

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 God cared for the tribes of Israel in the arid desert, giving them **food from the sky** so that they would not die of hunger. We saw also how the Israelites provoked God time after time because of their lack of belief and their lack of faithfulness.

Today we are going to see how God appeared to the people of Israel in the desert and gave them **His holy law**. We are reading in the Torah, the book of Exodus, chapter nineteen. It begins like this: *"In the third month after the Israelites left Egypt, on the very day, they came to the Desert of Sinai."* Where were Moses and the Israelites now in their journey through the desert? They had come to the mountain of **Sinai**. Do you remember where Moses was when God first called him and spoke to him from the bush which was on fire but didn't burn up? It was on that same mountain of Sinai. Do you remember the story? We heard how God spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai saying,

*"I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt...so I have come down to rescue them...So now, go. I am sending you to Egypt...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.**"*

Did God do for Moses what He had promised? He surely did! Where is Moses in our reading in the Torah today? We see Moses and the multitude of Israel **at the base of Mount Sinai, just as God had promised Moses forty years earlier** when He spoke to him in the burning bush, saying, *"When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on **this mountain!**"*

Now let us continue reading to see how God reappeared to Moses and spoke to all the people of Israel at Mount Sinai. The Scripture says:

*Then Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain and said, "This is what you are to say to the house of Jacob and what you are to tell the people of Israel: 'You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. **Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.'** These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites." So Moses went back and summoned the elders of the people and set before them all the words the Lord had commanded him to speak. The people all responded together, **"We will do everything the Lord has said!"***

Did you hear how the Israelites answered God? They said, *"We will do **everything** that the Lord has said!"* Was what they said true? Could they keep **all** the commandments of God? God knew very well that the Israelites could not do everything that He commanded them. What God really wanted was that they recognize their inability to please God, acknowledge their sinful condition before Him, and believe the Good News concerning the Redeemer who was to come into the world to redeem sinners. God had forgiven the sins of their ancestors Abraham, Isaac and Jacob based on their **faith in God's promises**. God wanted to forgive the people of Israel through faith alone also. God's way of salvation has always been by **faith alone**--faith in God and His plan of salvation. The Scripture says: *"Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because 'The righteous will live **by faith**.'"*

However, up to this point, the people of Israel hoped that they could achieve righteousness before God through **their own efforts**. How foolish of them! They had forgotten how many times they had offended God! They did not yet realize just how

great their sin was before God! In their thoughts, sin was **not** such a serious affair, but in the sight of God who must judge them, **sin is a terrible affair! God is holy and perfect**; He cannot approve any works that are less than perfect! However, up to this point, the Israelites had not yet recognized this. That is why they said, presumptuously, "*We will do everything the Lord has said!*" However, God had a plan by which He would show them that they could **not** do "*everything the Lord has said!*" Now let us continue in the Scriptures to see how God came down on Mount Sinai, revealed His glory and holiness, and gave **the Ten Commandments** to the tribes of Israel.

The Scripture says:

*And the Lord said to Moses, "Go to the people...[and tell them that in three days] the Lord will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people. Put **limits** for the people around the mountain and tell them, 'Be careful that you do not go up the mountain or touch the foot of it. Whoever touches the mountain shall surely be put to **death**. He shall surely be stoned or shot with arrows; not a hand is to be laid on him. Whether man or animal, he shall not be permitted to live.'... On the morning of the third day there was **thunder and lightning**, with a **thick cloud** over the mountain, and a **very loud trumpet blast**. Everyone in the camp trembled. Then Moses led the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. Mount Sinai was covered with **smoke**, because the Lord descended on it in **fire**. The **smoke billowed up from it like smoke from a furnace**, the whole **mountain trembled violently**, and the **sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder... The Lord descended to the top of Mount Sinai...***

*And God spoke all these words: "**I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.***

- 1.) *You shall have **no other gods** before me.*
- 2.) *You shall **not make for yourself an idol**...for I, [am] the Lord your God.*
- 3.) *You shall **not misuse the name of the** Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.*
- 4.) ***Remember the Sabbath day** by keeping it holy.*
- 5.) ***Honor your father and your mother.***
- 6.) *You shall **not murder.***
- 7.) *You shall **not commit adultery.***
- 8.) *You shall **not steal.***
- 9.) *You shall **not give false testimony** against your neighbor.*
- 10.) *You shall **not covet** your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor."*

*When the people saw the thunder and lightning and heard the trumpet and saw the mountain in smoke, **they trembled with fear. They stayed at a distance** and said to Moses, "Speak to us yourself and we will listen. But do not have God speak to us or we will die!" Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid. God has come to test you, so that **the fear of God** will be with you to keep you from sinning." **The people remained at a distance...***

This is where we will stop in the Scriptures today. God willing, in the next program we will look at each of the Ten Commandments which God gave to the Israelites on Mount Sinai. But before we bid you farewell today, there is something that God wants to teach

us through what we have just read. What we must understand is this: **God is Holy and we can never approach Him based on our own efforts.** The Scriptures teach that *"all men are like grass"* and *"God is a consuming fire!"* We all know what happens to grass that happens to be in the path of a wild fire!

In the beginning of our lesson today, we heard how the Israelites said to Moses, *"Everything that the Lord has said we will do."* They said that because **they did not recognize the holiness of God.** They somehow thought that they could please God through their own efforts. However, after God had appeared to them on Mount Sinai, their thoughts changed drastically! When the Israelites witnessed the thunder, the lightning and the mountain erupting with smoke and heard the voice of the Lord echoing out to them with ten holy commandments, *"they trembled with fear. They stayed at a distance and said to Moses, 'Speak to us yourself and we will listen. But do not have God speak to us or we will die!'"*

Thus the people of Israel began to recognize God's absolute holiness and their utter inability to approach Him. At the base of Mount Sinai they became aware of the truth of Scripture: *"All men are like grass" and "God is a consuming fire!"* In the presence of God the Holy One, could the Israelites honestly say, "No problem! Everything the Lord has said we will do!"? No, they could not! Now the Israelites recognized that **they had a problem; a very serious problem!** They sensed the holiness of God and the strictness of His commandments; they sensed their own unholiness and inability to keep God's perfect law. They felt **like dry grass in the path of a wild fire!**

How about you? Do you recognize the holiness of the Lord? Do you see that God and His law are righteous and perfect? Do you realize that your heart and your works are unrighteous and imperfect before God? Or are you like the Israelites who thought, "No problem! We will do everything that God requires! We will draw near to God by our

good deeds!" Truly, such thoughts do not agree with God's thoughts. Can those who are filthy and stained with sin dwell with the One who is pure and holy? No, they cannot! Can God approve that which is half good and half evil? No, He cannot and He will not! God is holy and cannot tolerate that which is unholy! He demands perfection! **Do you realize this?** Or are you hoping that, in the Day of Judgment, your "**good deeds**" will somehow wipe out your **evil deeds**? If that were so, then **God would not be a righteous judge!** To illustrate, what would we think about a judge who tells a murderer, "You are guilty of murder, however, because of the good deeds that you have done in the past, I won't sentence you. You may go free." What would we say of a judge who did that? We would declare him to be an unrighteous, unjust judge.

Friends, **God is a righteous Judge!** He cannot overlook sin! The Lord God who must judge the world can only do what is righteous! **The righteousness of God demands a payment for sin.** And that payment is **death** and **eternal separation from God!** The good works which we do cannot cancel our debt of sin. Concerning our good deeds, the Scripture says: *"All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags!"* **God** is like a **consuming fire** and the **good works** of the sons of Adam are like **dry grass**. In our own righteousness, we cannot stand before the flame of God's holy judgment!

Did the Israelites dare get close to the fire of God which descended on Mount Sinai? Did they try to climb the mountain up to where God was? Were they bold enough to approach the mountain which quaked and rumbled with thunder and lightning; the mountain from which billowed up smoke like smoke from a furnace? No! They did not approach it! They **stood afar off** and **trembled with fear!** Not one person among them dared to approach the mountain because of the fear they felt before the holiness of the Lord God and His awesome power. But that fear was very good for them, because the Word of God says: *"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom!"*

Friends, our time is gone today. However, we encourage you to remember what we have just heard and seen: that **God is holy** and **must judge people** according to **His standard** of holiness. **God is holy** and He cannot ignore sin. **God is holy** and we cannot approach Him on the merits of our own efforts!

In the next lesson, in the will of God, we will examine and interpret the Ten Commandments which God gave the Israelites there on the mountain of Sinai. Thank you for listening....

God bless you and instruct you as you think about this foundational truth from His Word:

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom!"

If you would like more information about *The Way of Righteousness*, please visit the website: one-god-one-message.com That web address again is: one-god-one-message.com

This is a production of TWR Africa. Please visit us online at TWRAfrica.org That's TWRAfrica.org