

# The Holy Ground - Take Your Sandals Off Your Feet



## 1. Scripture - God's Commissioning to Moses and Joshua

### 1.1 Moses before the Burning Bush (Exodus 3:1-12)

**Exo 3** <sup>1</sup> 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. <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> Then Moses said, "I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush does not burn."

<sup>4</sup> 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."

<sup>5</sup> Then He said, "Do not draw near this place. **Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground.**" <sup>6</sup> 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.

<sup>7</sup> 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. <sup>8</sup> 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, to the place of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites. <sup>9</sup> Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel has come to Me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. <sup>10</sup> Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt."

<sup>11</sup> 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?"

<sup>12</sup> 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.**"

### 1.2 Joshua before the Promised Land (Joshua 5:14 – 6:5)

**Josh 5** <sup>13</sup> And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted his eyes and looked, and **behold, a Man stood opposite him with His sword drawn in His hand.** And Joshua went to Him and said to Him, "Are You for us or for our adversaries?"

<sup>14</sup> So He said, "**No, but as Commander of the army of the LORD I have now come.**"

And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and said to Him, "What does my Lord say to His servant?"

<sup>15</sup> Then the Commander of the LORD's army said to Joshua, "**Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand is holy.**" And Joshua did so.

**Josh 6** <sup>1</sup> Now Jericho was securely shut up because of the children of Israel; none went out, and none came in. <sup>2</sup> And the LORD said to Joshua: "**See! I have given Jericho into your hand, its king, and the mighty men of valor.** <sup>3</sup> You shall march around the city, all *you* men of war; you shall go all around the city once. This you shall do six days. <sup>4</sup> And seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark. But the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets. <sup>5</sup> It shall come to pass, when they make a long *blast* with the ram's horn, *and* when you hear the sound of the trumpet, that all the people shall shout with a great shout; then the wall of the city will fall down flat. And the people shall go up every man straight before him."

## 2. What is God Saying to His People in the Aftermath of the Covid Era?

### 2.1 At Threshold of God's Holy Assignment for Your Life

- I believe in the aftermath of the covid era, God is bringing His people to the place that Moses faced, and Joshua face - at the threshold of His holy assignment for our lives

At the threshold of their primary assignment, God appeared to Moses and Joshua, and required something unique from both of them.

- **Before Moses was sent to Pharaoh** to deliver Israel out of Egypt, God appeared before him and commissions him.

'Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand *is* holy ground.'

- **As Joshua stood before the Promised Land** God appeared before him and speaks to Him.

Joshua and the children of Israel crossed the Jordan river by God's power, another chapter in Israel's history opened. They observed the Passover, the second-generation men born in the wilderness were circumcised, they ate the produce of the land, and **the manna stopped**.

They cannot go back. They can only go forward. The Red Sea and Jordan will not open for them to back out and reverse their way out.

And the **Angel of the Lord – the Captain of the Lord's Army appears before Joshua the captain of Israel's army** – and commands Joshua,

'Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand *is* holy.'

### 2.2 Your 'YES' and Obedience to God Opens Your Book

- **Moses'** obedience to God's voice opened the book of Exodus.

**Joshua's** obedience to God's voice opened the book of Joshua.

**Jesus** too said, there is a book written about Him.

**Heb 6:**<sup>5</sup> *Therefore, when He came into the world, He said:*

*"Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, But **a body You have prepared for Me.***

*<sup>6</sup> In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure.*

*<sup>7</sup> Then I said, 'Behold, I have come—*

***In the volume of the book it is written of Me— To do Your will, O God.'*** "

Your body was given to you to do the will of God.

- You have a book on you too.

Ps 139 <sup>16</sup>Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book, they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when *as yet there were* none of them.

<sup>17</sup> How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them! <sup>18</sup> *If* I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand.

- **Your book opened** when you said YES to God and started following Jesus. This book contains God's will for your life, and your walk of obedience to His voice to walk in His will.

**Every detail is recorded** - The minute detail of your obedience and God's pleasure in you are footnoted. (God numbers the hair on your head.) Every difficult decision and choice you made for the Lord.

**At your repentance**, your sins and mistakes are wiped clean completely from your records by Jesus' blood. Delete! Those pages of your life are cleaned and fresh for the Lord to write His holy and joyful purpose for your life.

- For some – it is a new volume in your life like Moses and Joshua. God is bringing you to a place of His **PRIMARY assignment** of your life for which He has prepared you for decades.

For some – it is a **new chapter in your relationship** with your husband or wife, family, children, friends in Christ or our work or business, etc.

For some – it is a **new chapter in our walk** with God where He invites us to come nearer to Him to a deeper walk with Him. It may be a chapter hidden from the eyes of men, but it is precious and holy to the Lord and His eyes are burning upon you.

### **3. Where is Your Holy Ground?**

#### **3.1 God Can Speak Your Language**

- God spoke to Moses the shepherd in the burning bush.

God spoke to Joshua in the war zone with a drawn sword.

God knows what will get our attention - thick black texter or red paintbrush or fine blue pencil for each of us.

**God's voice speaking through these** – makes it **holy ground**. (Spirit and Word)

It is God's voice that spoke from the burning bush, that made the barren ground holy.

The presence of the holy God speaking to Joshua made the Canaanite land of gross evil - holy.

- God's holy presence can find you anywhere - train, bus, McDonald's, beach, café, kitchen, classrooms – anywhere – pubs, mosques, Buddhist temples.

God's holy presence can encounter you in the warzones and battlefields of your life.

(King David found God and wrote songs of worship the Judean desert, caves, rocks, and in the wars.)

#### **3.2 God Makes Your Everyday Appointment Your Holy Ground**

- God appeared in the place of their everyday appointment – the desert where Moses shepherded his sheep, in the warzone where Joshua fought battles.

Do not despise the place of your appointment whether in your family, workplace, career, church, or ministry – however humble, mundane, or difficult.

- What does God want Moses to understand as he watched the burning bush?

You might be one of the many desert bushes, bypassed by all. Dry, barren, forgotten, and forsaken.

But this holy fire does not go out, unlike his zeal, willpower, and idealism in his younger days.

- This very mountain of Moses' wilderness wandering was the Holy Mountain of God. He just didn't know it. Israel will worship God on this very mountain of your pain and tears. It will burn with God's fire and glory. God will cut His covenant with Israel HERE, and they become a holy nation unto Him.

None of the 40 wilderness years of Moses' life was wasted. All of it was to prepare the desert bush that burned with God's holy fire.

This is how God redeems our past.

- Your marriage, family, workplace, church, ministry, friends, business – that has been the place of your pain and disappointment and frustration – I pray you will recognise it is God's Mountain, and it will become your holy ground where His holy fire begins to burn.
- Where is your wilderness? What is your dry old desert bush?

### **4. Take Your Sandals off Your Feet**

#### **4.1 Invitation to a Deeper Level of Holiness**

- Why was Moses told to take his sandals off his feet? Why Joshua?

Korean church tradition - All take their shoes off at the 'holy' pulpit. Take off your shoes with dirt clinging from the street, and put on clean white indoor fabric slippers!

The bride and groom were told to march in with shoes off to honour this tradition.

Best to do away with the tradition of elders that gets exalted over the word of God.

- Priests were given no footwear to serve in the Tabernacle or the Temple. This includes the High Priest. Every detail of their priestly gear was designed precisely from headgear down to undergarment. But no footwear of any kind was given.

Instead, before they enter the Holy Place from the Outer Court to carry out their priestly service, they had to wash their hands and feet in the basin of clean water stationed at the door. And they enter barefoot and serve barefoot in the Presence of God. Or they die.

- You are set apart for God's personal use. That makes you holy. What is set apart for God becomes holy, and no one can touch it.

**Ps 105** <sup>13</sup> When they went from one nation to another, From *one* kingdom to another people, <sup>14</sup> He permitted no one to do them wrong; Yes, He rebuked kings for their sakes, <sup>15</sup> *Saying, "Do not touch My anointed ones, And do My prophets no harm."*

- Entering a new assignment from the Lord means you are invited deeper into His Holy Place, into His presence, into His heart and mind and plans.

It requires you to enter a new level of holiness. It requires you to marinate in the presence of God to be pickled in His holiness.

Joshua fell on his face and worshipped when he recognised God's holy presence. He had 40 years of training under Moses who met with the Lord face to face in the Tent of Meeting.

## 4.2 Invitation to a Deeper Level of Surrender

- Moses and Joshua were starting their primary assignment for their lives – and the doorway to entering that assignment is to face a formidable enemy and overcome it.

Moses's job was to deliver Israel from Egypt, and the doorway to the deliverance was Pharaoh, a formidable enemy.

Joshua's job was to bring Israel into the Promised Land, and the doorway into the land was through Jericho, a formidable city, shut in and out completely.

- Neither Moses nor Joshua were rookies. They were not L platers. They had 80 years of life's schooling under their belt.

Moses was a prince in Egypt for 40 years – he got his PhD under the best professors in Egypt - political science, foreign and domestic policy, military training, etc. Then the perseverance of 40 years as a forgotten forsaken man of the desert.

Joshua was a Hebrew slave in Egypt for 40 years, and then as Moses' servant and a Warrior General in the war zone for the next 40 years. He survived those years as all of the men of his generation died around him except Caleb.

- God is requiring those who have walked with the Lord for decades - Take your shoes off your feet. God requires a new whole depth of surrender and a laying down of what you know, your accomplishments, your know-how, and your prowess.

He requires a new walk of greater vulnerability. He becomes your safety, security, power, holiness, ability to sustain, etc.

Being set apart for God's holy use EQUALS laying down of our strengths, rights, safety, will, and opinion.

Are you for me or for my enemies? Are you on my side or my enemy's side? Neither. I am the captain of the Lord's army. You submit, surrender. You follow.

God won the battle and conquered the devil, death, and sin. His battles today are to conquer you and me till we surrender.

- New surrender means entering new rest.

### 4.3 Invitation to a Death Blow to Self

- God is the devouring fire that consumes all that is impure, egotistical, and self-centred.

**Isa 33** <sup>14B</sup> “Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire?  
Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?”

<sup>15</sup> He who walks righteously and speaks uprightly,  
He who despises the gain of oppressions,  
Who gestures with his hands, refusing bribes,  
Who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed,  
And shuts his eyes from seeing evil:

- He is the sharp polished sword that will deliver a death blow to all my rights, opinions, my ways.
- The Cross is this fire and the sword - the place of the execution of our sinful ego until we can say with Apostle Paul.

**Gal 6** <sup>14</sup> But **God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.**

What doesn't move God, doesn't move you. What doesn't impress Jesus doesn't impress you.

Boasts of the world and people don't move you, impress you, make you envious or jealous, or give you fear or inferiority complex. Boasts of this temporal life and world hold no value to you.

So, you do not boast or brag about your accomplishments, degrees, your paycheck, how dedicated you are, how much Bible you know, how much you pray and fast – nothing but the Lord and the cross – cos this is the power of God.

- The cross sets you free from yourself! You are one person you cannot run from – miserable, depressed, blaming, and accusing everyone but unable to see your own sin. The Cross of Jesus is the power of God that delivers death to sin and saves you from yourself.

**1 Cor 1** <sup>18</sup> *For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.* <sup>19</sup> *For it is written: “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, And bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.”*

<sup>20</sup> *Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?* <sup>21</sup> *For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.* <sup>22</sup> *For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom;* <sup>23</sup> *but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness,* <sup>24</sup> *but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.* <sup>25</sup> *Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.*

<sup>26</sup> *For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called.* <sup>27</sup> *But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty;* <sup>28</sup> *and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are,* <sup>29</sup> *that no flesh should glory in His presence.* <sup>30</sup> *But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God— and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—* <sup>31</sup> *that, as it is written, “He who glories, let him glory in the LORD.”*

- Death to man's strength means the power of God is resting on me. That's how we defeat the enemy that stands in the way of God's deliverance, that stands in the way of God's promise for me.

#### 4.4 What are the Shoes You need to Take off before the Lord?

- What kind of shoes are you wearing, that you need to take off before God in surrender? In death to self? What rights? What fights?

- All kinds of shoes - high heels, designer shoes, work boots, running shoes.

Take your shoes off as a mother and surrender your children to the Lord.

Take off your shoes as a wife and surrender your husband to the Lord.

Take off your shoes as a husband and surrender your wife to the Lord.

Take off your shoes as a businessman, career person, and breadwinner, and surrender your work, business, and career to the Lord.

Take off your shoes as a Christian worker and surrender your ministry, your church to the Lord.

- Jesus invites you to lay down your heavy burden, and take up His burden He gives you – it is light because it is His assignment for you.

Jesus invites you to take the hard yoke off your neck and put on His yoke that He gives you – which is easy because it is His calling for your life.

He invites you to learn from His humble and lowly heart and lay down our yoke and burden of pride, wilfulness, defensiveness, excuses, and blaming others.

He invites us to soften our stiff necks, break our hard hearts, bend our haughty eyes, and silence our boastful mouths – and receive His rest.

**Matt 11** <sup>25</sup> At that time Jesus answered and said, “I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from *the* wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes. <sup>26</sup> Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight. <sup>27</sup> All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and *the one* to whom the Son wills to reveal *Him*. <sup>28</sup> Come to Me, all *you* who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> For My yoke *is* easy and My burden is light.”