

אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In Exodus chapter 3 we have the record of the Moses, forty years after his escape from Egypt, living as a shepherd in the land of Midian, and how his attention was arrested when he saw a bush blazing with fire, yet apparently not being consumed. Moses decided to investigate this remarkable occurrence and why it was that the bush was not burned up. As he drew near he heard a voice coming out of the bush instructing him not to come any closer as the place on which he was standing was holy ground, and he was instructed to take off his shoes. The voice continued, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob”. Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God. (Exo 3:6) God then told Moses how he knew about all the suffering of the Israelites whom he described as ‘my people’, and how He intended to end their captivity by bringing them out of Egypt to a very fertile land. God then instructed him to go down to Egypt and confront Pharaoh, and lead God’s people out of the land of their oppressors. Moses, despite his anxiety, was assured that God would accompany him in this undertaking and as a token of his success in doing so, he was given the assurance that when he had led his people out of Egypt, he would bring them to the same mountain where he was currently located. Moses though had another question, and asked God, “When I come to the children of Israel and say, ‘the God of your fathers has sent me’, they will ask me, ‘What is his name? What shall I say? God replied, “I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, ‘I AM’ hath sent me unto you. (Exo 3:14). The Hebrew text renders this אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה

Rendered in the English alphabet this becomes, “EHYEH ASHER EHYEH”. Hebrew text is read from right to left whereas the English reads from left to right. Bro. Thomas received a lot of criticism regarding his knowledge of Hebrew and Greek. However reviewing the printed text of his early magazines I am satisfied that this may actually have been down to the printer’s unfamiliarity with the Hebrew letters which in the old letterpress typeface, made from lead, each letter was cast back to front. It is easy enough to read English text backwards but Hebrew text is a different matter as evidently John Thomas’s printers discovered. Modern technology has certainly been a blessing in this respect.

So the phrase 'eyeh asher eyeh' only occurs once in the Bible. In the KJV it is rendered 'I AM THAT I AM' that is in the present tense. Bro. Thomas disagreed with this translation and correctly discerned the tense as being in the future case, that is in English, 'I will be who I will be', a statement which is therefore prophetic. The statement itself invites a response of a question, 'What will you be?'. One response is provided in the title 'Yahweh Elohim' or 'I will be mighty ones'. As indicated in our previous consideration on 'Elohim', the will of God is carried out by thousands of agents who in this Hebrew word are designated mighty ones, but as we have seen they are otherwise described as angels. But there is another word often used in connection with God's purpose with the earth and with mankind, who clearly has been gifted with abilities far higher than those pertaining to the animals, although in certain respects mankind reveal themselves as being no better than beasts. What then does God desire to be manifest in human beings? God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. Surely the intention was that being in the image of Elohim they should reveal elohistic characteristics, but not only because they had the capacity but because God had given them free will, they would desire, of themselves, to appreciate the abilities God had given them, so that they would reflect his love and kindness. As we know God allowed this creative experiment to continue for 1600 years, and then because mankind's almost total preoccupation with its own desires, God intervened and with the exception of Noah and his family he destroyed them all with the great flood. God still desired to fulfil the plan he had initiated in Eden and so he made his purpose clear to the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and the Israelites in Egypt, "Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I *am* the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments: And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I *am* the LORD your God, who brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians". (Exo 6:6-7) We know that the history of Israel eventually ended in disaster when the nation revolted against His commandments, but the letter to the Hebrews reveals that God will fulfil his promises.

"For this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest." (Heb. 8:10-11) How was this to be achieved? Ever since the failure that occurred in Eden,

God made it clear that he would provide a redeemer. The whole of the Old Testament is full of prophecies and types and shadows of this coming redeemer, a member of the human race in whom God would manifest himself through the perfect obedience of one man born of a woman, born under the law. That man of course is Jesus of Nazareth, who is known as the Christ the Anointed One. Now the New Testament is full of instruction as to how it was that the Lord Jesus was and is God made manifest.

The apostle Paul in his 1st Letter to Timothy explains how important the doctrine of God manifestation is and he states that “without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory. (1Ti 3:16 KJV)

The apostle John states, ‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. (Joh 1:1-4) In v14 John writes “the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.” Here, then, by substitution, is the doctrine affirmed in 1 Tim. 3:16, viz., “Theos was made flesh,” or “**God was manifest in the flesh.**” With this in his letter to the Romans, Paul is in harmony: “God promised . . . His Son Jesus Christ, who was made of the seed of David **according to the flesh**” (Rom. 1:1). “Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth **as a mercy-seat** to declare His righteousness” (3:25). “God sending His own Son in the **likeness of sinful flesh**” (8:3). “The last Adam” (1 Cor. 15:45). “**God was in Christ** reconciling the world unto Himself” (2 Cor. 5:19). “God hath made him to be sin (sinful flesh) for us, who knew no sin” (5:21). “God sent forth his Son, made of a woman” (Gal. 4:4). “Christ Jesus, being in the form of God” (Phil. 2:6). “Christ Jesus . . . God manifest in the flesh” (1 Tim. 3:16). “God . . . hath spoken to us by a Son” (Heb. 1:1). “Jesus, made a little lower than the angels” (2:9), “took part of flesh and blood” (5:14). “A body hast thou prepared me” (10:5).

In all this, it is the manifestation of the Father that is set forth, and, to revert to 1 Tim. 3:16, it is the Father’s “house,” the Father’s “ecclesia” that is in question—“how you ought to behave yourself in the house of God (*theos*), which is the ecclesia of the living God (*theos*), the pillar and ground of the truth.” Now Christ personal and multitudinous is “the house of God.” “God was in Christ.” He is “the sanctuary, the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man,” “for an habitation of God, through the Spirit.” These are all Paul’s expressions, and the indwelling Presence is always *Theos*, and **not a preexistent, co-equal, and co-eternal being such as most translators suppose** the Lord Jesus Christ to have been as a member of a supposed Trinity.

This is in harmony with the Lord's own doctrine. "The *bread of God* is he which cometh down from heaven. . . . I am the bread of life . . . the bread that I will give is *my flesh*" (John 6.). "He that is of God hears God's words" (8:47). It is God's words, God's bread, God's flesh; so much so that Jesus says to Philip, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

It is indisputable from all this testimony that Paul taught that Jesus was "Theos manifest in the flesh." Meanwhile, it is for the Lord's people to remember what that wonderful manifestation was in word and work, and so to behave in God's house as to be accounted worthy of an abiding place there. For God is indeed calling out a people for his name. He is achieving this through the influence of the Holy Scriptures, read and understood and most importantly, put into practice in the life through obedience to whatever he has commanded. The Lord Jesus taught Nicodemus that, "... he that does truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God. (Joh 3:21) Jesus explains how, as God was dwelling in him, he can also dwell in others who believe in him through the Word, He that hath my commandments, and keeps them, he it is that loves me: and he that loves me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. Judas said to him, (not Iscariot), Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, **If a man love me, he will keep my words:** and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loves me not does not keep not my sayings: and the word which you hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me. (Joh 14:21-24) You are my friends, if you do **whatsoever** I command you. (Joh 15:14) Paul again shows how God can be manifest in us through our application of the word in our lives. He writes about always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that **the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.** For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that **the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.** (2Co 4:10-11)

DHH