

## **Names of God from the Bible**

### **52 – The Presence**

*All God's Names are eternal names – so He is still The Presence for us today.*

#### **Reading: Exodus 33:12-23**

Presence speaks of intimate relationship. It is more than a mere acknowledgement of God.

When we consider the context of this expression of God, we realise that it was something very special and new. This Name was given to Moses, not Abraham, Isaac or Jacob. (Although God had told each of them that He was with them and would bless them.) However, this Name was not given at the initiation and calling of Moses, this occurred after the golden calf debacle.

Moses was called by God in Midian, where he had the experience of the bush that didn't burn, though it appeared on fire. He went back to Egypt and confronted Pharaoh, his false priests and magicians. God used Moses to inflict the plagues and death on the first born of the Egyptians. Moses led the people free and miraculously through the Red Sea on dry land. He saw the destruction of the Egyptian army as they were overwhelmed by the returning flood of water.

Here we read Moses saying to God, *"teach me Your ways so I may know You and continue to find favour with You."* God replied, *"My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."* Then Moses said to God, *"If Your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and Your people unless You go with us? What else will distinguish me and Your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?"*

Moses recognised that he was no more than a servant of God. Moses was not like the Egyptian magicians, nor was he a miracle worker. God, not Moses, had performed the miracles of the plagues that beat the forces of evil in Egypt. God, not Moses, had led the people of Israel through the Red Sea on dry land. God, not Moses, had drowned the Egyptian army.

Surely, these miracles proved God was with Moses and the Hebrews? Yet there had to be something more. Remember at the bush, Moses asked God for His Name? Why did he do that? God had already introduced Himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, so what more did Moses want?

A new Name. A Name that assured Moses of a personal experience of God.

Moses had seen God do awesome things. God gave him an awesome covenant and awesome instructions for the present and the future, but Moses wanted more. He asked God to reveal His glory.

God said, *"I will cause My goodness to pass in front of you... I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion."* In other words, I will show you My love. Yes, this was very special. God had been seen in awesome power and judgment, now God was going to show His love. The Presence that would go with Moses would be the Presence of Love.

The Bread of the Presence was there in the Tabernacle – the Bread of Love. As we look at that symbol through the lens of the New Testament, we see Jesus. Jesus, the Bread of Life. Jesus, the Bread of Love – His Body broken for us. God, The Presence, with us in Communion.

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How big is God's love? As wide as those hands that were spread upon the Cross. The Presence's heart was broken on the Cross as the final and indisputable vision of everlasting and eternal LOVE.

To know God's Presence is to know Love. To experience God's Presence is to experience Love. Like Moses, we can know and experience God's Presence, His Love.

Yet, there is more. God has given, Jesus has sent, the Holy Spirit as the deposit of the Presence, a guarantee of God's Love, to be with us every moment of every day, regardless of circumstances, challenges or crises.

What is more, as Jude informs us, Jesus will present us *"before His glorious Presence without fault and with great joy."*

### **What does that name mean for us today**

God is with us continuously in the Person of Love. He is on our side, He is at our side, and because of that, His perfect love casts out all our fear.

### **Prayer**

*Father, thank You for showing that You are Love, and that to be with You is to be in the eternal Presence of Love. Amen.*

### **Additional Readings**

- Exodus 25:23-30
- Psalm 139:7-24
- Jude 24

### **Questions**

1. What is the difference between the individual and community experience of God's Presence?
2. Has God revealed Himself as The Presence to you? How and when?
3. How does Jesus fulfil that Name?