

When the Church Can Expect a Powerful Holy Spirit Movement

The church I pastor, Passion Church, recently held a conference called Vision 2020. It was a wonderful time of worship, abiding in God's presence, hearing impactful preaching and receiving Spirit-led ministry.

I started the conference with a message calling the church back to true worship and devotion. Revival and awakening are a by-product of the depth of our love and devotion to Jesus. If you would like to purchase recordings of the conference, visit the Passion Church website.

This week's blog will continue the theme of the church's need for fresh consecration and devotion to Jesus if we want to see revival and awakening in our cities and nations. I believe the body of Christ is on the verge of another awakening, but it begins with allowing our hearts to be completely crucified and yielded to Jesus (Gal. 2:20, 6:14).

Since the beginning of the year, God has highlighted three things to me:

First, the church must maintain its first love—a pure worship of Jesus.

It is important for the church to remain in the essentials of the faith—worship of Jesus free of selfish motivation, a desire to obey His Word, to live a consecrated and disciplined life, and to maintain a passion to reach the world with the Good News. As people of faith, we honor and value Jesus for our salvation and His gifts given. Further, God's grace empowers us to do our assignment, and the Holy Spirit gives us hope, comfort and revelation. But first, we love Jesus wholeheartedly!

John 4:23 (NKJV) says, "But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him."

The heart of worship is Jesus! He is our affection and desire. We pursue Him, not His gifts or His benefits. We worship the King in holiness, in singularity of heart. No other gods before us, no other false affections. This is worship in Spirit and in truth.

As we worship Jesus in Spirit and in truth, Holy Spirit gifts and prophecy flow and revival can occur. Genuine prophecy flows from the heart of God toward humanity. Revelation flows from intimacy with Jesus and communion with the Holy Spirit, our friend and helper. He guides us into all truth, speaks what He hears, and reveals God's plans and purposes to us. Revival flows from the river of God's presence to dry and weary places.

Secondly, we must understand the importance of fellowship and partnership with the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is drawing the church back to the heart of worship, holiness and power. There is a clarion invitation, and as we respond in humility and righteousness, God's greater glory can be released. God is highlighting the importance of the Holy Spirit in this season. Why?

The Holy Spirit is the fulfillment of the promise Jesus made to the disciples that He would send another Comforter, the Spirit of truth who would abide with them, and with us, forever (John 14:16). The Holy Spirit was given to teach us, to bring all things to remembrance. He was to testify of Jesus; convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgment; and He empowers us with courage and wisdom to proclaim Christ in our world. Believers are anointed by the Holy Spirit, who abides with us and teaches us all things (1 John 2:20, 27).

The Holy Spirit is our Comforter, our friend and our helper in

time of need. Jesus is the rock, the source. The Holy Spirit is the river that never runs dry, never wearies, never quits and never stops flowing! We can dam up the river, but God's desire is that the Holy Spirit would run freely through our lives as living water to bring life to barren places. To realize individually and corporately what God has promised, we must learn to partner with the Holy Spirit.

Miracles don't occur because we will them into being. No, as we agree with God's Word, pray and trust the power of the Holy Spirit working in and with us, all things become possible!

Third, expect the prophesied season of harvest and miracles.

Quite often before revival occurs, God reveals what He is about to do. The Lord has been revealing for some time through His prophets that a great harvest of souls is coming. Jesus said in the parable of the wheat and the tares regarding this final harvest, "...the harvest is the end of the age..." (Matt. 13:39, NKJV). The last-day church will see the greatest harvest!

The Lord is inviting us to see the world as ready for harvest now—with Jesus it is always harvest time (see John 4:27-42). With the eyes of faith, the church must look at society differently, not as broken and hopeless; rather, ready to be harvested. Further, the acceleration of the harvest has begun (see Amos 9:11-12). In many parts of the world, dramatic church growth has been occurring for some time.

Along with this harvest, there is a resurgence of apostolic authority and power to advance God's kingdom and help with this harvest. The church should pray, evangelize and trust God for healing and miracles, but ultimately it is God who releases the power of His Spirit to reap the harvest.

As we position ourselves through sincere worship and devotion of God, we can expect His Spirit to move in power, healing and miracles to occur, and many to come into the kingdom! {eoa}

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Prophetic Pastor: The Reason So Many Believers Don't Experience Healings, Miracles

As a pastor, Candice Smithyman's desire is to see all believers pursue a higher level in Christ. God wants them to experience His manifest presence—and so does Smithyman.

But there is one thing that must happen and sadly, she says, it doesn't for all Christ followers. For them to experience God's healing and other miracles, their soul must be transformed.

"A lot of people miss out on these things is the component of faith," Smithyman, the executive pastor of Freedom Destiny Church in Orange Park, Florida, told Dr. Steve Greene on a recent episode of *Greenelines* on the Charisma Podcast Network.

“I know the whole faith movement that has happened in the past, and people are always telling others, ‘You don’t have enough faith.’ That’s not where I’m going with this.

“It is a place of believing the reality of what you are not seeing in a moment. It’s going to a place in Christ, a place and a relationship with Him, where you understand His goodness and love. Then you meditate on that until you grab hold of the fact that God loves you and He is good, and that He wants to do a miracle, He wants to heal you. They will say that God is good and how much He loves them, but when it comes down to it, they don’t really believe that God will do it for them or somebody they love. There’s a doubt there.

“Those doubts are crushed every single day when we spend time in the Word, reading it and speaking it over ourselves, declaring and decreeing the truth that Jesus speaks about Himself. He overcame with His authority every demonic force that comes to lie to us, deceive us, and create fear and doubt with us. That’s why I need to meditate on God’s Word until it becomes a reality for me. Then, faith becomes a reality and we begin to see the healing and the miracles.”

Be sure to tune in to Smithyman’s podcast, *Manifest His Presence*. And for more of her wisdom, listen to the entire *Greenelines* interview with her.

The Prophetic Link Among Abortion, Anti-Semitism and the Return of Messiah

The book of Exodus begins with an introduction to Moses and the explanation that Israel was in bondage in Egypt because the new ruler of Egypt had forgotten who Joseph was. For many believers in Yeshua, the book of Exodus is one of those Old Testament books that is only really good for making sermon points because we now have the New Testament.

Those Old Covenant books like Exodus have been replaced by the “new” and “better” books of the New Testament. This understanding is not only dangerous theologically, but it is bad prophetically.

Our understanding of the prophecies of the Bible requires our understanding of the texts of the Old Testament books. For instance, our understanding of a redeemer cannot be fully grasped without understanding the role of Moses. After all, the Bible tells us in Deuteronomy 18:15 that Yeshua (Jesus) would be a prophet like Moses.

So, it would be impossible to fully identify Yeshua as Messiah without knowledge of Moses. The truth is that the keys to understanding both the first coming and the Second Coming of Yeshua are directly tied to our understanding of the Torah, especially as it relates to the book of Exodus.

By way of clarification, let me provide one example of a prophetic link between the book of Exodus, the first coming of Yeshua and the return of Yeshua. In the book of Exodus, Israel is under bondage to Egypt because hatred of Israel rose among the Egyptians.

But slavery isn't the only evil thing we see begin to take

place in Egypt. We also see that in order to defeat the people of G-D, the Egyptians begin to kill babies. It is only after Egypt begins to hate the Jewish nation and espouse infanticide that G-D raises up Moses to deliver the children of Israel from Egypt.

Roll forward to when Yeshua came the first time. The Jewish people were under bondage to Rome and, as in Egypt, the Romans began the slaughter of babies. Once again, it was after the rise of hatred and infanticide that Yeshua came as our redeemer.

For those of us who believe that Yeshua is going to return one more time for the final redemption of Israel (which includes non-Jewish believers also: Eph 2:11-20), it should be easy to see this prophetic pattern in Scripture and apply it to our eschatology. The first two redemptions took place after the rise of hatred of the Jewish people and governmentally promoted infanticide.

In our world today, we have seen over the past few years a dramatic increase in anti-Semitism, unfortunately even among those who profess faith in Yeshua. We have also watched as government increased its promotion of infanticide (abortion) to the point where we have politicians calling for after-birth abortions.

In the Bible, when we see both the rise of hatred against the Jewish people and infanticide, we also see the redemption of Israel. Come, Yeshua, come! {eoa}

Eric Tokajer is author of *With Me in Paradise, Transient Singularity, OY! How Did I Get Here?: Thirty-One Things I Wish Someone Had Told Me Before Entering Ministry, #ManWisdom: With Eric Tokajer, Jesus Is to Christianity as Pasta Is to Italians and Galatians in Context.*

Why Kobe Bryant's Untimely Death Should Prompt Believers to Contemplate Their Mortality

We have all come face to face with eternity this week. Kobe Bryant, the basketball legend, the family man and American hero, was tragically killed in a helicopter crash. Eight others were also killed including his 13-year-old daughter, a rising basketball star, Gianna.

As soon as I heard news of the devastating crash, instantly I wondered, *Kobe, where are you? Where will you spend eternity?*

Death is a sobering reality and it must be faced with sacred respect and with self-examination. The severe truth is that none of us gets out of here alive. Wealthy people and poor people die; famous people and obscure people die. Educated people and blue-collar workers die; married people and single people die.

This is an opportune moment to consider our own mortality and to speak with others about their views on death. We are each given the opportunity to determine where we will spend eternity—no one decides it for us, but it is a personal and powerful decision. This singular decision is a vital part of human life and must not be ignored.

One day, each one of us will take our final gulp of the oxygen that surrounds earth and will step into the eternity that we have chosen.

As you ponder the impact of Kobe's incredible life and his untimely death, perhaps it would be an appropriate time to contemplate your own mortality. What, yet, do you have to accomplish before you leave time and enter eternity? Is there someone that you need to forgive? Is there a wrong that needs righting? Is there someone who needs to know that you care about the life they are living?

As Kobe's death is spoken about around the water coolers this week, and as others are processing the inevitability of death, perhaps it will present the opportunity for which you have been praying. Maybe, just maybe, you could respectfully and honorably share with your co-workers and friends where you will be spending eternity. It might be the moment when someone will listen to your heart of faith and will consider the peace that is yours because of Jesus.

Kobe and Gianna stepped into a helicopter and stepped out into their chosen eternity. I don't know where they are, but I know where I will spend eternity. I must share with those whom I love why my decision matters so deeply. I wish I could have shared it with Kobe and Gianna.

If you are looking for the words to say, perhaps these thoughts might help you as you share your faith with others: "I am not afraid of death because of an important decision that I have made. My decision is based on radical forgiveness, on a mercy that I didn't deserve and on a love that I don't understand. My decision was in response to the love of the man and our God, Jesus. He died young just like Kobe did. But He died so that I could live. I have asked Him to forgive my sins and now I know that I will live forever in heaven. Would you like to join me there?"

I am praying for Kobe's wife and for Gianna's mother today. I am praying for the family members of the others who were in the crash. I am praying for you as you share your hope with others. {eoa}

Carol McLeod is an author and popular speaker at women's conferences and retreats, where she teaches the Word of God with great joy and enthusiasm. Carol encourages and empowers women with passionate and practical biblical messages mixed with her own special brand of hope and humor. She has written five books: *No More Ordinary*, *Holy Estrogen!*, *The Rooms of a Woman's Heart*, *Defiant Joy!* and *Refined: Finding Joy in the Midst of the Fire*. Her teaching DVD *The Rooms of a Woman's Heart* won the Telly Award, a prestigious industry award for excellence in religious programming.

Global Investment Mogul Reveals 2 Ways to See God's Glory in Your Work

Shundrawn Thomas knows all about the favor and blessing of God in his life and career. As the president of a trillion-dollar global investment business, Thomas leans every day on his faith but, moreover, has surrendered his work and his company completely to God's will.

Obviously, the fruits of his labor have not been in vain. His most important mission, every day, is to glorify the Lord and impact the kingdom with the resources God has blessed him with.

"I've had a lot of success, and the spotlight has shined on me, but that doesn't necessarily reflect God's glory," Thomas told Dr. Steve Greene on a recent episode of *Greenelines* on

the Charisma Podcast Network. “I have found that the moments that glorify God the most is when those high levels or extraordinary level of success are met with two things.

“One, other people being served and being more well off reflects that glory. On varying levels, sometimes significant levels, people will actually recognize God’s hand in it. When they come to instinctively recognize that it’s something more than just about an individual or selfish ambition, then God gets the glory. They will see a more transcendent purpose and outcome of good. When that happens, even you yourself see, in a sense, the image of God, the handprint of God.

“The second thing I look for is, when I reflect myself, I can see that change in my own character has taken place. I can see where I’ve matured or grown. In that way, I also know that, OK, now I’m experiencing the hand of God. I’ve seen the glory of God because it’s coming through, not so much of what I’ve achieved, but what’s transformed in me.”

For more of Thomas’ incredible success story, listen to this podcast.

Jentezen Franklin: Too Many Christians Fall for This Worldly Point of View

As a preacher for more than three decades, Pastor Jentezen Franklin has seen too many Christians develop a mentality that

says, "The grass is greener." They want more out of life, but from a worldly, materialistic point of view.

But Franklin has come to discover that, like the formation of a diamond, a satisfying life in Christ takes time, effort and surrender to the Father's will. Believers, he says, need to appreciate where they are right now.

"In the natural, it takes intense heat and it takes pressure to form a diamond. It's just part of the process," Franklin told Dr. Steve Greene on a recent episode of *Greenelines* on the Charisma Podcast Network. "I wouldn't be who I am, and we wouldn't have the church we have had we not endured the intense heat and pressure.

"In this instant society, we all want the picture-perfect everything—the picture-perfect marriage, life. We look at other people's Instagram, and the grass is greener on the other side. The Bible says in Proverbs 17 that the eyes of the fool are on the ends of the earth. It's like the guy who has this \$100,000 bass boat and he's throwing his bait and his rod and reel as close as he can get to the bank from out in the middle of the lake. He doesn't appreciate where he is right now.

"[My suggestion] to everyone is to search for your own acres of diamonds. Ask God to open your eyes to where you are right now, to see the full potential of every opportunity that is front of you right now. Open your eyes to the relationships you've taken for granted. Open your eyes to the job that you've become so familiar with and that you don't even appreciate. Enjoy where you are and receive that and ask God to open your eyes to wonderful things. Have a spirit of gratitude and joy, not thinking about what you could have some day. God will still give you those things, but be grateful for what He has given you for now."

For more words of wisdom from Pastor Jentezen Franklin, listen

to this podcast.

The Real Reason Jews Take Offense at the Invitation to 'Become a Christian'

I first visited Israel in 1976.

I had responded to a small ad in the back of a magazine that said, "Wanted: Christian clergy to visit Israel. Only \$600, from New York City."

It was sponsored by the Jewish Agency for Israel, an operative outreach for the World Zionist Organization, and the price was right.

It was 28 years after Israel had become a nation and three years after the Yom Kippur War of 1973 when Israel was surprised by an attack by a coalition of forces from Syria and Egypt, while the Jews were in their synagogues acknowledging their sins as a nation. Within three days, however, Israeli forces had pushed the Syrians back to the pre-war ceasefire lines.

All conflict finally ended 240 days later, with Israel gaining even more land in the Golan Heights from Syria and Gaza from Egypt. By 1976, the nation seemed fairly safe and peaceful.

The Jewish Agency set the daily agenda. About 20 American clergies traveled by bus to various national and religious

sites during the day and were given various briefings by government and civic leaders. A Jewish rabbi traveled with us and invited dialog as we traveled. I remember how he seemed more knowledgeable of Christian history and theology than we clergy were of Jewish history and theology.

On several evenings, back at our hotel, we were presented lectures by various academicians on Hebrew history and modern Israeli successes. Again, I was unaware of much of Jewish history and persecution over the centuries—much of it caused by “Christians” and “in the name of Jesus of Nazareth.” At first, the lectures were interesting, but then I felt defensive—all right, self-righteous. After all, I had not personally discriminated against Jews—I barely knew any, nor had I done or said those despicable things.

Slowly, I began to realize how objectionable to many Jews such words as *church*, *Christian*, *conversion* or even Jesus’ name had become. Even in Bible college, I don’t remember being taught much about the horrors of the Jewish Holocaust. But these people had either lived through these terrible times or had relatives who had died in these atrocities.

These events were not 12th-century crusader stories to be read about in history classes. These were the events of family history for them. It is understandable how their views of Christians and Christianity were shaped by these realities.

—Jews were often killed indiscriminately by the “Christian” Crusaders, while they pursued their commission by Rome to drive “the infidel Muslims” from the Holy Land.

—During the Spanish Inquisition (14th and 15th centuries) many Jews were killed because they would not convert to Christianity, as demanded by the official church.

—For centuries, generations of children in Western nations were taught anti-Semitic attitudes by their own parents, teachers and even church leaders. Most Christians smugly

called all Jews “the Christ-killers.”

–The Protestant Reformation did not “reform” those attitudes. Martin Luther himself wrote and taught against Jews with deep animosity. Unfortunately, it was common for the times.

–The Nazi Holocaust was birthed and nurtured in a nation that was nominally “Christian,” while most nations (sadly, including the United States) did nothing to stop the actual slaughter of the millions of Jewish people and other outcasts of society.

Given these failures of Christian history*, it is understandable why the idea of “becoming a Christian” is viewed by many Jews as a betrayal or renouncement of their own ethnic origin, culture and history.

Accordingly, many of those seeking to communicate God’s love to today’s Jewish people refer to themselves as “Messianic” rather than “Christian” and use the literal Hebrew equivalent of Jesus’ name, *Yeshua*, to overcome the corruption of His name throughout history and its negative use and meaning in modern Jewish culture. After all, Jesus is first of all the Jewish Messiah and the then the gentiles’ Savior (Rom. 1:16).

The apostle Paul urges us to do “good work—to the Jew first, and then to the Gentile” (Rom. 2:16). While the standard of living in modern Israel is relatively good for the majority, approximately 21% of Israelis (mostly immigrants and certain Arab communities) were recently found to be living under the poverty line—more than in countries such as Mexico, Turkey and Chile.

I have frequently given to , “a benevolence outreach of Maoz Israel Ministries, established to meet the needs of hurting believers in Israel.” I invite you to review their mission and ministries and donate as often as you can.

Also, to better understand the cultural clash modern Jews and

Christians often experience, you might want to read the personal testimony of Ron Cantor, "Leave Me Alone, I'm Jewish." At his blog site, you can read the first two chapters free. Ron is the CEO of Tikkun International, "a global family of Messianic congregations, ministries, and leaders dedicated to the restoration of Israel and the church." I have come to really appreciate his ministries and insights.

Finally, you will never fully understand and appreciate Jewish people, Israel or the modern Messianic miracle without visiting Israel. I recommend that you review the exceptional, pastoral-led tour opportunities through InspirationTours/Israel or the ones conducted by Ron Cantor, where you can be introduced to the rebirthed Messianic movement in Israel.

*Insights are drawn from Jack Hayford's "Reaching His Chosen People," *Ministries Today* (March/April 2001): 20-21. {eoa}

*Ordained to the ministry in 1969, **Gary Curtis** is a graduate of LIFE Bible College at Los Angeles (soon to become Life Pacific University at San Dimas, California). He has taken graduate courses at Trinity College in Deerfield, Illinois, and Fuller Seminary in Pasadena, California. Gary served as part of the pastoral staff of The Church on The Way, the First Foursquare Church of Van Nuys, California, for 27 years (1988-2015); and served for the last 13 years as the vice president of Life on The Way Communications Inc., the church's not-for-profit media outreach. Now retired, Gary and his wife have been married for 50 years and live in Southern California. They have two married daughters and five grandchildren.*

Why Your Creativity Releases Deeper Intimacy With God

Allen Arnold says each person has a choice to live one of two kinds of lives—with or without God. We can either rely on Him to guide us, or we can take the perilous road of trying to do life on our own.

Arnold, who has spent 20 years in the publishing industry, adamantly chooses the former, and he wants everyone to know what he knows about the benefits of being anchored in identity, creativity and intimacy with God.

In other words, God can nourish our gift of creativity, or we can toil in futility without Him.

“Each of our stories are ones where we actively walk with God, step by step into the unknown, to the mystery, into the wildness of this world, or it’s one where we try to figure it out on our own,” Arnold told Dr. Steve Greene on a recent episode of *Greenelines* on the Charisma Podcast Network. “Sometimes we rely on our best intuition. We rely on formula, and we try to do it on our own strength.

“In these two schools of thought, you were born creative. But that gift of creativity is of God, and the creativity He gives us, I believe, is an invitation. It’s an invitation to pursue what we love to do. When we grow closer and discover more about God, He will develop that gift and draws us into our dreams, our passion, our destiny.

“He says, ‘Come with me. I’ll show you how to do this. I’m the original Creator and I know more about everything creative than anyone. But as you pursue what you love as My son or daughter, we will co-create together.’ That’s the invitation God gives us. You can choose to be with Him or without Him.”

For more on how you can further develop your creativity with God, listen to this podcast.

Prophetic Word: The Lord Says, 'Don't Quit, Remember Your History with Me'

Do you feel like quitting today? If so, the Lord gave me a word for you: "Don't quit; remember Me instead. You're on miracle territory; just remember!"

A number of years ago, a friend made me a prayer staff to memorialize what God has done in my life. I love this prayer staff because it has the names of my people on it: my grandparents' names, my mother's name, my aunts' and sisters' names, my uncles' and pastors' names, and more. It carries the names of many people who have made an impact on me; and, as such, it symbolizes my history with God. I love to use this staff because, when you remember your history with God, not only do you give Him the honor He deserves—but you also walk right onto miracle territory.

When you recall how good, how great and how faithful God has been in your life, you position yourself for a miracle.

My parents were sharecroppers. I was the baby of 12 children. I remember when my mother would take her first-fruits vegetables from every summer's harvest and go sell them. Then, she would take her vegetable money and donate it to the ministries of Billy Graham, Oral Roberts, T.L. Lowery, R.W. Schambach, and other powerful men and women of God.

It hits me like a ton of bricks when I remember this, because the Lord has told me that's why I am where I am today.

One time, I was standing in Mabee Center at Oral Roberts University. I was getting ready to go on stage and sing when, suddenly, the Lord spoke to me. He said, "You know the reason why you're here? You're here because of some cabbage. You're here because of some okra. You're here because of some tomatoes." He was talking about my mother's offerings—and He wanted me to remember how He had worked throughout my past in order to bring me onto that stage that day.

No matter where you are right now, you have a history with God too.

Your family has a history. And when you go to pray, it's time to remind God of who He is and of what He has done in the past. When you remember your history with God, He'll do today what He did yesterday. He'll do today what He did last month, last year and 20 years ago. He'll give you a miracle one more time when you thank Him for the miracles He already performed.

When you remind God of what He has done in the past, He'll remind you who He is right now.

He'll show you what He can do right now, too. Go ahead and say out loud as you read this: "I have a history with God." Say it again: "I have a history!"

God wants to give you a miracle right now. Nothing is impossible with Him. Whatever He has already done for you, He wants to do again. And whatever He hasn't done yet, He will do if you'll just remember how big He is. If you want to walk on miracle territory, remember your history.

When you remember God, celebrate what He has done in your life:

—Go back to the burning bush where God called you.

–Go back to the Sea of Galilee, where you walked on the water.

–Go back to where you were when no one knew your name.

–Go back and remember when the disease was taking over your body, but God healed you.

–Go back to that time when the divorce was imminent—but God restored your marriage and even gave you another child.

–Go back and remember when it looked like your children were lost, but then God brought them back, saved them and filled them with the Holy Ghost.

–Remember when you didn't have a job, but God blessed you!

–Remember when you were addicted to drugs and alcohol, but the Lord set you free!

Go back and remember your history with God. Don't let your story be the one described in Romans 1:21 (NKJV), where it says: "... although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened." No, *you* glorify God. *You* remember your history and give thanks for it. *You* persevere until you walk right into the miracle you need *today*.

How do you get a miracle? You remember your history with God.

With God, all things are possible. If you feel like quitting today, don't do it. Remember God instead. Remember what He has done, and believe Him to do it again. Step onto miracle territory with Him—and stay there. {eoa}

Judy Jacobs *is internationally known for her declarative worship and powerful message of the gospel. She has ministered personally in over 50 countries, and has also ministered through several TV networks such as TBN, Inspiration Network and Daystar. She has also been honored to minister and be*

involved with T.D. Jakes and The Potter's House, and many crusades. Pastor Judy serves as the co-pastor of Dwelling Place Church International. She is also the director of the International Institute of Mentoring and has published five books and eight solo albums. She is married to Pastor Jamie Tuttle, and together they have two daughters.

Messianic Rabbi: The Beauty of Standing on Holy Ground

Since the first time I heard the story of Moses and the burning bush as a small child, it has been one of my favorite biblical events.

Just think about it: Moses is minding his own business watching his sheep when he looks up and sees a bush covered with flames, but not being consumed by those flames. I have often said how impressed I was with Moses having the nerve to walk toward the bush.

I am sure I would have turned and run at the sight of something so clearly extraordinary. But Moses walks toward the bush, and it is then that G-D reveals one of the most important lessons we find in the entire Bible.

Remember at this moment in Moses' life, he is a fugitive from Egyptian justice, having murdered an Egyptian soldier. So, we see he is a murderer.

When we look a little deeper in Exodus chapter 4, we find that

he not only had committed murder, but he also has not circumcised at least one of his sons. So, Moses is a murderer who has also violated the Abrahamic covenant.

Moses has some real spiritual issues in his life and yet, while Moses is in this clear state of sin, G-D meets with him in a supernatural way and calls out to him from the center of the burning bush. But that is not the end of what G-D does. He doesn't just speak to Moses; He says in Exodus 3:5 (TLV):

"Then He said, 'Come no closer. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.'"

G-D didn't require Moses to repent of all of his sins before He spoke to him. G-D didn't ask Moses to go home and get his life right and then come back after he spent sufficient time being disciplined.

He didn't even ask Moses to go to all of those whom he had sinned against and make things right and then come back. No, G-D didn't require Moses to do any of those things. G-D simply asked Moses to take his sandals off his feet because the place on which he was standing was holy ground.

In our world, when something is holy or extremely valuable, we require people to put on special apparel, shoes and gloves so that they will not defile the object in any way. Yet when we read this narrative, we see that G-D does completely contrary to what we do. G-D tells Moses to remove his sandals from his feet—removing the one thing that separated Moses' feet from the holy ground.

"Why?" you may ask. Because the truth is that G-D calls every one of us, just as He called Moses, while we are sinners. When we turn toward G-D or repent (to turn), G-D makes us holy at that moment in time, just as G-D told Moses to remove his sandals, which separated Moses' feet from G-D's holy ground. We find this concept reiterated in the Book of Acts 3:19-20:

“Repent, therefore, and return—so your sins might be blotted out, so times of relief might come from the presence of ADONAI and He might send Yeshua, the Messiah appointed for you.”

Notice that it says repent so that your sins may be blotted out. But it doesn't stop there. It goes on to say, “that relief might come from the presence of G-D.”

This concept is unbelievably important for us to understand today because too many people, both believers and non-believers, are bound up in guilt because they don't understand that G-D doesn't wait for us to be perfect before He welcomes us into His holy presence. The result of this false belief is that they never experience the relief and beauty that come from being in G-D's presence on holy ground. {eoa}

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