

**Peace** be with you, listening friends. We greet you in the name of God, the Lord of peace, who wants everyone to understand and submit to the way of righteousness that He has established, and have true peace with Him forever. We are happy to be able to return today to present your program *The Way of Righteousness*.

In our last lesson, we saw how Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, oppressed the descendants of Abraham, the Israelites, by making them his slaves, working them ruthlessly.

However, we also read, *"the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread, so the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites."* Finally, Pharaoh issued a decree that every infant boy born to the Israelites was to be thrown into the river to die.

However, God, who is more powerful than Satan, had a plan to overturn the evil which Pharaoh was doing. Thus, we read how the daughter of Pharaoh took in an Israelite baby that she found in a basket in the river. The daughter of Pharaoh had pity on him and adopted him as her child, naming him **Moses**. Thus, Moses grew up in the house of Pharaoh-the very one who sought to destroy the people of Israel! God, in His wisdom, planned to use Moses to deliver the Israelites from the hand of the wicked king. When Moses was forty years old, he ran from Pharaoh who wanted to kill him. For forty years Moses lived in the wilderness, where he got married and tended the flock of his father-in-law.

Now, let us continue with this story to see **how God revealed Himself to Moses** so that He might send him to Pharaoh to lead the people of Israel out of Egypt. We are reading in the Torah, in the third chapter of the book of Exodus. The Scripture says:

*Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law...and he led the flock to the far side of the desert and came to [Sinai], the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush.Moses saw that though*

*the bush was on fire it did not burn up. So Moses thought, "I will go over and see this strange sight- why the bush does not burn up."*

*When the Lord saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, "Moses! Moses!" And Moses said, "Here I am." "Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is **holy ground.**" Then he said, "**I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.**" At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God. The Lord said, "**I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey-the home of the Canaanites... And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them. So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt.**"*

*But Moses said to God, "Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" And God said, "I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: **When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain.**" Moses said to God, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?" God said to Moses, "**I AM WHO I AM.** This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'" <sup>15</sup>God also said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites, 'The Lord, the God 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!**"*

We can learn **at least four things about God's character** from what God said to Moses from inside the burning bush on Mount Sinai.

1.) First, we learn that God is **holy**! When Moses saw the flames of the burning bush, he was amazed, drew near to investigate, and heard the voice of God calling out to him. Moses trembled with fear, and did not dare to look. Why was Moses afraid? Because he was standing in the presence of God, the Holy One! God declared His holiness by saying to Moses: *"Do not come any closer. Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground!"*

Truly, God, who appeared to Moses in the fiery flames, is **holy**. God wants everyone to recognize His holiness. Concerning the angels who stand in the presence of God, the Scriptures say: *"Day and night they never stop saying: 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come.'"* The angels recognize the holiness of God. You who are listening today, do you recognize God's holiness?

Let us think a little about what this means. As we have already seen in previous lessons, the holiness of God caused Him to expel Adam and Eve from the Garden of Paradise after they had sinned. The holiness of God caused Him to refuse Cain's sacrifice. It was also God's holiness that caused Him to wipe out the people of Noah's day with a flood. In the period that followed, God confused the language of the world, scattering the people of Babel, those who were trying to rebel against God. And in Abraham's time, the holiness of God caused Him to rain fire from the sky on the people of Sodom, those who were taking pleasure in wickedness.

Tragically, to this very day, most people do not respect the holiness of God. They do not comprehend who God is. They have not recognized His absolute purity. We can see this in the way people practice sin and take pleasure in it. We also see the lack of importance people attach to the holiness of God when they wear religion like a cloak, but do not examine the Holy Scriptures in order to understand God's truth. Many habitually use God's name in insincere talk. They invoke the name of God in vain by

saying, "*bi ism Allah*", which in Arabic means *in the name of God*, or "*Insha'a Allah*", which means, *if God wills it* when, in reality, the will of God is the farthest thing from their minds. We observe people's failure to understand the holiness of God by the way they seek to establish their own righteousness before God and refuse to accept the way of righteousness which God has established. Some think that they can make themselves pure before God by prolonged fasting, repetitious praying, or ceremonies of washing and purification or ablution. But, as we clearly see in the Writings of the Prophets, such outward actions do not satisfy **God the Holy One** who requires that a person be pure on the inside. Dear friends, God is holy! That is why He said to Moses, "*Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is **holy ground.***"

2.) Next, based on what God said to Moses in the burning bush, we discover that God is not only the Holy One, but He is also **the Faithful One!** {Lit. *the One who keeps His covenants*} Did you hear what God first said to Moses? He said, "*I am the God of your forefathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.*" These words should bring joy to the heart of anyone who wants to approach God and enjoy a relationship with Him. God, the Holy One, is the One who established a covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. God is the Faithful One; He will never leave or betray His friends! Even after hundreds of years, He had not forgotten what He had promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and their descendants.

What about you? Do you appreciate the faithfulness of God? Do you enjoy a close relationship with the God who spoke with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob? This is an important question for anyone who wants to be truly happy in this life and in the life to come. We are not asking: Do you have religion?-because following the rules of religion will never make anyone righteous before God. What we are asking is: Do you have a right relationship with God? Have you believed the message of the way of salvation

which God has established? Have you come to see that following **a religion** and having **a relationship** with God Himself are two different things?

Today there are thousands and thousands of religions in the world. For example, the experts tell us that in the country of Brazil alone, there are more than four thousand different religions and sects! Four thousand religions!?! Amazing! Are there four thousand gods? Or four thousand ways which lead to God? No! The Scriptures say: *"There is **one God and one Mediator between God and men.**"* Why then are there thousands of religions and thousands of different sects in the world today? It is because most of Adam's descendants have ignored the foundation of truth that God established with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They do not know about the promises which God made to Abraham and his descendants concerning the Mediator, who was to come into the world to deliver the children of Adam from the penalty and power of sin. They do not know the Word of the God who never changes. They do not know **the Faithful One!**

3.) God manifested another characteristic when He appeared to Moses in the fire that blazed in the bush. The characteristic is **mercy**. God is not only the Holy One and the Faithful One, but He is also **the Merciful One**. That is why God said to Moses concerning the people of Israel,

*"I have indeed **seen** the misery of my people in Egypt. I have **heard** them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am **concerned** about their suffering. So I have **come** down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land..."*

Why did God plan to liberate the people of Israel and lead them to a good land? Did the Israelites deserve God's mercy? Were they better than other nations? No, they were not! Why then did God purpose to deliver them and bless them so? Only because of His

faithfulness and His mercy. As the Scriptures say: *"God heard their groaning and He remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. So God looked on the Israelites and had mercy on them."* Yes, God is **the Merciful One!**

4.) Finally, there is one more aspect of God that we can observe in the story of the burning bush. We heard Moses ask God what His name is. Can the nature of the eternal God be described in a single name? This God who is so great and holy, faithful and merciful; this God whom man cannot see with his eyes; this God who created everything, sees everything, knows everything, and can do anything--**What is His name?** Some think God's name is simply "God" or *Allah*. Truly, God is God. However, *God* is not His **name**. God is who He is. I am a man, but *Man* is not my name. Each of us has a name by which we are known. What is **God's name?** What answer did God give to Moses? Let us read it again. God said to Moses,

*"I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'" God also said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites, 'The Lord, the God 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!"*

This translates into Hebrew as "YHWH" and English as "Lord"

What is the name of God that describes His eternal nature? Did you hear it? It is: **the Lord!** In the Holy Scriptures, the prophets ascribe to God hundreds and hundreds of names and titles, but this name, *the Lord*, is used more than any other--over six thousand, five hundred times. God is the Lord, the Eternal "I AM," the One who was, who is, who will exist forever! He is the Eternal One! He has no beginning. He has no end. He has no limits. He has no equal. He is the One who exists by His own power! What He was yesterday and is today, He will be forever. He never changes. The Lord is His Name!

Listening friend, do you know **the Lord**? Do you recognize His **holiness**? Are you rejoicing in His **faithfulness** in both His relationship with us and in keeping His covenants? Have you received His **mercy**? Do you believe His Word? Have you entered into a close relationship with the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob? Do you know the Lord who spoke to Moses from the burning bush?

Thank you for listening. God willing, next time we will continue the story of Moses and see how God sent him to Pharaoh, the wicked king of Egypt....

God bless you as you continue to ponder these words God spoke to Moses:

*"I AM WHO I AM!...I AM the Lord!...This is my name forever!"*