

Special Meeting – Proclaiming the Name of the Lord

Exodus 34:6,7 Part 2: The Lord – Merciful and Gracious 3rd January
2026

We would say that this little Bible study today is probably at the very core, the very centre of our faith, the most important aspect of Christianity and is an often overlooked subject but which gets to the very heart of true religion, and is therefore not a bad way at all to start 2026. Putting God first rather than ourselves is a habit we all must get used to.

One might think that true religion, the Christianity of the Bible is all about salvation. Salvation – our salvation is of course something we are very much interested in, and is of vital importance – but that is not, in fact the driving message and reason for Scripture, for the reason and message of the Gospel. We are by nature, selfish - we think that the world was made for us, that we are the most important, that us being saved and that Jesus died for us, and we must therefore be very grateful and be good people. But the truth is, we are nothing, in the great scheme of things, and account for very little. In Isaiah 40:15 God says: *Behold, the nations are as a drop in a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he takes up the islands as a very little thing.*

There is a phrase that we would do well to remind ourselves of – and which addresses the real reason for the gospel, the scripture, the reason for the whole creation, and for the existence of mankind. The Phrase is: God manifestation not human salvation.

God made the earth to be inhabited – Isaiah 45:18: *...God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the Lord; and there is none else.* reference – and others – He made man in his own image, and he said it is not good for man to dwell alone. So it is that God also does not want to dwell alone, but declares in Scripture that His purpose is to choose people to share eternity with Him and His Son. (Ephesians 1:11; 3:11; 2 Timothy

1:9) God has attributes and characteristics and a personality He wants to share, and to be appreciated, and for His glory to be magnified and to be benefited by those who prove to be likeminded and worthy. This then is the reason why God describes His purpose as calling out *a people for His Name* as we can read in Acts 15:14.

Focussing on ourselves and our own needs and what we can get from God will not elevate us to a higher plane, but focussing on God, His standards and His character will instil the desire to be like Him, to reach higher, to give inspiration and aspiration.

The character of God as we have been shown is not complicated or complex – unlike the character and personality of human beings, especially the one we see in the mirror – God – His character is straightforward, transparent and not hidden. The character of God is just two-fold. *The Goodness and Severity of God*

We have been reminded of the reference in Romans 11: 22 Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.

Goodness and severity. Straightforward and easy to understand. Some people really struggle with God. They say they don't believe in God, or they hate God. Not that it makes the slightest difference to God, less impact than a small breeze blowing a piece of grass. But the problem is with them not God, and reflects their own complicated and complex personality – we recall the individual we quoted in a recent Bible Talk of Richard Dawkins who describes God as.... *The God of the Old Testament is arguably the most unpleasant character in all fiction: jealous and proud of it; a petty, unjust, unforgiving control-freak a ... infanticidal, genocidal, filicidal, pestilential, megalomaniacal, sadomasochistic, capriciously malevolent bully.*

But such a description reflects badly on someone trying hard to provide shock content to sell more of his books, as well as someone who has not read the Bible but cherry picked certain passages and read them with preconceived judgement, through the lens of their own spitefulness.

We quote Paul the Apostle by way of response in Romans 2: 4-5: *Do you despise the riches of the goodness of God and his forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? But after your hardness and impenitent heart you treasure up unto yourself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;*

In Romans chapter 9 the Apostle explains why those with such a negative mindset are permitted to come out with such outrageous, monstrous and blasphemous lies, is because Romans 9:22-23: *... God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath (unbelievers etc) fitted to destruction: And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory,*

So justice and vengeance are aspects of God's characteristics clearly seen because of the deserving behaviour of so many.

However although this side of severity, this severe side of God, which bespeaks of justice which our Brother has developed and discussed in his presentation, seems to be so apparent and the only side with which so many people seem to see God, the goodness of God is even more obvious, but just that people because of their unbelief, and willing ignorance and lack of application of their intelligence do not acknowledge.

The goodness of God is seen in that man is born and lives and enjoys the experience of life despite never invoking the name of God who created him, man is permitted to continue in his life building empires inflicting cruelty on others – for centuries for millennia - man is given endless opportunities. Everyday is a gift. The gift of life - Despite the wickedness of man, the beauty of creation is still there every day, the stunning sunsets, the brilliant rainbows, the mesmerising night sky, the cool refreshing rain, for everyone the just and the unjust alike.

The goodness of God is seen in the constancy and consistency of the seasons, the harvests, the protection of the earth for life to exist, the provision of all that is required for life to continue. James 1 17 *Every good*

gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Yet man rarely praises the source from where all this goodness comes from, but only complains that he doesn't have enough, and spends his days complaining or trying to take from others.

But the goodness of God is seen by those who know that they are without excuse Romans 1:20 *For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.*

Recognising that the source of goodness and few do, and acknowledge and praise God for his goodness. In turning from the pursuit of selfishness, it is possible to get to know God, and *to see Him as he is* –

The goodness of God is clearly seen in John 3:16,17 *that he so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.* The goodness of God is seen despite the wickedness and natural evils of men, that God gave of his own blood – his only and dearly loved firstborn son, in order to rescue the world from its depravity, offering redemption, and providing a way in which death can be overcome.

The goodness of God can be seen in a place of refuge and shelter, giving protection and a life of stability and hope, and the goodness of God is learned and experienced in the indwelling of the heart, experiencing the change as a person, when allowing the character of God to influence and inspire and alter our behaviour accordingly, to even in the smallest way manifest the same graciousness, and benevolence. This personal experience is the one which increases our faith – Psalm 34:8 *O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusts in him.*

The character of God is twofold. The Goodness and severity of God. We have begun by attempting to balance things up a bit. As we begin the year, the best way possible by getting to know God, and studying his personality,

it is how we begin to learn to love him, much as a child progresses from being just dependent upon their parents for life and protection, but behaves in an often spoilt and selfish way, always expecting to be given whatever they want, but they typically gradually develop and growing older, realise their parent is more than just a machine that never stops giving. They realise their parent has feelings too, and also suffers, and grieves, and sacrifices for the child. This awareness makes the child respectful, and slowly they love the parent no longer for selfish reasons but as a friend. This is the natural, but also the spiritual. This also reflects our spiritual journey, as we learn more about God.

Our talks are based on Exodus 34. Israel was like that child. They had been brought through the waters of birth, Hosea 11:1 *When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.* Deuteronomy 32:10 he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye. God showed them his goodness in bringing them out of Egypt, creating a pathway through the sea, destroying their enemies in the depths of the sea, providing them water in the desert, Elim, and an oasis. He gave them quail to eat, to satisfy them with flesh. He gave them bread to eat, fresh every morning. He gave them a leader, and a priest. He gave them an organisation. And he led to them to Horeb to give them a law.

But because of their weakness, because of their unbelief. Despite leaving Egypt, Egypt did not leave them! They complained. They were selfish. They were demanding, complainers and murmurers. They complained that they would be better off in Egypt, they complained about the bitter water. They complained about the lack of bread. They complained about too much bread. They complained about hardship, complained about thirst, complained about leadership. They complained about giants... rarely if ever did they praise and thank God for what He had done for them. You see Israel were chosen out of all the nations - not because they were any better than any other nation, but because they would prove to be an accurate representation of all mankind, and demonstrate to all peoples, just how undeserving man is of the goodness of God. So Israel learned the severity of God. They had to wander for 40 years. They were sent fiery serpents which

bit them, they were sent pestilence and plague, earthquakes came and swallowed rebels up, and their enemies were permitted to destroy some of them.

Here in Exodus, from where we have taken the passage of scripture for our talks, we find the nation of Israel were still gathered at the foot of Mount Horeb. At this particular time, God chose to show them his goodness, by giving them a law, a foundation for their society, an act of great mercy. But in the process of delivering the law to Moses, the leaders of the tribes, decided that Moses had taken too long. We don't know what has become of him. We want something else to worship. So a bit like atheists and evolutionists who have set up elaborate alternative religions to provide an alternative explanation, the leaders got Aaron to fashion a golden object which looked like a calf, they set it up, and announced to the gullible crowds, *These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.*

The severity of God as immediately seen, as the angel spoke to Moses: *10 Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation.* These were testing moments. But with God, as the Apostle reminds us – *Mercy rejoices against judgement* - it is more powerful – James 2:13. Mercy triumphs over judgment. Instead of consuming them in destruction, as that was the punishment they deserved, God only plagued the ringleaders, and followers of the rebellion. Moses had to clamber the long climb back up into the mountain again, as he had smashed the first two tables of stone which he had broken. He was instructed to inscribe two more large tablets of stone - bthis time himself. The Law of Moses. Taking them with him, he stood high in the mount alone in the presence of God.

The angel of God, the representative of Yahweh descended in the cloud, and spoke with Moses, described elsewhere in scripture as face to face as a man speaks with his friend. God through the angelic presence proclaimed His name, and in doing so described His character, That is His Name is synonymous with his character. Understanding the Yahweh name – is to understand his character. The Title Lord God, - Yahweh Elohim – *I will be*

mighty ones, describes God's purpose and His intention, to be manifest no longer through just one, but to be reflected through many. But His character is also his identity – his Name, what God is known by, is what was proclaimed to Moses.

After the name was proclaimed to Moses, he made his way back down the Mount and he himself reflected the glory of God, so much so that his face shone, and his people, could not look upon him. So bright was his face. He had to wear a veil. This foreshadowed of course the work of the very manifestation of the goodness of God

Moses prefigured how The Lord Jesus would also ascended up to God, on behalf of his people, and after the covenant with God was broken, A new covenant was confirmed by him and he manifest the glory of God – full of grace and truth, as He said to Thomas – *if you have seen me you have seen the Father*. The Lord Jesus reflected the character of God to such an extent that he is described as the express image of his person. By continually reading of the life death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus - which can be found in some form on nearly every page of scripture, we draw ever closer to the character of God.

It really is so important to remember the balance of God. He is equitable, and just, and so with all of God's dealings with men reveal the two aspects – the goodness and severity of God. In fact, the manifestation of divine goodness is impossible without the manifestation also of severity. For example, the goodness shown towards Noah required severity towards a world given over to wickedness; the deliverance of Israel was at the expense of Egypt; the settling of the Israelites in Canaan required the elimination of its inhabitants with their corrupt and evil forms of worship, and so on. God's purpose to establish His glory throughout the earth is only possible by the suppression of flesh, and so will require a blending of goodness and severity.

So let us familiarise ourselves with the goodness of God, but just bear this point in mind. It was the goodness of God that He agreed to the request of Moses to see his glory – 33:18 *And Moses said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory*. God replied: *I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will*

proclaim the name of the Lord before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy. But he added:

You cannot not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live. So it will come to pass, while my glory passes by, that I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by: you will only see my back part. So here in Exodus 34:6 we finally arrive at the moment this part of the character of God is proclaimed. Just seeing the back parts as it were of the angel, Moses was granted a wonderful vision of divine glory: a vision so bright, radiant and real, that its light settled on his face with such power, that it remained long after on his face, to even blind those later on, who looked upon him. That glory was but an expression of the character of God, but its fulness was to be manifested in the Lord Jesus throughout his life. In practice, during the wilderness journey, Moses was seen only the farther side – the back side of the divine glory: the severity of the law; but in Christ is revealed its goodness.

The apostles saw the glory of Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration, but they also witnessed the fading glory of Moses – the corruption of the law. Of the Lord, John declared: *We beheld his glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth... For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.* (John 1:14, 17). The glory faded from Moses' face, but there has been no fading of the glory of Christ Jesus. Which will be only magnified even more in time to come.

And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God... Yahweh, Yahweh- El. To cover these titles of the Name of God and explain them in full, is not the intention today. But feel free to go onto our website, and under the Bible Study tab, you will find a long series of Bible classes which discuss the Names and Titles of God. But this literally means here : I will be, I will be Mighty One, The word "God" is El and denotes power or strength, or mighty. The name Yahweh El signifies: He Who will be Strength, and its fulfilment is revealed in the Lord Jesus who is described in

Psalms 80:17 as *the Son of Man whom Yahweh made strong for Himself*. It was God's intention for that Spiritual Strength to flow through to the nation of Israel, and then to the Gentiles – and so the Yahweh Name is still able to give that Strength today through the Lord Saviour: *It is the spirit that makes alive; the flesh profits nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.*

But what exactly is this Strength? It is not the bullying, hectoring, loud, boastful, and violent behaviour of today where the biggest, loudest physically strongest and most violent achieve success. No No. The proclamation of the character of God, explains the Divine Strength. Here in these verses:: Merciful; gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, Keeping mercy, forgiving sin.

I am the way the truth and the life declared Jesus, the Son of God. He is the only human, to ever have developed these Strengths to the fulness, and reflected the blazing glory of God. So to understand these attributes in action, - it is easy, one only has to read and follow the life of Christ.

Mercy. Merciful, full of mercy. Actually the Hebrew is *Rachum* and denotes lovingkindness, compassion and tenderness, and therefore relates to one who is easily moved to help another. It comes from a root Hebrew word meaning to caress, it is often translated compassion: 86:15 But thou, *O Lord, art a God full of compassion*, 112:4 *he is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous*. This compassionate character of The Lord God is among His foremost attributes, and therefore is one upon which believers can rely, though they should not assume it as their right. John declares that God is love – the very first Bible text I was taught as a child, and I'm sure I'm not the only one! Love for His Creation, and particularly those made in His own image are cherished, so love filters into every aspect of His plan and purpose. Agape: The Greek word for sacrificial love is only derived from Him; it is not a natural characteristic of you and me, and has to be learned. Even the severity of God in chastening and punishing Israel, is an act of love, - of compassion and mercy – Note the Words of Jesus Revelation 3:19: *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.*

Rachum – mercy- compassion as an attribute of God shows He is interested and invested in our development and welfare.

Gracious — The Hebrew is (c)hannuwn and it comes from another Hebrew word which means to bend or stoop in kindness to an inferior. To bestow favour. It indicates The Lord God's readiness to condescend to help those in need. We can see how the Israelites were instructed to develop this characteristic in their dealings with those not so fortunate as they, on the ground that they are all God's children, - for example to return the coats that the very poor handed over as security for a loan at the end of the day, so they don't shiver to death during the night - and He is gracious — therefore they should manifest such qualities in themselves Exodus 22:27 – *For that is his covering only, it is his raiment for his skin: wherein shall he sleep? and it shall come to pass, when he cries unto me, that I will hear; for I am gracious.* The use of the word suggests the gracious act of a person of strength coming to the aid of a weaker party who stands in need of it because of his condition or circumstances. It is the opposite of the competitive and entitled attitude of mind that marks out society today. 1 Peter 2:1-3: *Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all deceit, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speaking, As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.* Yes we are the feeble ones, and need the merciful help of God because of our inherent weakness, and He is always ready to extend this to those who seek it. But first we have to recognise it.

Longsuffering: This comes from two Hebrew words: *arech*, meaning long" and *aph*, a word used for anger or wrath. So literally means long of anger. But not in the sense of holding onto a grudge, but controlling anger, holding the irritation in, hence often the phrase is translated slow of anger. Again, using the parent child analogy which is so helpful, the parent understand the child is still learning, and so controls their exasperation when the child drops their dinner all over the floor yet again. It is not really a good comparison, in one sense though, because the child doesn't know what it is doing. But as mature adults, there is no such excuse. Yet still God is slow to anger: Peter describes God who suffered the wickedness of the generations

before the great flood: 1 Peter 3:20 *Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, ...* or how God demonstrated his long suffering towards Israel in Egypt and even in persevering towards this generation: 2 Peter 3:9 *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.* This is exactly the reason for the Divine patience:

All true children of God should strive to develop this characteristic of God and extend it to others (Col. 1:11; 3:12).

Abundant in goodness. Goodness is (c)hesed, a word frequently rendered "mercy" in the Psalms, so that the RV translates the phrase here as plenteous in mercy. But Strong's Concordance however, gives the meaning as kindness, and others as lovingkindness, - and that the word comes from a root word which means to bow the neck in courtesy to an equal. This shows the condescension of God, how He has devised a way to draw alongside, to get down to our level as it were – As Psalm 103:13,14: *Like as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that fear him. For he knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust.* It is not natural to be like this.

Understandably people will crouch down to console a child, or try to speak on the level with young teenagers. But very quickly, impatience kicks in, and sympathy and even empathy is discarded, as the level of expectation of certain standards is not met according to our judgement, although we conveniently forget our own failures. Jesus corrected a lawyer in the New Testament - And Jesus said unto him, *Why callest thou me good? none is good, save one, that is, God.* Interestingly the word God and good are connected in ancient Anglo Saxon language. But Jesus makes the additional point: Luke 11:13: *If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?* The goodness of God, is that generosity of spirit, readiness to make allowance, encouraging, and thinking of the feelings of others before our own.

Abundant in goodness and truth. **Abundant in truth.** The Hebrew *emet* means stability, faithfulness, trustworthiness. It is where the Hebrew word *Amen* comes from – meaning so be it... It is truth, the matter is established. In Deuteronomy 32 God is described as a Rock, the God of truth, so also in Isaiah 65:16. The very statement *Yahweh Elohim*, the Title of the Godhead – I will be mighty Ones – is a statement of intent, it is a truth. It has already been partly fulfilled. The communication of God to man, is truth, - we recall an earlier passage we quoted - Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. God does not change. His word is truth – as Isaiah proclaims in chapter 55: So shall my word be that goes forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. So the proof of truth is in its testing. The Lord God promised a Saviour from the beginning, and a Redeemer of Israel. That He would be Mighty Ones. First in His Son. The certainty of the purpose of God is demonstrated in the person, the life death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. He is the Testament to truth. Paul says to the Corinthians: *for all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.* (2Cor. 1:20). Jesus himself declared: I am the Way the Truth and the Life. He described Himself as the Amen, the faithful and true witness. Thus Friends, Jesus Christ is the Statement of Faith. The Statement of The Faith.

As we draw near to the end of this talk, we have a couple of more attributes that are a manifestation of the Name of God. **Keeping mercy for thousands** — The Hebrew word for mercy is *(c)hesed* as in verse 6, - abundant in goodness - and we see it here repeated, keeping mercy or goodness for thousands, Keeping in Hebrew is *natser* meaning to guard or protect, whilst "thousands" is *alephim*, the plural of the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet *aleph*. In its numerical sense, *aleph* is used for number 1 or 1 thousand, but is also used as the word *families*. In the verses before us, the Lord God is revealed as the Preserver of Bountifulness, of Lovingkindness, One whose beneficence is inexhaustible, preserving mercy for His families Israel after the flesh and spirit showing lovingkindness and mercy.

Finally God proclaimed Himself as forgiving: **Forgiving iniquity, and transgression and sin** — These words describe three aspects of wickedness. "*Iniquity*" is *avon*, and is that which is crooked and perverse, and hence a reference to human nature that inevitably goes astray. *Transgression* is *pasha* and signifies rebellion, a further development from the crookedness of human nature. *Sin* is *chattath*, a *missing of the mark*, the result of transgression and iniquity. As we were reminded – in the first talk – forgiveness is conditional – because as we know – the goodness and severity of God, Forgiveness is dependant – because God is also a just God. As the lord Jesus taught: Matthew 6:14-15: *For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.* And 1 John 1:9: *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

This afternoon we have reminded ourselves of the Name of God, and His character, completely fulfilled in Christ Jesus who became the Word made flesh. God manifest in the flesh. We have read about it. We have talked about it. Now we know – there is no excuse not to do. Let us conclude with words we quoted earlier from the Apostle Paul: Romans 2: 4-5: *Do you despise the riches of the goodness of God and his forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? But after your hardness and impenitent heart you treasure up unto yourself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;*

Brother Terry