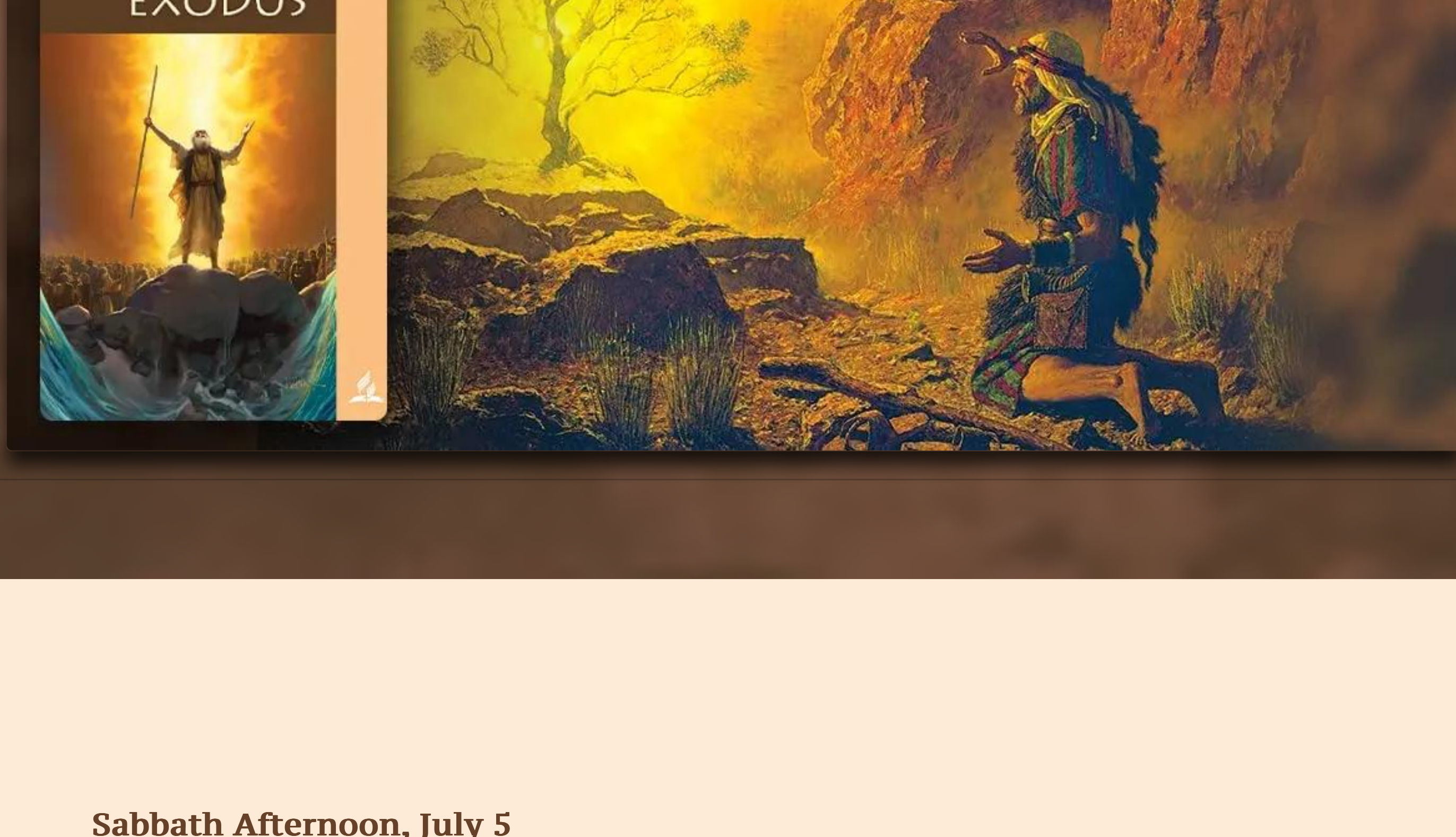


The Burning Bush

Lesson 2, 3rd Quarter, July 5-11, 2025



Sabbath Afternoon, July 5

Memory Text:

“And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites.” KJV — Exodus 3:7, 8

It should be remembered that we are not the first and the only people who have had to change our way of thinking; we are not the first and only people to discover that God's plans are the opposite of our plans. Moses, too, found that his plan for delivering the children of Israel from their Egyptian bondage was not God's plan. Likewise, God's plan for the route they were to take in their journey to the promised land was not their plan. The apostles positively believed that Christ was to set up His kingdom at His first advent, but they, too, had to change their belief. Moreover, since the Hebrews, whom out of slaves God had made kings, had been promised that their kingdom was to stand forever, they were indeed astounded when it went down. And there have been other surprises all along from the dawn of history.

Sunday, July 6

The Burning Bush

Read Exodus 3:1-6. What significance can be found in the fact that the Lord introduced Himself to Moses as “the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob”?

“As the years rolled on, and he wandered with his flocks in solitary places, pondering upon the oppressed condition of his people, he recounted the dealings of God with his fathers and the promises that were the heritage of the chosen nation, and his prayers for Israel ascended by day and by night. Heavenly angels shed their light around him. Here, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he wrote the book of Genesis. The long years spent amid the desert solitudes were rich in blessing, not alone to Moses and his people, but to the world in all succeeding ages. PP 251.1

“Leading his flocks one day near Horeb, “the mountain of God,” Moses saw a bush in flames, branches, foliage, and trunk, all burning, yet seeming not to be consumed. He drew near to view the wonderful sight, when a voice from out of the flame called him by name. With trembling lips he answered, “Here am I.” He was warned not to approach irreverently: “Put off thy shoes from off thy feet; for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.... I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” It was He who, as the Angel of the covenant, had revealed Himself to the fathers in ages past. “And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.” PP 251.2

“Humility and reverence should characterize the deportment of all who come into the presence of God. In the name of Jesus we may come before Him with confidence, but we must not approach Him with the boldness of presumption, as though He were on a level with ourselves. There are those who address the great and all-powerful and holy God, who dwelleth in light unapproachable, as they would address an equal, or even an inferior. There are those who conduct themselves in His house as they would not presume to do in the audience chamber of an earthly ruler. These should remember that they are in His sight whom seraphim adore, before whom angels veil their faces. God is greatly to be revered; all who truly realize His presence will bow in humility before Him, and, like Jacob beholding the vision of God, they will cry out, ‘How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.’” PP 252.1

Monday, July 7

The Angel of the Lord

Read Exodus 3:7-12. How did God explain to Moses why He wanted to intervene on behalf of the Israelites enslaved in Egypt?

“It was He who, as the Angel of the covenant, had revealed Himself to the fathers in ages past. ‘And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.’ PP 251.2

“And it came to pass in process of time, that the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage. And God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them.” The time for Israel's deliverance had come. But God's purpose was to be accomplished in a manner to pour contempt on human pride. The deliverer was to go forth as a humble shepherd, with only a rod in his hand; but God would make that rod the symbol of His power.” PP 251.2

“As Moses waited in reverent awe before God the words continued: “I have surely seen the affliction of My people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey.... Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth My people the children of Israel out of Egypt.” PP 252.2

“Amazed and terrified at the command, Moses drew back, saying, “Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?” The reply was, “Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain.” PP 252.3

Tuesday, July 8

The Name of the Lord

Read Exodus 3:12-22. Why did Moses want to know God's name and what is the significance of His name?

“Moses thought of the difficulties to be encountered, of the blindness, ignorance, and unbelief of his people, many of whom were almost destitute of a knowledge of God. “Behold,” he said, “when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is His name? what shall I say unto them?” The answer was”—PP 252.4

“I AM THAT I AM.’ ‘Thou shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.” PP 253.1

If God's proper name is Jehovah, then dare we His created beings, be so disrespectfully familiar as to address Him by His proper name, rather than by one of His titles, God, Lord, Father, Creator, Saviour, etc., when we would not think of indulging the less disrespectful familiarity of addressing our earthly parents by their given names – John, George, Bill, Dorothy, Ruth, Mary, etc., – in place of their parental titles Father and Mother? Such irreverence practiced by the heathen might be excusable because of their ignorance, but practiced by enlightened Christians, who ought to know better, it is inexcusable. We may with reverence use the word, Jehovah, only if a heathen should ask us, Who is your God? Then we could with solemn propriety answer Jehovah, the only true and living God. Never, though, when addressing God, can we reverentially use His Proper Name.

As the God-fearing Jews anciently “regarded the Divine Name as too sacred for utterance,” so should enlightened Christians do today.

However, the most ancient and hallowed Hebrew name for God was not only never commonly pronounced, but was even so-spelled, in an abbreviated form, that it could not be pronounced; so much so that the original pronunciation is not known. All we know for sure is the—Consonant Form, Yhwh, Yvh, or Yhw.

This abbreviated form of the name made it hard for the translators to spell out a pronounceable word. They, therefore, chose to supply what they thought were the missing vowels. The first syllabic term upon which there was general agreement was Jah. Other derivatives were supplied by different translators. Yahweh, Yahowah, or Yahovah were formulated to suit certain languages. The anglicized form evolved as Jehovah. Therefore, any improvised letters that go to make up the ineffable Name may not actually be the Hebrew word after all! (See Funk and Wagnall's Standard Dictionary, definition “Jehovah.”)

Wednesday, July 9

Four Excuses

Read Exodus 4:1-17. What set of signs did God give to Moses to perform in order to strengthen his position as God's messenger?

“Moses saw before him difficulties that seemed insurmountable. What proof could he give his people that God had indeed sent him? “Behold,” he said, “they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice; for they will say, The Lord hath not appeared unto thee.” Evidence that appealed to his own senses was now given. He was told to cast his rod upon the ground. As he did so, “it became a serpent; and Moses fled from before it.” He was commanded to seize it, and in his hand it became a rod. He was bidden to put his hand into his bosom. He obeyed, and “when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous as snow.” Being told to put it again into his bosom, he found on withdrawing it that it had become like the other. By these signs the Lord assured Moses that His own people, as well as Pharaoh, should be convinced that One mightier than the king of Egypt was manifest among them. PP 253.6

Read Exodus 4:10-18. How does the Lord respond to Moses, and what lessons can we take from that for ourselves, in whatever situation we believe God calls us to?

“But the servant of God was still overwhelmed by the thought of the strange and wonderful work before him. In his distress and fear he now pleaded as an excuse a lack of ready speech: “O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since Thou hast spoken unto Thy servant; but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue.” He had been so long away from the Egyptians that he had not so clear knowledge and ready use of their language as when he was among them. PP 254.1

“The Lord said unto him, “Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the Lord?” To this was added another assurance of divine aid: “Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say.” But Moses still entreated that a more competent person be selected. These excuses at first proceeded from humility and diffidence; but after the Lord had promised to remove all difficulties, and to give him final success, then any further shrinking back and complaining of his unfitness showed distrust of God. It implied a fear that God was unable to qualify him for the great work to which He had called him, or that He had made a mistake in the selection of the man. PP 254.2

“Moses was now directed to Aaron, his elder brother, who, having been in daily use of the language of the Egyptians, was able to speak it perfectly. He was told that Aaron was coming to meet him. The next words from the Lord were an unqualified command: PP 254.3

“Thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth: and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do. And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people: and he shall be, even he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God. And thou shalt take this rod in thine hand, wherewith thou shalt do signs.’ He could make no further resistance, for all ground for excuse was removed.” PP 254.4

Thursday, July 10

The Circumcision

Read Exodus 4:18-31. How do we understand this strange story, and what lesson can we take from it?

During those forty years of shepherd's life he forgot the Egyptian language, and with it the Egyptian learning. In its place, though, he learned to tend well to sheep. He therefore dismissed from his mind the idea of ever delivering the people of God from their Egyptian bondage. Then it was that God saw him strong and well able, and commanded him to go back to Egypt and to bring out of it His groaning people. You recall that Moses protested against the idea and argued that he had failed at his first attempt, the time he was young and well-informed and that at that late hour of his life he was not trying again, that he could no longer even speak the language. After a prolonged conversation God removed his objections by promising to give him his brother, Aaron, to be his spokesman, and Moses finally consented to return to Egypt.

“On the way from Midian, Moses received a startling and terrible warning of the Lord's displeasure. An angel appeared to him in a threatening manner, as if he would immediately destroy him. No explanation was given; but Moses remembered that he had disregarded one of God's requirements; yielding to the persuasion of his wife, he had neglected to perform the rite of circumcision upon their youngest son. He had failed to comply with the condition by which his child could be entitled to the blessings of God's covenant with Israel; and such a neglect on the part of their chosen leader could not but lessen the force of the divine precepts upon the people. Zipporah, fearing that her husband would be slain, performed the rite herself, and the angel then permitted Moses to pursue his journey. In his mission to Pharaoh, Moses was to be placed in a position of great peril; his life could be preserved only through the protection of holy angels. But while living in neglect of a known duty, he would not be secure; for he could not be shielded by the angels of God. PP 255.5

“In the time of trouble just before the coming of Christ, the righteous will be preserved through the ministrations of heavenly angels; but there will be no security for the transgressor of God's law. Angels cannot then protect those who are disregarding one of the divine precepts.” PP 256.1

Friday, July 11

Further Thought

“The divine command given to Moses found him self-distrustful, slow of speech, and timid. He was overwhelmed with a sense of his incapacity to be a mouthpiece for God to Israel. But having once accepted the work, he entered upon it with his whole heart, putting all his trust in the Lord. The greatness of his mission called into exercise the best powers of his mind. God blessed his ready obedience, and he became eloquent, hopeful, self-possessed, and well fitted for the greatest work ever given to man. This is an example of what God does to strengthen the character of those who trust Him fully and give themselves unreservedly to His commands. PP 255.1

“A man will gain power and efficiency as he accepts the responsibilities that God places upon him, and with his whole soul seeks to qualify himself to bear them aright. However humble his position or limited his ability, that man will attain true greatness who, trusting to divine strength, seeks to perform his work with fidelity. Had Moses relied upon his own strength and wisdom, and eagerly accepted the great charge, he would have evinced the entire unfitness for such a work. The fact that a man feels his weakness is at least some evidence that he realizes the magnitude of the work appointed him, and that he will make God his counselor and his strength.” PP 255.2