

Christ & His Bride

Lesson #4

Prepare To Meet God

Feb. 26, 2025

Isa. 40:3 The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Powerful Reminder: God often does His greatest work in the wilderness.

- God spoke to Moses through a burning bush in the wilderness.
- He spoke to Elijah through a gentle whisper in the wilderness.
- God gives us the strength to overcome our trials in the wilderness.

John the Baptist preached repentance and prepare the way of the Lord in the wilderness.

Powerful Truth: In those dry, uncertain places, we are stripped of the distractions and reminded of what really matters.' The prophet says, "Clear or prepare the way for the Lord."

Isa. 40:3 The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Prepare: #6437 panah - to turn, to face, appear, look

In ancient Hebrew culture, the act of turning was significant both physically and spiritually.

Turning towards someone could indicate respect, attention, or readiness to listen, while turning away might suggest rejection or disapproval. The concept of turning is also deeply embedded in the idea of repentance, where one turns away from sin and towards God.

This reflects the covenant relationship between God and Israel, where turning towards God was a sign of faithfulness and obedience.

Highway: #4546. Mesillah In a spiritual context, the concept of a "highway" often symbolizes the path of righteousness or the way prepared by God for His people.

At the burning bush, the Lord told Moses that He had come to rescue His people and lead them "out of Egypt into their own fertile and spacious land. . . . a land flowing with milk and honey."

[Ex. 3:8] But before tasting the sweetness of their new homeland, the people had to first meet their Lord at His mountain. Moses led the people deeper into the wilderness to "the base of Mount Sinai" where they set up camp [19:2]. The Israelites spent nearly a year at the foot of Mount Sinai, learning God's law and worshiping Him.

Prepare Yourself To Witness The Mighty Power Of God.

A. Prepare to Meet with God—Exodus 19:1-8

- The LORD laid out to Moses the terms of His covenant with His people & His purpose.

Ex. 19:1-6a In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai.

² For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness; and there Israel camped before the mount.

³ And Moses went up unto God, and the Lord called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel;

⁴ Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, IF ye will OBEY my voice indeed, and Keep My Covenant,

THEN ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine:

⁶ And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.

- What God had done for Israel. What He expected. What He Would Do in the Future.

Ex. 19:7-8 And Moses came and called for the elders of the people and laid before their faces all these words which the Lord commanded him.

⁸ And All The People Answered Together, and said, All that the Lord hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the Lord.

Consider: By agreeing to "do everything the Lord has commanded" the people effectively signed their names to God's covenant. Key word > OBEY.

B. Prepare To Hear God Exodus 19:9

Ex. 19:9 And the Lord said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may HEAR when I speak with thee and believe thee forever. And Moses told the words of the people unto the Lord.

C. Prepare To Meet God, Obey Him, Hear Him

Ex. 19:10-11 And the Lord said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes,

¹¹ And be ready against the third day: for the third day the Lord will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai.

This speaks to the themes of sanctification, purification, obedience, and readiness to receive God's Word. The symbolism of sanctification and washing of clothes serves as a powerful reminder of the importance of approaching God with reverence, humility, and a pure heart.

- Remember: God's purpose for Israel: Kingdom of Priests and a holy nation

D. Prepare To Respect the LORD

Ex. 19:12 And thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about, saying,

Take heed to yourselves, that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death:

Ex. 19:13-15 There shall not an hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through; whether it be beast or man, it shall not live: when the trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount. And Moses went down from the mount unto the people, and sanctified the people; and they washed their clothes.

¹⁵ And he said unto the people, Be ready against the third day: come not at your wives.

The Appearance of the LORD: Ex. 19:16-25Ex. 19:16-19 On the third day, the presence of God was seen: in the "thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled."

¹⁷ Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they took their place at the foot of Mt. Sinai. ¹⁸ Now Mount Sinai was completely covered with smoke because the Lord had descended on it in fire, and its smoke went up like the smoke of a great furnace, and the whole mountain shook [quaked] violently. The sound of a trumpet, a shofar, grew louder and louder, and Moses spoke and God answered him by a voice.

Imagine seeing Mount Sinai engulfed in fire and smoke and feeling the foundations of the mountain moving at the sound of God's voice. What a dreadful, frightening display of God's power and presence! It serves as a symbol of God's holiness and the divine nature of the covenant which is about to be established.

Key: To receive His Law and Commandments, the people were required to be sanctified, holy, and set apart unto Him [19:10].

God required of His people what was true of Himself -

"Ye shall be holy; for I am holy" [19:10; Leviticus 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:7].

What was the initial purpose the Lord revealed Himself to His people on His holy mountain?

Ex. 20:18-20 All the people were seeing the thundering and the lightning, and heard the sound of the horn, and saw the mountain smoking—and when the people saw it they trembled with fear and kept their distance. ¹⁹ They said to Moses, "You speak to us and we will listen, but do not let God speak with us, lest we die." ²⁰ Moses said to the people, "Do not fear, for God has come to test you, That The Fear Of Him May Be Before You So That You Do Not Sin."

After Moses received God's law and instructions for the tabernacle at Mount Sinai, he ratified the covenant with blood in Exodus 24:4-6.

Ex. 24:7 And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient.

A reminder of the significance of obedience & submission to God's will in the lives of believers.

God has a specific plan and purpose for His Church.

I Pet. 2:9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

Rev. 5:10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

When we are born again, we are betrothed to Jesus Christ, our future bridegroom.

I Pet. 1:16 Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

I Thess. 4:7 For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.

Holiness= #38 = hagiosmos > SANCTIFIED; set apart; consecrated

Holiness or *hagiasmos* in the Greek has been defined by Wescott as:

"the preparation for the presence of God."

Isa. 40:3 The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Powerful Truth: In those dry, uncertain places, we are stripped of the distractions and reminded of what really matters.' The prophet says, "Clear or prepare the way for the Lord." What do I need to clear or remove to experience God? Sin, pride, busyness or self-reliance. The wilderness is not punishment: it is to Prepare The Way For The Lord To Work In You. Our life is a "preparation time" before we are to be presented to Christ as a pure virgin.

A. Recognize God's Presence In You

Gal. 2:20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.

John Gregory Mantle: "There is a great difference between realizing, 'On that Cross He was crucified *for me*,' and 'On that Cross I am crucified *with Him*.' The one aspect brings us deliverance from sin's *condemnation*, the other from sin's *power*."
Question: What does it mean as far as this life is concerned to be 'crucified with Christ?'
"It means three things: (1) a man on a cross is facing in only one direction;
(2) he is not going back; and (3) he has no further plans of his own.

T. S. Rendall "Too many Christians are trying to face in two directions at the same time. They are divided in heart. They want Heaven, but they also love the world. They are like Lot's wife:
➤ Running one way but facing another.

Gen. 19:26 But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt. This dramatic and harsh punishment serves as a warning about the consequences of disobedience to God's commands. Some see it as a symbol of being turned into a lifeless, unproductive substance, devoid of the spiritual life that comes from obedience and faith in God. Remember, a crucified man is not coming back. The cross spells finis for him; he is not going to return to his old life. Also, a crucified man has no plans of his own. He is done with the vainglory of this life. Its chains are broken and its charms are gone. In the light of these truths, would you say you are acting like a "crucified" Christian? - H.G.B.

I Cor. 6:19-20 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? ²⁰ For ye are bought with a price: therefore, glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

- The Holy Spirit was given for the purpose of glorifying Jesus Christ [John 16:14].
- The Spirit can use our bodies to glorify Him and to magnify Him [Phil. 1:20-21].
- Our special relationship to the Holy Spirit brings with it a special responsibility.

II Cor. 6:16-18 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them; and I will be their God,

and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.

¹⁸ And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

II Cor. 7:1 Therefore, since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from everything that could defile the body and the spirit, AND THUS Perfecting [accomplishing] Holiness in the Fear & Reverence of God.

Note:

#3436= molusmos = staining, defilement, pollution. = only use in NT

It conveys the idea of impurity or corruption that affects one's relationship with God.

#4151 Pneuma = spirit = often signifies the immaterial, life-giving force or presence of God.

The New Testament writers used "pneuma" [spirit] to articulate the presence and work of God in the life of believers and the church.

Eph. 4:30 And Grieve Not the holy Spirit of God,

whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

I Thess. 5:19 Quench Not the Spirit. Don't hold back the work of the Holy Spirit in you.

Consider: The Pharisees were keen on putting away sin, but they neglected to perfect holiness.

Powerful Truth: But it is foolish to try to perfect holiness if there is known sin in their lives.

I Pet. 1:16 Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

Swindoll: With a desire to make God relevant, we can make shallow the holiness of God.

A shallow view of God leads to a shallow life.

Cleansing ourselves is only half of the responsibility.

We must also be "Perfecting Holiness In The Fear Of God" [II Cor. 7:1].

This is a constant process as we grow in grace and knowledge [II Peter 3:18].

To be cleansed from spiritual and moral uncleanness, believers must "perfect holiness" in reverent obedience to God.

The fear of God is:

reverent obedience to Him, recognizing His holiness, majesty & Sovereignty.

Perfecting holiness in the fear of God means to humbly submit to God's sanctifying work in our lives, striving to live in a way that pleases Him.

B. Rely Upon His Promise

The promise of the Father: You shall receive the EMPOWERMENT of the Holy Spirit.

Rogers: Stop trying and start trusting. Let Jesus Christ live His life in you.

Stop asking: What would Jesus do if He were here. He is here.

Rogers: If you don't surrender and let Him live His life in you, you are only a little, cheap, tin imitation of Jesus. Your fellowship is broken, and your garment is defiled.

Powerful Truth: Living the Christian life is a miracle.

➤ Miracle #1 The New Birth

- **Miracle #3** Our translation and our glorified body
- **Miracle #2** Sanctification: The life we are to live is a supernatural life.

Powerful Truth: The Christian life is not difficult. It is impossible.

- God specializes in the impossible. He will live His life in and through you.

I Thess. 4:3 For this is the will of God, your sanctification:

Jeff Syverson: The shaping process is long and hard. Trials come to shape us.

Our faith is stretched and tested. But in all the stretching, pulling and shaping, His one design is to make us into a vessel He can use for His glory.

A habitat is defined as the environment in which a plant or animal naturally lives and grows.

God told Moses: The Israelites were to build a sanctuary for His dwelling place.

Ex. 25:8, 22 And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them.

And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee...

Sanctuary: a sacred place; place of holiness; safe haven

The Hebrew word, miqdash, means a consecrated or holy place.

He had specific demands regarding the environment and type of dwelling place that was acceptable to Him. God took Moses on the mountain and showed him exact details for the tabernacle which was patterned after and symbolized the heavenly tabernacle of God.

In Revelation 4, John takes us into the house of God, the heavenly tabernacle and into the very Holy of Holies itself.

I. God's Dwelling Place is the Throne [seat of authority] of Heaven.

Rev. 4:1-2 After these things [letters to the 7 churches] I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, "Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this."

² Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne. John is overwhelmed due to the authority of that throne and the glory of the One sitting on the throne. God's habitation is the place of power and authority.

Truth: God NO LONGER dwells in temples made with hands.

He now dwells, through His Holy Spirit, in the hearts of His people.

I Cor. 6:19 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?

If God is going to reside in your house; if you are going to experience the fullness of His presence manifested in your life, then He demands the throne. The THRONE is God's dwelling place. He has the right to rule, the right to control our lives. He comes as Lord, Master & King.

Truth: If God is going to feel at home in me, if I want a lasting, abiding, and growing relationship with Him, I MUST give Him the throne & be a prepared sanctuary for His dwelling.

II. God's Dwelling Place is a Holy Place

After John views the splendor of the throne of God and Him who sat on it, he begins to notice other things in God's dwelling place.

1. 24 thrones surround God's throne
2. These thrones have 24 seated, white-robed elders, crowned with gold crowns
3. Lightning and thunder proceed from the throne.
4. A sea of crystalline glass shimmers in front of the throne.
5. 7 lamps of fire surround the throne
6. Four living creatures like a lion, a calf, a man, and an eagle stand before the throne.

Rev. 4:8 The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within.

And they do not rest day or night, saying:

"Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!"

When the 4 living creatures gave glory and honor to God, the 24 elders fell on their faces and worshiped, saying

Rev. 4:11 "You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power;

For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created."

John becomes aware that God's throne is surrounded by absolute holiness.

It is thrice holy; the plan for the tabernacle included a place called the "Holy of Holies."

Truth: If God is going to dwell in us; if we are to enjoy the full richness of His presence;

not only must we give Him the throne, but we **MUST** also provide Him with a holy place.

God's home is a place of holiness. Yet many of us expect Him to dwell with us when there is uncleanness, rebellion, lust, worldliness and other unholy things in our lives.

Consider: If I am in tune to the Holy Spirit, it is part of His ministry to point out those things to me and clean them out. My part: Humble myself, yield and let Him work.

As long as I listen and co-operate, He will be working in me so that sanctuary becomes a holy dwelling place. It's when I resist that I grieve the Holy Spirit. Persistent resistance can eventually quench the Holy Spirit in my life. If I want the Holy Spirit to lead and control me, I must present myself to Him as a clean, pure, empty and holy vessel.

III. Provide Him with a Spirit of Thanksgiving

Rev. 4:9 He watches and listens as the 4 living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, to Him who lives forever and ever.

God dwells in the midst of continual thanksgiving. His Word exhorts us to give thanks.

I Chronicles 16:34 O give thanks to the Lord, for He is good;

for His lovingkindness is everlasting.

I Thess. 5:18 In everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

- Giving thanks to God is a healing balm for our spirit.

Consequence of NOT Giving Thanks [Ingratitude or Indifference]

Deut. 28:47-48 Because you did not serve the LORD your God with joy and gladness of heart, for the abundance of everything, Therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the Lord shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things: and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee.

- Stiff penalty? It shows the value and importance God places on thanksgiving.

Questions to Consider: Is the voice of constant thanks heard in the temple of my heart?

If God sniffed the air of my sanctuary, would He smell the sweet, fragrant incense of praise and thanksgiving or the stench of bitterness, anger, pride and ingratitude?

Paul & Silas were in jail, bound in heavy chains and behind guarded doors. It was dark and dismal. Around midnight they began praying and singing hymns of praise to God. God heard the praise and the prayers and said - "That sounds like home." He came down, the ground shook, the chains fell off, the prison doors opened and a pagan jailer and his family were brought to Christ - all because of an "attitude of gratitude."

Worship is not about your circumstances! Worship is about who God is!

IV. Provide God With An Attitude of Worship

In John's vision of Heaven, the throne of God is also filled with an atmosphere of worship. The 4 living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to God while the 24 elders fall on their faces before Him, cast their crowns at His feet and worship Him. [Rev. 4:9-11]

John witnesses the entire created host of Heaven and earth praising and worshipping God.

Rev. 5:12, 13b-14 "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom, And strength and honor and glory and blessing!" "Blessing and honor and glory and power Be to Him who sits on the throne, And to the Lamb, forever and ever!"

¹⁴ Then the four living creatures said, "Amen!" And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped Him who lives forever and ever.

"Amen" is intimately tied with worship; a powerful word that means to be in agreement with - "So be it." It is also a word of RADICAL OBEDIENCE which is at the heart of true worship.

Genuine worship comes from a heart that is in: 1. Absolute agreement with God

2. Absolutely committed to God

3. Radically Obedient to God

When God told Abraham to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice, Abraham did not complain; he complied. Without question or hesitation Abraham took Isaac to the mountain, placed him on the sacrificial altar, and prepared to slay him -

until God stayed his hand and provided a ram to be sacrificed in Isaac's place.

That was WORSHIP.

There was no music, no singing, no preaching, no program - just RADIAL OBEDIENCE.

When God allowed Satan to test Job's faithfulness, Job lost his family, wealth and health. He was reduced to sitting on an ash heap, scraping his sores with a piece of broken pottery. Job didn't understand his suffering and cried out to God. Yet there was an "amen" in his heart. In the midst of his trials he said:

Job 1:21-22 "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there.

The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; Blessed be the name of the LORD."

²² In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong.

Job didn't rail at God, curse God or turn away from God. Instead, he worshiped.

➤ Worship is not about your circumstances! Worship is about who God is!

When God told David that the child born of his adulterous affair with Bathsheba would die, David secluded himself for a week to seek God and fast and pray for the life of the child. When he was informed that the child was dead, what did David do? Did he get angry at God? Did he lose faith in a God who did not answer his prayers? NO! The Bible says that David washed himself, put on clean clothes, and worshiped God. [II Sam. 12:20] David had an "amen" spirit. Despite his pain and sorrow, he accepted God's will as right and just. That is WORSHIP. Acts 13:22 tells us that David was a man after God's own heart.

Truth: True worship is the response to the will of God in which, no matter how difficult or radical a thing He asks you to do, there is NO OBJECTION, NO RESISTANCE - there is only an "AMEN" in your spirit that says: "I agree with You, Lord."

It is a trusting acceptance that God's will is right, His justice fair, and His purpose perfect.

"Amen" worship is a radical abandonment of myself to the will and purpose of God.

God is looking for those who will abandon themselves completely to Him, casting everything at His feet.

II Chronicles 16:9 For the eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him.

Lord prepare me, to be a sanctuary, pure and holy, tried and true

With thanksgiving, I'll be a living, sanctuary, for you.

Prayer: "Lord, take the throne of my life. I give it to You. Make me into a holy habitation acceptable to You. Clean out the worldliness that has so controlled my life - the lust of the eye, the pride, the bitterness, the resentment, the uncleanness. Take it all out. I want to be a clean vessel, a holy habitation for Your presence and glory. Teach me to have a grateful heart.

Let thanksgiving rise up new every morning, like Your mercies, for great is Your faithfulness.

Teach me how to worship You in spirit and in truth. Give me an "Amen" in my heart of absolute surrender and radical obedience. Amen - So be it!"