

Holy Ground



David Wilkerson October 1, 1983

God can't use a man until He gets him on holy ground. A holy God must have a holy man on holy ground.

Holy ground is not a physical place, but a spiritual one. When God commanded Moses to take off his shoes because he was on holy ground, He was not referring to a two-by-four piece of real estate. He was talking about a spiritual state.

God called Moses from the burning bush, commanding him: "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground..." (Exodus 3:5).

The place was holy! What place? The spiritual condition he had finally come to. Moses had arrived at a place in his growth where God could get through to him. He was now at the place of reception, ready to listen. He was mature and ready to be dealt with by a holy God.

Please don't think for a moment that Moses alone was on holy ground. So was all of Israel, even though they were at the end of their hope. I have never believed God would keep an entire nation under slavery just to give Moses time to mature into a gracious leader. Our Lord is no respecter of persons. God, in those 40 trying years, was preparing Israel as well as Moses. By way of loving judgment, the Lord was driving Israel back to holy ground — back to a hunger for Jehovah.

While Moses was on the mountain being stripped of all his rights — because that is what was meant by the removal of his shoes — Israel was in the valley being stripped of all human strength. Moses would have no rights; Israel, no strength. God could prove Himself strong on their behalf in no other way. The great "I AM" was being revealed! What is "Holy Ground"?

Let me list at least three descriptions of this spiritual condition.

1. It Is a Place Where All Hidden Leprosy Is Exposed.

Moses was truly a man touched by God. He was supernaturally called and was full of revelation about who God was. He was permitted to know guidance as few other men have known. He was humble, pious, and burdened for the honor of God. He loved God and grieved over the sins of the people.

In spite of all this, Moses did not know of the leprosy in his own bosom: "And the Lord said unto him, Put now thine hand into thy bosom. And he put his hand into his bosom; and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous as snow..." (Exodus 4:6).

What terror — to reach into your own bosom and touch leprosy! What an object lesson on the utter depravity of the flesh. There is nothing but disease and death in the old man. How can Moses stretch forth a leprous hand to bring about deliverance? Impossible!

Was God indulging in a little magic with Moses? No! He has no time for tricks and pranks. This was a powerful lesson the man of God must learn. It was God's way of saying to His man, "When self is in control, you end up

hurting people, bringing reproach on My work. When you attempt to do My work in spectacular, fleshly ways — you minister death, and not life.

"I cannot use that old nature from Egypt — it can't be transformed — it will always be leprous. There must be a new man, one caught up in the glory and power of the 'I AM!'"

Moses was commanded to put his leprous hand back into his bosom. "And he put his hand into his bosom again; and plucked it out of his bosom, and, behold, it was turned again as his other flesh..." (Exodus 4:7).

He would do it again in the sight of all Israel. God's people would see with their own eyes not only the miraculous anointing on the Lord's servant, but also his potential for horrible evil. They were not to get their eyes on Moses, but rather on the great "I AM." Did any in Israel that day dare to put their hand in their bosom — fearing the leprosy that lay hidden in themselves? The flesh was exposed that day, in all its ugliness and corruption.

Stretching forth the hand represents ministry. By it the seas opened, fire fell, and miracles were performed. Who among us today dares to stretch forth a leprous hand? Who will attempt to do God's work with a bosom filled with unexposed leprosy?

It will always be there, latent in the old man — the sin nature. And God wants it exposed to our spiritual eyes. Not only is there "no good thing" in us — there is a leprous thing in us! It is that horrible thing that lusts against the Spirit, that deadly thing that one must die to, at the Cross.

What a grief it must be to the heart of God to reject so many works done in His name, because they have leprosy in them. The leprosy of ego. The leprosy of human success — competition — self motivation.

The leprosy of a worker permeates everything he touches. One may create a great, even spectacular, work for God. All may praise its bigness, its grandeur. But the truth will out. If it has in it the seed of leprosy, it will spread until it finally kills.

What is leprosy, but sin? Hidden, unexposed, unforsaken sin! What happens when a man of God gets on holy ground? His inner soul is exposed! His deepest, hidden sins are brought to light. You can't lie with a leprous hand staring you in the face. No longer are you telling people what you've done for God — you are not glorying in your service to Him. You are too humbled by the exposure of what is in your flesh. Never again will you take lightly the potential for evil, latent in the flesh.

Thank God for that second, sanctifying touch! That cleansing moment, when by faith the old flesh is done away with and the hand of ministry is purified. When we are once again clothed in the proper flesh — His flesh.

2. Holy Ground Is a Place of No Reputation

Moses had decreased to zero point. Once he had been held in high esteem, respected in high government places, great in reputation and prestige. He moved among the wealthy and the influential, probably the best known man of his time. He was counselor to potentates.

But God couldn't use him until He tore him away from his popularity and esteem. Who knew him now? Hidden away, out of sight — silenced and without influence. He had no outlet for his great energy. No one now hung on his every word. What world leader would listen to such a man — an isolated shepherd, a has-been?

But the very moment Moses reached zero point — when his reputation was totally lost and there was nothing left of the old, self-promoting Moses — he was on holy ground!

How long did God wait by that bush, ready to break forth in a glorious new revelation? Only until that final, breaking moment when Moses truly no longer cared about his work or his reputation. When he gave up the last scraps of reputation, he found revelation.

The Lord Jesus stood on this same holy ground. The scriptures say,

"He made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant..." (Philippians 2:7).

It was a willful choice — to shun reputation and become a servant. Thank God for those who once again are being

called to such holy ground, seeking to decrease that He may increase.

One great man of God wrote, "The man of God who truly preaches the Word will finally give up the idea of being known. If he preaches Christ, his reputation will constantly decrease; Christ will increase. True prophets die unknown. God gives them their dues only after they die."

I believe that! If I as a minister am gaining a larger, more widespread reputation, something is missing in my message. Self is too prominent. Christ should be gaining, I should be losing recognition. I should begin to be less known as the years go by until, like Paul, I end up shut in with God.

Recently I wrote to the brethren who manage Kingston Trust in England. These godly men have given their lives to the distribution of books written by J. B. Stoney, Darby, Coates, and other pious English men of God who are now with the Lord. These men have stirred my soul. Their knowledge of Christ is awesome. I am reprinting some of their messages, and I asked Kingston Trust to supply me with biographical backgrounds on them. I was deeply moved by the answer I received.

"Dear David — These men labored mostly unknown and unrecognized in their time. They allowed little to be written about themselves; consequently, there is nothing to send you. They were concerned only with the glory of Christ and cared nothing for reputation or recognition."

No pictures! No brochures describing how or what they preach! No press clippings; no glamour, no flowery recommendations from well-known personalities. Nothing left of their work or reputation but the glorious message of Christ the Lord. Most of the time they signed only their initials to their messages. They fretted that someone might praise them and rob Christ of all the glory. No wonder they had an open heaven!

T. Austin-Sparks didn't even want his book covers to be in color—lest people be distracted from the message. Plain wrappers for great revelations. I can't find a picture of these pious men anywhere. They all died in faith, rejected by organized religion and mostly unknown in their time. Yet today, they speak louder than ever.

How many evangelists today would submit to the kind of ministry shutdown placed upon Paul? One day he is the busy shepherd of churches worldwide. He is a fruitful evangelist, teacher — shaking nations. He travels, he trains workers, he heals the multitudes in the power of God. The next picture is one of total isolation. He is put out of sight, in a dark prison.

But thank God for that shutdown! Out of it came the epistles to the body of Christ. It was a time of no reputation — but glorious revelation.

Let me tell you honestly what I believe a number of well-known ministers ought to do. Shut it all down for a while and get alone with God. Enter into a time and place of no reputation. Decrease! Shut down all the machinery — turn off all the cameras — silence all the publicity. Let all the promotion grind to a halt. Let the dear man of God isolate himself from the public eye, and let him touch God for a new revelation of Christ. Then bring back what is of God, in a purified form.

What is to be lost? Souls? How can a man of God please Him more than by being shut up alone with Him, decreasing and getting true revelation? God's kingdom does not depend on any one man or ministry. God is more interested in winning all of me, than in me winning all the world for Him. Furthermore, the world cannot be saved by men who refuse to decrease.

May we all decrease! May He alone increase! God help us to get back to this holy ground.

3. Holy Ground Is a Condition of Freedom From Materialism.

"He forsook Egypt...choosing rather to suffer with God's people than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season..." (Hebrews 11:25–27).

Nothing saps the power and authority of a man of God quicker than materialism. A true servant cannot set his heart on God and the things of this world simultaneously.

Materialism is not "things" in themselves, but the pursuit of things. Material things are the fuel that fires our lust.

Christ stands before us as a rebuke we cannot shut our eyes and ears to. He is set before us in the gospel as poor, despised, reproached, persecuted, without a place to lay his head. Jesus never enjoyed the things of this world — not its property, its wealth, its pleasures, or its success. He was satisfied with daily bread. And that is all He asks us to pray for also.

If there were any worth to the things of this world, certainly He would have partaken of them. He denied these things because He knew they had no value or virtue. He knew how the things of this world can become the object of man's affections, consuming all his time and energy. He knew how material things woo souls away from His own love. That is why our Lord poured contempt on the things of this world.

Christ wanted us to be so detached from this world and its things, that we would be ready to depart and be with Him momentarily. What a shame we prefer the physical blessings of the old covenant to the spiritual ones promised by Christ!

God is calling the church off from this covetous chase for the things of this world, because He knows the vanity and vexation it causes. What a sad day, when our Lord shows us how contemptible the things are that we struggle for, pray for, and worry about.

We excuse the poverty of Jesus as necessary to His work of redemption. Since we are not redeemers, we don't think we should suffer the same kind of lifestyle. Certainly Christ does not expect all to live as He did, but in trampling the things of this world and despising them, our Lord is trying to tell us they are not worth setting our affections upon.

It was Christ's gospel that brought to light a new way of living. A new way of waking humbly with the Lord as strangers having no love for this world. The apostles lived as did our Lord, and they died in a condition of poverty, persecution, and distress. They were set forth as examples of suffering and shame so that God's grace and love could be revealed through heavenly things.

Paul said: "Even to this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place...being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it — we are made as the filth of this world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day..." (1 Corinthians 4:9, 11–13).

Why is it that God gives so much of worldly success and riches to the vilest and most wicked of men? God pours riches and fame even upon His worst enemies. The ungodly get the greatest portion of this world's goods. Dictators have had more wealth poured upon them than they knew what to do with. You can tell how little God values worldly things by the way He gives them so freely to the damned. The Arabs today have most of this earth's wealth. The despisers of God have been inundated with so much money, they can't enjoy or use it all.

If property, money, and success were in any way godly or sanctified, would the Lord be so generous in giving them away to the worst of sinners? When Christ and His disciples walked this earth, they were surrounded by the wealth and opulence of the Roman potentates. But that which these reprobates so coveted, Christ totally rejected. He looked upon it as a snare. He preached and taught that it could destroy a man's soul. He exalted the excellence and superiority of spiritual values over physical. Christ also knew the total unsatisfaction and disappointment of those who had all their hearts could want. It left them empty and unfulfilled. Too, He knew the stupidity of men who had their security in material things.

We talk about the riches of our biblical patriarchs. Some of our godly ancestors lived to be hundreds of years old, and it gave them time to enjoy great earthly prosperity, huge estates, unparalleled riches. But it also brought on the violence and godlessness that ended in a flood.

To get on holy ground, one must cut the cord of materialism. I have not yet come to that place, but that is my goal. To have no place here on earth, but to give all time and energy in pursuing the revelation of Christ. Then perhaps we can say with our fathers, "Take this whole world, but give me Jesus."

God — get us back on holy ground.

[Download PDF](#) [1]

Links

[1] <http://worldchallenge.org/printpdf/4908/>