

JUNE 17, 2019

Welcome to the Bible Study Evangelista Show. I am Sonja Corbitt your Bible study Evangelista. Welcome back new and old listeners, welcome to those of you from Laudate the app, and I am just thrilled to be back. I am so thrilled to be back. I thank you for allowing me these breaks. This one was particularly long partly because I had so much going on. I have two new books coming out, one will be out within a week, it's called, 'How to Pray Like Mary'. You can get it on Amazon, or you can get it from Ascension press. I'll have it available shortly as well on my website which is actually acting up. So, if you've been trying to access the show, or anything else through the website I am sorry, I'm still working on it. I'm telling you I'm just about - I want to put my head through the wall. Ha-ha, and you know, if you've been following me very long, you know that I've actually done that before so, it's not out of the realm of possibility.

So, I've got those two new books, the other one will be out in October so there's no point in even talking about it yet, but it's called, "Exalted". It's about The Magnificat series that I did here. Then we went on a holy land pilgrimage. I led a hundred and six people to the Holy Land, and my family was with me, and it was absolutely glorious to go back with them and watch all of those people have exactly the same experience that I had last year when I went for the first time. So, that was a thrill, and then I filmed 12 parts of a series for Catholic TV a couple of weeks ago. It's called 12 Angry Men and it will be on anger and how God deals with anger in the scriptures. In fact, I could have easily probably done double that, there are so many instances of where God confronts people for their anger, and in doing so he helps them work through it, or he tries to anyway. And that's really what was we're looking at; we're looking at through that series how that works. In any case I have been super busy, but I have been studying for the series and I'm telling you I haven't been excited about a series like this in a while. Of course, I always say, that right? Ha-ha Whenever I start, the one I'm working on is always my favorite at the time, right? So, what we're going to do today, there is a lot of ground here to cover. So, if I don't get through it all, and I don't want to rush because it's so rich. We could talk about this 'I Am' subject for the rest of our lives and never plumb it all. But I want to offer you quite a bit of information, and so if I don't get to it all today, we'll break this down into two shows. But we're going to look at the Gospel of John because this series is on the seven, I Am statements of Jesus and those only show up in the Gospel of John. So, we're going to look first today at the background of his Gospel, then we're going to look at the background on I am, and we do so because Jesus made these statements. Then we'll look at some Thomas Aquinas which some of you are probably terrified to even hear his name, but I know from experience that a lot of you really enjoy my sharing on him. And even if you know your eyes roll back in your head, maybe you don't even know who he is, maybe you are afraid of him because he can be difficult. But at the same time, I hope you don't not listen to that just because he can be a little bit intimidating. I know you will get something because I know, and here's why; I know that you'll get something and even if most of it goes over your head, you're going to get something amazing from Thomas Aquinas, there's no way you can't. That's kind of the outline of what we're going to do.

So first I want to talk about the Gospel of John because it is dramatically different than the other gospels which are called the synoptic gospels because they're similar. So, Matthew, Mark and Luke and also not only are they similar but they give us a synopsis of Jesus's life and from start to finish in some cases. They are somewhat different, but those three Matthew, Mark and Luke are similar whereas the Gospel of John is completely different. You've probably seen the words 'read this first' on consumer products, like on the packaging. Most consumers know that our life is too short to read these huge instruction manuals, so they put it on the packaging pretty plainly. If you can't read the manual at least read this very important part. So that 'read this post' is for your own good and I brought that up because the Gospel of John kind of makes a similar claim. It's the only book in the Bible that states its purpose completely. It's written he says, 'to tell people how to find eternal life', he says in chapter 20:31. Because he identifies the purpose of his gospel is sort of sets it apart from the others. And it's

061719_I AM WHO AM



not so much a life of Jesus or a chronology as it is this presentation, and this assertion of Jesus's Divinity, or his deity. So, every chapter of his gospel gives evidence in signs and statements, which I'll elaborate in a moment on, for his divinity, or his deity, his diviner authority either way. So according to John then believing that Jesus is the son of God is the beginning of eternal life. And what could be more important? So, John's statement about his gospel and the purpose is as good as a read this first sticker for your entire life, really because that's exactly somewhat he wants to convey. Not only that Jesus is divine but also that he is the way to eternal life. So, we know for sure that the author of the Gospel of John is Saint John the son of Zebedee. And then it's written around 90 AD and instead as I said of organizing all the historical events into this chronology John gives us Jesus in all of his huge sweep of theology and theological grandeur. He gives us fewer stories than the other gospels but the ones he does give are really rich in detail and so some of the scenes in John that are not in the synoptics are; that discussion with Nicodemus he has in chapter 3, the conversation with the woman at the well in chapter 4, and the raising of Lazarus which I believe is in Chapter 11. And so, he begins his gospel with this beautiful poetic prologue that a lot of people have called the overture for the whole work, and it's one of my most favorite pieces of scripture. Partly because our choir master has put together this unbelievably soaring piece of music around that first part: "In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God. He was in the beginning with God, all things were made through him, and without him nothing was made that was made. 8:01

So, in the beginning was the word, the word, that word; 'word' is logos in the Greek. That logos was a Greek philosophical idea around deity and being, and so John sort of repurposes that philosophy, that Greek philosophy, and he's presenting then the Incarnate Word, the Eternal Word, the Word of God. And I love that it's so beautiful. He - well I will get to the history of that in a moment, but he starts off with this overture, and then he goes from chapters 1 to 12. He builds the narrative into the climax of the Last Supper and then the passion and the death, and resurrection of Christ, in chapters 13 through 20. And then chapter 21 is sort of like this little after word in which Jesus appears to the apostles and then he has that memorable, 'do you love me' discussion with Peter over that fish breakfast. And just seeing that in my head I know exactly where that place was, we just got back, you know, and that was one of the places that we visited, so that's really neat. If you ever get a chance to go on a holy land pilgrimage you must. There's also a plenary indulgence attached to it but anyway I digress.

So, what John does do though is he weaves these two threads throughout his gospel that help us follow the narrative and what he's trying to present. One of them is that he gives seven miracles, or signs to show that Jesus is divine. He does it through these seven miracles. Now 7 is important because seven is a divine number it's also the number of Covenant in the scriptures. And so John is, see already he's using this grand symbolism to say huge things and it's so poetic it's really intuitive actually and it reminds me, the way he writes reminds me a lot of John Paul II, and so it's just one of my favorite books for this reason, but then he talks about the seven signs and they both precede and then foreshadow the great eighth sign of Jesus's death and Resurrection, and I wish I had time to do the signs. We might actually do those next after we do the I am statements since you know we are talking about it. But then we find these seven I am sayings in which Jesus is declaring his divinity and his Messiahship, and the people know it. Well the Pharisees know it anyway because they more than anyone else understand what Jesus is saying and saying I am seven times. But the seven signs are in Chapter 2; at Cana he changed the water into wine, we saw that place too in the pilgrimage. Chapter 4 raising the son of the royal official. Chapter 5 the paralyzed man at Bethesda. Chapter 6 the multiplication of the loaves, another one in chapter 6 he walks on the water. Chapter 9 the healing of the blind man. And then chapter 11 the raising of Lazarus, and that of course, that precedes the big one where Jesus himself dies and is resurrected. So, there's an overview of the seven signs. The I am sayings I don't have time to do, but we'll look at it in the next segment. I'll see you on the other side. This is Sonja Corbitt your Bible study Evangelista.

If you follow me on Facebook, then you know that the title of the Catholic TV show is Evangelista Bible study. I thought that was really neat. I was worried that they were going to change Bible study Evangelista too much so that it would be unrecognizable, I wanted you to know, I wanted it to have some synergy right?, the two things, and so I was really glad that they called it that.

061719_I AM WHO AM

So the seven I am sayings then are these: in chapter 6:35 he says, “I am the bread of life”, in 8:12 he says, “I am the light of the world”, in 10:7 he says, “I am the gate for the sheep, and 10:11 he says, “I am the Good Shepherd, and 11:25 he says I am the resurrection and the life, in 14:6 he says I am the way the truth and the life”, and in 15:1 “I am the True Vine.” So, you can already see through the numerical symbolism, and also the signs, what the signs that stand for, and what the I am sayings stand for that John is packing his gospel with; this rich theological, and sacramental symbolism. So, we’ve got bread, light, sheep, water, and the world. And so all of this gives us lots, and lots of food for meditation which is why we can do a whole series on it. And in fact, now that I’ve already said that out loud, I think I am going to do the I am sayings first, and then go back under the seven signs.

So, this will be a pretty long series. We’ll make it 14. Well it will actually be longer than that because we’re going to spend two, I think on just what I am means. So, when we get to the statements, we are going to know why the Pharisees hated Jesus so much for saying this about himself. So, John’s not giving us Parables then and he gives us really very few stories of like healings and things. Instead he likes to give us Jesus’s long discourses, were these teachings, these sermons that are themselves full of all of this theological content. I mean you could spend your whole life just on the book of John, and a lot of theologians do. So, in the synoptics then Jesus only makes this one trip to Jerusalem, but in John he makes at least four, and he does so because of the Jewish feasts. And this is one of the other things I really love about John, and man when I got this in him, I was like holy moly! Jesus never did anything accidentally. So, John then places the life of Jesus in the context of the ancient Jewish worship and he is emphasizing the length of his ministry. But he also shows Jesus placing himself in that Old Testament, not just his ministry but also himself, his person, in the context of Jewish worship meaning that feast schedule, and if you’ve done my book fulfilled then you know what that is, that liturgical schedule, and why we as Catholics also have a liturgical schedule because that’s where it comes from. But we don’t keep the Liturgy and the feast days of the Old Testament, we instead have our own. We have Christmas, we have Easter, we have feast days, Saints feast days, we have Corpus Christi which is coming up. We have lots and lots of Feasts and that’s where it comes from. What we see there is that God likes to keep time with us, and he likes for us to keep time with him. And so, he gives us the schedule to keep us mindful, and our days and our months, and our years of him, and so it all centers around that. And so, Jesus did the same thing and St John shows us that when he goes to Jerusalem he goes for this Feast because the Old Testament commands that he should as a good Jew. So more than any of the evangelist John leads readers to the Deep Waters of God’s mystery. And that’s what I love so much. And that’s the Segway into our looking at the term I am, okay?

So that is the proper name of God in the Old Testament and said the Jews call it even now the name by excellence, the great name, The Only Name, the Glorious and terrible name, the hidden and mysterious name, the name of the substance, the proper name and then most frequently the explicit or they separated name. I don’t know about you but that makes me want to just holler Hallelujah. It occurs the next name Jehovah, which is the, it’s the anagram of the name in Hebrew with consonants added; Jehovah. So is actually Yahweh, or YHWH. And then it’s pronounced when we pronounce it, of course the Jews don’t, but if we do Jehovah if we do then it’s that name occurs more frequently than any other Divine name in the scriptures. The older concordances, around 18 to 1900, they don’t agree exactly but in round numbers it’s about six thousand times that it appears in the Old Testament either alone, or with another divine name. Then in the Septuagint, and the vulgate, they usually render the name, or translate it; Lord, Kyrios, or Dominus. Dominus, it’s a translation of Adonai and that is usually substituted for Jehovah especially in the reading of it, because they don’t want to pronounce it. I was actually asked once if that meant that we shouldn’t pronounce it and I think that one of the things that is important for us as Christians is, we are not going back to Judaism. Jesus taught us in fact, if you’ll notice in our mass, it says, ‘we dare to say our father’. Why do we dare to say it? Because they wouldn’t say it. They don’t say it. We dare to say it because Jesus has revealed the father to us as our father, and so we say, we can say his name. Did Jesus? I don’t know. Well I know he did when he went up to the temple well anyway when I say temple I mean the heavenly temple after his death and resurrection because he would have been, he was in the holy of holies that was not made with hands, the book of Hebrews says, but anyway I digress.

Modern Jews don't know how to say the sacred name and neither do we as Christians you know you just take a your best stab at it because according to rabbinic tradition the real pronunciation of God's name, I Am, it stopped being used about the time of Simeon the just who was according to oh, well he was a contemporary they say of Alexander the Great and at any rate it appears that they no longer pronounce the name after the destruction of the Temple. And why is that important? Because the only time they could pronounce God's name, this name, the one that he gave to Moses at the burning bush - and we'll get to that in a moment - but the only time anyone was allowed to pronounce this name; I Am, in Hebrew was on the day of atonement when the high priest, only the high priest would go into the holy of holies and only with blood, and he would pronounce the holy sacred name of God, this proper name, this explicit or separated name. He would pronounce it in the holy of holies as he sprinkled Blood on the mercy seat. That was the only time it could ever be uttered and that's why when Jesus asked Peter who do people say I am? And Peter says well you're the son of God. And that's when Jesus was like, well wow. So, the reason they didn't pronounce it after the destruction of the temple is because the temple is where the sacrifices occurred. And in 70 AD it was completely destroyed. It's never been rebuilt, and it probably won't be a because Jesus is now the true Temple. And he is the sacrifice and the sacrifices then have not occurred since that time. And since there's no sacrifice there's no holy of holies and there's no day of atonement then they don't under the name. It lost them it lost the tradition and the history of how to even say it properly. Isn't that amazing? I think that is so amazing because that name was handed from Moses to the high priest Aaron, and then the priest after him all the way through those thousands of years of sacrifices in the Tabernacle, and then later the temple. And then after the temples were destroyed and rebuilt and then up until Jesus's time, and then in 70 AD that last Temple was completely destroyed. I find that length of History amazing, and it's really amazing when you go to the Holy Land because you realize you're standing in the place that people have stood in for 10, 11, 12 thousand years of history of human history. Well not just of human history but like civilized history. It's amazing.

So, the catechism I'd like to look at that for just a moment because the catechism has quite a bit to say about it. I'm not going to go through the whole thing, but I'd like to outline it for you because it gives us this outline. God reveals his name, and then his name reveals that he is a living God; I Am Who I Am is his name. In revealing it, this is number 206. 'In revealing his mysterious name, YHWH, ("I AM HE WHO IS", "I AM WHO AM" or "I AM WHO I AM), God says who he is and by what name he is to be called. This divine name is mysterious just as God is mystery. It is at once a name revealed and something like the refusal of a name, and hence it better expresses God as what he is - infinitely above everything that we can understand or say: he is "the hidden God" his name is ineffable (that means unsayable, or even unknowable), and he is the God who makes himself close to men., the catechism says. And then the rest of the outline well I want to read 209 too: "Out of respect for the holiness of God, the people of Israel do not pronounce his name. In the reading of sacred scripture, the revealed name (YHWH) is replaced by the divine title "LORD" (in Hebrew Adonai, in Greek Kyrios). It is under that title that the divinity of Jesus will be acclaimed: "Jesus is Lord." More on that when we get back. This is Sonja Corbitt your Bible study Evangelista.

So, the catechism starts with just a simple sentence God reveals His name. Which is amazing if you think of it that God would stoop to tell a human being who he is, to reveal himself at all. And so, he does that, and in doing so he reveals that he is the living God; "I Am Who I Am". And then the next part of the outline is that, "he is a God merciful and gracious. God alone is", he reveals through his name. "God, he who is, is truth and love." And so, the next heading is: "God is truth, God is love." And so, you can read the details of that in the catechism numbers 203 through 221 and I of course and don't have the time to read it all. You should go and look at it. It kind of goes through some of what I've already said, but it gives you the whole background which we're going to kind of look at here a little bit as well. But, God, the God of the universe, the Creator God calls himself I am. In Exodus 3:14 the Bible says that God said unto Moses I Am Who I Am. Moses had said when I go down to Egypt and the people ask me who sent me what should I tell them? And God said you tell them that I Am sent you. And what that - actually later on in that conversation, he tells him that I Am has - first of all he reveals His name; I Am Who I Am, and then he says tell them that I Am sent you. And then he says I Am will be

with his people. When he gives Moses his mission, he basically says that you're going to rescue my people from Egypt, and deliver them through the Exodus, and I will be with you to make sure that happens is basically what he says. And so, we've already read that the, we'll say English word, or the Jehovah name is composed of the abbreviated forms of the Hebrew verb; to be, so YHWH. And so according to that explanation then the meaning of Jehovah would be something like He who will be, Is and has been. First in that passage, that conversation that God has with Moses, he reveals His name as, I Am it's translated in the vulgate as I Am, that's the Latin Bible, and then in the Septuagint is the Greek, and it says there; I Am Who Is, and then in the Aramaic it says; I shall be He Who, shall be, or the Eternal Who does not cease. Holy moly I mean this is just so good! And then the second time he says tell them, He Who Is has sent me to you, or I Am Who Am and Who shall be, has sent me to you, and then finally the third time God uses that third person of the imperfect, I Am Who Am with you, or I Am Who will be with you. So, he says his name actually in three different ways there and he's conveying something different each time and Jesus then completed what was given to Moses. Seven times in that Gospel of John he says that expression I am. First, he said, "I am the bread of life, he who comes to me shall never hunger", and we'll look at that next week if we get through the rest of this, and I think we actually might.

CS Lewis said (I love this), "I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about him, Jesus." Here's what they say, "I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher but, I don't accept his claim to be God." That is the one thing, CS Lewis says, that we must not say. "A man who is merely a man and said the sort of things that Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher he would either be a lunatic on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg, or else he would be the devil of hell. You have to make your choice. Either this man was and is the Son of God, or else and that man or something even worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him, and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about him and great him and teacher. He has not left that open to us and he did not intend to." Isn't that amazing? I love that passage. So he tells a story about - well he doesn't tell a story, but I think it was Chesterton who actually talked about this greeting that he heard once from a like an ecumenical pastor of some sort greeting and it went something like this: "Greetings to you in the name of Yahweh the almighty, in the name of Allah the beneficent and merciful. Greetings to you in the name of the eternal one who gave the Buddha his great enlightenment, and in the name of the Hindus supreme being that orders the cosmos." And so GK Chesterton said then, "When men choose not to believe in God they do not there after believe in nothing. They then become capable of believing in anything." I thought that was interesting, so I thought I'd share that with you. Well I'm at it I want to take it just a moment to shut out my friends of the show. I mentioned you in the postponement email last week, but I want to shout you out on the air because I appreciate you so much. So Teresa S, Susan M, Steven N, Dennis C, Mary G, Chanel N, Cheryl L, Ana Laura R, Susan R, Holly R, Mary S, Candice D, Elena R, Shannon S, Ray and Sherry M, thank you so much you guys, Mary E, Minerva G, Andrea B, Hank and Theresa V, Denise M, Jerry O, Stephanie N, Angelica sea, Jana L, Mary Z, Allison R, Karen D, Julie N, Maria A, Tammy S, Lynne P and Wanda R. That's a whole long list but that was a two-month break, so I appreciate you so much. Thank you for loving and lifting me. So, there's your shout out. You keep me going you have no idea.

So here at this point I want to turn to Aquinas says about this name I Am, all right? And there's so much and I can't share it all, but here are just two of some of the things that he says in his Summa. Number 11 on seeing God everywhere or the presence of God in all things. We want to know where can I find God and the answer is literally everywhere. So, Thomas Aquinas says, "God is in all things not indeed as part of their essence, nor as an accident, but as an agent is present to that upon which it works. For an agent must be joined to that wherein it acts immediately and touch it by its power hence the thing moved, and the mover must be joined together. Now since God is very being by his own essence, created being must be his proper effect. As to ignite is the proper effect of fire. Now God causes this effect, this being, or existence in things, not only when they first begin to be, but as long as they are preserved in being. As light is caused in the air by the sun as long as the air remains illuminated. Therefore, as long as a thing has been God must be present to it according to its mode of being but

being is innermost in each thing and most fundamentally inherent in all things. So, it must be that God is in all things and inner mostly. Now this is part of why Aquinas can be somewhat intimidating, because he's using an ancient rhetorical method here of logic, and so first he posits an assumption and then he objects to the assumption and in so doing he draws these conclusions. So, the objection to the fact that God must be in all things is the first one is, "It seems that God is not in all things, for what is above all things is not in all things, but God is above all things." And then the reply to that objection is, "God is above all things by the excellence of his nature, but he is in all things as the cause of the being of all things." Now I promise I'm going to unpack this for you. I know it's confusing, but just try to follow me. Objection 2 "Further what is in anything is there by contained. Now God is not contained by things, but rather does he contain them." And the reply to that objection is, "Although corporal things are said to be in another as in that which contains them, nevertheless spiritual things contain those things in which they are as the soul contains the body." So, the soul contains the body not vice versa as the spiritual meaning of a play contains its physical setting, and not vice versa. That's a new idea for some of us where the soul contains the body not vice versa. Just sit with that for a few minutes and watch your brain explode.

So, God also then is in things as containing them. And here's the 4th Objection, "Further the demons are beings, but God is not in the demons for there is no fellowship between light and darkness." The reply to that objection is, "In the demons there is their nature which is from God and also the deformity of sin which is not from him. Therefore, it is not to be absolutely conceded that God is in the demons except with the addition in as much as they are beings. But in beings not deformed in their nature we must say absolutely that God is." This is so important it is going to take a bit to explain and explorer. It's important because this is how you can directly become a saint. The easiest and the most effective way to become a saint, according to the Saints, is to practice the presence of God. Which is to get little by little closer to the beatific vision which we will have in heaven. That's the vision that will make it impossible for us to sin because we will be in the presence of the one who is so supremely beautiful, and good, and lovable that sin will no longer even be attractive and we will see him as he is, St Paul says. Then we will know by direct sight and experience, rather than by faith, that nothing can ever be more attractive than him. We will experience that, and we won't want anything else. But we can get only a little close to that vision in this life, but even the tiniest bit of progress on that road is worth infinitely more than any spectacular success on any other road. And we will unpack that a little bit more when you get back.

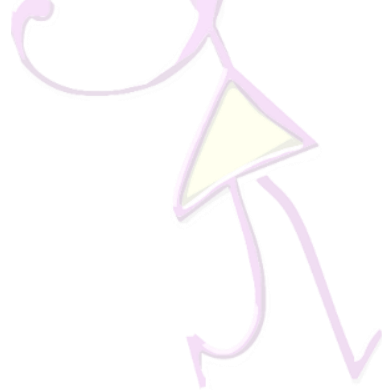
Okay in case I lost you completely at the end of that last segment, what St. Thomas is doing here is he's giving us that philosophical basis for practicing the presence of God everywhere all the time. He is explaining that God is everywhere, he's in all things. And if we see this big picture than the whole world starts and light up like the stained-glass window, right? When the Rising Sun suddenly Shines on it all those colors burst into life, right? But we're not talking about pantheism which is God is all things. Pantheism Sees God as nothing more than his creation. So, he's just all of us. Deism is another heresy that sees God as this like deadbeat dad that left his kids after fathering them. He's like gone and detached from anything that he's made. But for St. Thomas God is in all things. His present rather than absent. But he also transcends all things in fact he is in all things because he transcends them all like light. Because light transcends all color it can be present to all colors, or like the mind because the mind transcends matter it is present to all matter by knowing it. And so, it's the same sort of with God because he is infinite existence itself transcending everything finite, limited essences or natures, he can be present to all of them giving them all existence. So, God is I Am, he is the source of all being. Everything that exists because God made it. The essence of something is it's 'what', its existence is the 'whether'. So, the existence of a rock or a dog or a man, does not include God because that's the what of it. But their existence, the whether they exist, is caused by God, not just in the past by creation, but also in the present by preservation. God preserves everything in being. He continues to give it the act of existence. So, everything gives what it has, and God is the fullness of being itself. So, God gives being. He creates being and he preserves us in being. Not just people, but angels and rocks and clouds and seahorses. Everything that exists, this makes me cry, everything that exists, exists in the beingness, and the love because God is love, the beingness and the love of God.

I mentioned this in my book *Fearless* that if God did not love Satan, Satan would cease to exist. I mean you talk about blowing your mind. But God is oh, God is the one, the thing the source of all being and existence. So, when we say that God is fullness of being and he tells us that through his name I Am Who Am. To say that he is the fullness of being is to say that he does not have existence from any other outside source or cost. He is existence by his own essence. He is what and whether of everything. Therefore, he can give everything existence, and this is what creation of being and preservation in being means, ok? That's what Thomas Aquinas is getting at through all of this kind of back-and-forth stuff. So, what he is saying is that the presence of God in all things is the nature of its being and existence. He is its causality. He's the reason it is. So, for A to cause B, A must touch B, A must meet B. Since God causes creatures, he must touch them. Men don't impregnate women without touching them. Women don't give birth to children without touching them. Baseball bats don't move baseball's through the air without touching them. Mine's don't sell problems without touching them mentally. That is thinking about them. The touch can be physical or mental, but all causality involves some sort of touch, or some sort of presence of the cause to the effect. Creatures though touch other creatures only externally from without. God however touches creatures internally at their ultimate center, at their act of existing. He turns them all on from the inside. Hot things give Heat. Dogs give doggy-ness. God infinite being gives being and therefore we can find him in every being, in every grain of sand. There's a guy named Gibson who calls this the great syllogism. 1) being is innermost in age thing, 2) God is very being by his own essence. 3) Therefore, God is in all things and inner mostly. So, let's compare a deer and a unicorn. When God gives existence to a deer but not to a unicorn because it's not real, he turns on the whole of the deer and is therefore present to the whole concrete substance, all of the deer, at one time. And because God is not in time, he made time for us, for creatures he's not of time, he is not past or future, but he's present right now. I Am, he says.

He is present now to us, creating us now, and not just in the past. God has no dead passed and no unborn future. He is the Living God, I Am. He's not the dead or unborn God. He is everything that he is, and he does everything he does in the present. He is always now. He is right now saying, fiat let it be to you and that is why you exist, you and your cat too. So, meet him here in the moment in I Am, "for all real living is meeting" according to Rabbi Buber in 'I and Thou'. That was the one question in Aquinas seeing God everywhere the presence of God in all things. And then also the question of predestination that comes up automatically when you start thinking about God Is, right? If those that I love are predestined by God to be saved then they will be saved, we know that from Romans chapter 8. Saint Paul talks about predestination as a real thing, but does God then predestine everything? That's part of the question, but then if God predestines people be saved, then does he predestine others to go to hell? And if they will be saved, or they will go to hell for sure, why do I have to pray for them? Why should I pray for them? So, St Thomas says that predestination is said to be helped by the prayers of the Saints and by other good works because Providence of which predestination is apart does not do away with secondary causes but so provides effects that the order of secondary causes falls also under Providence. So as natural effects are provided by God in such a way that natural causes are directed to bring about those natural effects without which those effects would not happen. So the salvation of a person is predestined by God in such a way that whatever helps that person towards salvation falls under the order of predestination whether it be one's own prayers or those of someone else or other good works and the other stuff without which one would not attain to salvation. So, the predestined must strive after good works and prayer because through these means' predestination is most certainly fulfilled. So, then predestination is, well let me explain. So, Pascal said once that God established prayer in order to give creatures the dignity of causality. So, every one of our prayers and good works makes a difference probably an eternal difference because without those effects would not happen.

So, it's not right to think that because God has predestined all things and since whatever will be will be that our prayers cannot make a real difference to the Future. We can't change God's predestination, but we can change the future because that's one of the things God has predestined that our free choices that cause the future to be one thing rather than another. Okay? So, God knows whether so and so person will be saved or not, and so why should I pray for them? Because maybe God has predestined that their salvation depends partly on my prayer. And if I don't add my prayer then that person might

not be saved. See how every single vote counts. We don't have these details because God deliberately hides them from us. If we saw all the effects of our prayers and our good works, if we saw the difference we make we would be completely overwhelmed and paralyzed with this responsibility. So, nothing God's will but prayer does change things because God changes things through our prayers. He has willed that causal order of things. He has willed that his will be fulfilled only through us and our prayers and good works. Sometimes he even refuses to give us the things we need until we pray because he sees that we need prayer even more than we need the thing that we're praying for. So, prayer is like work. God could have given us everything without our work, food for instance, but he knew and knows that we need to work even more than we need the things that we are working for. So, we cooperate. We work with God, not as equals, not side-by-side like soldiers on a battlefield but like a general and his infantry man, we're like an author and his character. He won't do it without us, and we can't do it without him. So, St Thomas Aquinas unlike Calvinists in Protestantism he does not believe in two equal and parallel predestinations, hell as well to heaven, or damnation and salvation. Predestination means predestination to heaven. For God is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to salvation he says in 2nd Peter 3:9. And so God knows that not all will come to salvation and he allows it by allowing our free choice, and in that sense, and that sense only he allows damnation of people. He writes the whole story. He writes all of the tragedy as well as the comedy, but he acts in the story only in one way; for the good, for the salvation, because God, John says in chapter 3:17, that God that sent the Son not to condemn it but that the world will be saved through him. So, what does I am mean? I am means that he is the source of all being he is the source of all good and love and all truth and we can cooperate through his goodness and his love with the salvation of the world. That's the point, he is who he is, he will be with us, and who sent us Jesus, who said I am to show us what he's really like. We'll unpack that more next week. I finished the whole thing y'all so we're going to run right into I Am the bread of life when we get back next week. I'm Sonja Corbitt your Bible study Evangelista.



love and lift all you've been given