

Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, Amen.

¹ Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. And he led the flock to the back of the desert, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. ² And the Angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed. ³ Then Moses said, "I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush does not burn." ⁴ So when the LORD saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." ⁵ Then He said, "Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground." ⁶ Moreover He said, "I am the God of your father – the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God. ⁷ And the LORD said: "I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows. ⁸ So I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey.... ¹⁰ Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt." ¹¹ But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?" ¹² So He said, "I will certainly be with you. And this shall be a sign to you that I have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain." ¹³ Then Moses said to God, "Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they say to me, 'What is His name?' what shall I say to them?" ¹⁴ And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And He said, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'" ¹⁵ Moreover God said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: 'The LORD 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, and this is My memorial to all generations.'"

Text: Exodus 3:1-8a, 10-15 A 2/6/22 2 Peter 10:16-21 Matthew 17:1-9 Psalm 147 Resp. Ps. 111
Hymns: 44, 39, 41, 800

OUR GOD

- 1. is almighty, holy, and eternal**
- 2. is love**
- 3. is a God we can love, serve, and obey**

Dear fellow believers in Christ,

Who is this God in whom we believe? Is He really there? How does God feel about us? Is He a God we can revere, love, and to whom we can devote our life?

-1-

During the time of the Old Testament God chose Moses to lead His people out of their slavery in Egypt through the wilderness and into the Promised Land. Our text is God's calling of Moses. One day as Moses was tending sheep he saw an amazing sight: "*The Angel of the LORD*

appeared to [Moses] in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed.” Many times the Old Testament refers to “*the angel of the LORD*.” Usually it means God the Son. We’re told, “*God called to [Moses] from within the bush,*” making it clear that “*the Angel of the LORD*” here is the Son of God (my emphasis). The burning bush caught Moses’ attention. What really caught his attention was the fact that the bush wasn’t burning up! Moses was witnessing the miraculous power of almighty God.

The Lord told Moses, “*I have come to deliver [My people] out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land.*” The Lord then informed Moses that He had chosen him to lead His people out of Egypt: “*I will certainly be with you. And this shall be a sign to you that I have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain.*” Again the Lord revealed Himself as the almighty God. The Jews were slaves in Egypt. They had not been trained to fight, and they had no weapons. At that time Egypt was a world power, with a powerful army. There was no way the Jews could free themselves. God, in His almighty power, would set them free! He promised, “*I will certainly be with you*” – with Moses and His people. God worked the ten plagues against the Egyptians, and finally destroyed the Egyptian army in the Red Sea. God’s people were free to go, with no threat any more from Egypt. The Lord eventually led them to Mt. Horeb, the same mountain on which He appeared to Moses in the burning bush, and promised to deliver His people. (By the way, Mount Horeb is another name for Mount Sinai, on which God later gave His people the Ten Commandments.)

As Moses approached the burning bush “*the Angel of the LORD,*” the Son of God, called to him from within the bush, “*Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground*” because the holy God was there. “*Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God.*” Moses was “*afraid;*” the idea from the original is that along with his fear Moses was “*in awe*” of God the Son. Moses, a sinful human being, hid his face in the presence of the holy God.

Once when Jesus had given Peter and the others a miraculous catch of fish Peter fell down at His feet and said, “*Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord*” (Lk. 5:8). For Jesus to be able to work such a miracle, Peter realized that Jesus is God. Peter knew that he was a sinful human being who didn’t deserve to be in Jesus’ holy presence.

The psalmist asked God: “*What is man that You are mindful of him?*” (8:4a). Who are we sinful human beings that the holy, almighty God should even notice us, much less care about us? The Bible admonishes us, “*Walk prudently when you go to the house of God; and draw near to hear rather than to give the sacrifice of fools, for they do not know that they do evil. Do not be rash with your mouth, and let not your heart utter anything hastily before God. For God is in heaven, and you on earth; therefore let your words be few*” (Eccl. 5:1-2). God doesn’t want us to be afraid or hesitant to come to Him (He. 4:14-16). But as He made clear when He told Moses to take off his sandals in His presence, God wants us to come before Him with deep reverence and humility.

God told Moses, “*The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob ... This is My name forever.*” ... “*Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’*” Remember, this is “*the Angel of the LORD,*” God the Son, speaking.

When the Son of God is called “*the Angel of the LORD,*” “*LORD*” in the original is literally, “*the existing One.*” “*LORD*” (“*the existing One*” – the God who really is there) is from the same word in the original as “*I AM.*” The Son of God was there during the lifetime of Abraham, and during the lifetime of Abraham’s son, Isaac, and during the lifetime of Isaac’s son, Jacob. Jesus said, “*Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM*” (Jn. 8:58). God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit is the eternal “*I AM*” who has always been, always is, and will always be. The Bible assures us, “*The eternal God is your refuge*” (Dt. 33:27). The eternal God was the refuge of Moses and His people as He led them to the Promised Land. The same eternal God is our refuge, leading us through life to our home in heaven.

-2-

“*The Angel of the LORD,*” the Son of God, told Moses, “*I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows. So I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and large land*” (as opposed to their present confinement from their slavery in Egypt), “*a land flowing with milk and honey*” – a land of rich blessings. The Bible says about our almighty, holy, eternal God, “*God is love*” (1 Jn. 4:8). God assures us of His love in His Word: “*I have loved you with an everlasting love*” (Jer. 31:3). In His love for His people God had seen their suffering and heard their cries for deliverance. God made Pharaoh set His people free, and destroyed Pharaoh’s army when he tried to take God’s people back to Egypt. God remained faithful to His people throughout their forty years of wandering in the desert and gave them a country of their own, the “*good and large*” Promised Land.

God did something far greater for His people. Before when He had called Himself “*the God of Abraham, ... Isaac, and ... Jacob,*” along with showing that He is the eternal God, it was a reminder that He is also the God of the covenant – the loving Savior-God. “*The Angel of the LORD,*” the Son of God, would later come as the promised Messiah descended from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He brings all who trust in Him into the Promised Land of heaven!

The Son of God, Jesus Christ, saw our human race helplessly enslaved in sin. In love He came down to earth and sacrificed His life on the cross and delivered us from our sins. During His earthly ministry Jesus said, “*But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living*” (Mt. 22:31-32). Jesus didn’t say “*I was the God of Abraham, ... Isaac, and ... Jacob*” (my emphasis), meaning that they are dead and gone. Jesus said, “*I am the God of Abraham, ... Isaac, and ... Jacob*” (my emphasis), meaning that our life doesn’t end when we die. For everyone who believes in Jesus, when we die He takes us from life here on earth into eternal life with Him in heaven. Jesus says, “*I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die*” (Jn. 11:25-26a)

As the Son of God lovingly cared for Moses and all of His Old Testament people, so He lovingly cares for us. Jesus sees when we have troubles. He listens to our cries for help, and He delivers us. We read in the thirty-fourth Psalm, “*The angel of the LORD*” (Jesus) “*encamps all around those who fear Him. ... The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry. ... The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears, and delivers them out of all their*

troubles. ... *The LORD redeems the soul of His servants*” (vv. 7, 15, 17, 22). Jesus takes care of us all through our lives, and He will see us safely into heaven with Him.

-3-

God told Moses, “*I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.*” But Moses said to God, “*Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?*” So [God] said, “*I will certainly be with you.*” Moses felt unworthy and unable to lead God’s people. God assured him that He had chosen him and that He would be with him, so Moses could and should serve Him. “*Moses said to God, ‘Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, “The God of your fathers has sent me to you,” and they say to me, “What is His name?” what shall I say to them?’ And God said to Moses, ‘I AM WHO I AM.’ And He said, ‘Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, “I AM has sent me to you.”’*”” Moses thought the people wouldn’t believe that God had chosen him to be their leader, and wouldn’t follow him. God told Moses to tell the people that the eternal God had chosen him to lead them, and they were to obey God and follow Moses.

Knowing our God and all He has done for us and continues to do for us, we love Him and want to serve Him and obey Him. We say in Luther’s explanation to the Second Article of the Apostles’ Creed “Christ ... redeemed me, ... with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent sufferings and death; that I should be His own, and live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness.”

“*God said to Moses, ‘I AM WHO I AM.’ ... This is My name forever, and this is My memorial to all generations.*” The God in whom we believe is the holy, almighty, eternal God. Our God is love, as He showed in giving His life to save us, and continues to show in faithfully leading us through life and taking us to heaven. Our God is a God we can revere and love, and to whom we can devote our lives, ourselves, our all. Amen.