and judgement of God – this is the connection to *truth*, and *love*, which is poured into our heart by the Holy Spirit.

This is the life that we are to live. We live by love.