



A Systematic Expository Study of the Word of God

## PREPARATION FOR A GREAT HARVEST OF BLESSINGS

Isaiah 40:3-5; Joshua 3:5; Genesis 35:3-5

In the Old Testament, the children of Israel were commanded to gather for feasts, to hear the word of God in a focused, concentrated manner and to experience the spectacular (Deuteronomy 16:10-15; Ezra 6:19-22; 10:9-12). In the New Testament, especially at the time of our Lord Jesus Christ, it was not different (Matthew 4:23-25; 5:1,2; 15:32). In our own time, God has also given us the great opportunity to gather unto Him during special seasons like the December and Easter Retreats.

The Easter Retreat this year is unique and promises blessings of salvation, healing, renewal and restoration, and abundant life for every participant. It is our special privilege to plunge into God's inexhaustible storehouse and receive until our joy is full. The Lord has abundant blessings enough to meet the needs of all His children. But expectation determines realization. If we sow real faith, great expectations, serious publicity, earnest prayers and full participation into it, we are sure to reap bountiful blessings and great miracles. If on the other hand we sow cold, lukewarm attitude, half-hearted participation and lethargic prayers, we cannot justly expect divine visitations.

Sincere heart and life preparation always precede spiritual breakthrough and unforgettable encounter with God. The level of readiness to receive from God is determined by one's relationship with God, earnest craving and desire, availability to receive, prayer of faith and openness of heart. This preparation serves as a link connecting us with God's unlimited resources and sufficiency. God is prepared to bless and we must be prepared to receive too.

### PERSONAL PREPARATION FOR THE PROMISED BLESSINGS

Joshua 3:5; Job 11:13-19; Genesis 35:1-5; 1 Samuel 7:3-5; Ezra 7:10; Isaiah 62:10-12; 1 Chronicles 29:18,19; Isaiah 58:8-12; Hosea 6:1-3.

Retreat time affords people with varied needs the opportunity to plunge into God's power that "***hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness***" (salvation and total freedom, healing, deliverance, holiness, breakthrough in life's challenges, power of the Holy Spirit, fruitfulness in the family, restoration, revival etc.). On the part of all who are longing for God's visitation and abundance, the need for personal preparation is paramount. It is only instructive that recipients of great blessings from God have always prepared their hearts in terms of brokenness, sincerity, renewed commitment, obedience and removal of abominable objects.

In view of the great expectation from the Retreat to "***be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of [His] house; and drink of the river of [His] pleasures***" (Psalm 36:8), it is wise for us to (1) set goals (2) sanctify [set apart] ourselves (3) support with prayer and finance (4) seek to get the best (5) serve with commitment and dedication (6) secure necessary permission (7) spread abroad news of the programme.

### PROCLAMATION BY PEOPLE DESIRING THE PROMISED BLESSINGS

Psalms 68:11; 145:9-12; Luke 2:10,11; Mark 5:19; 2 Kings 7:9-16; Luke 14:16-23; John 1:40-42; Luke 8:38-40.

Going by what the Retreat promises to deliver, God expects us to herald its coming with zeal and commitment. He expects that multitudes of people will be brought unto Him for salvation, spiritual renewal and restoration, and instruction in the Word. Such a great event must therefore be joyously proclaimed by all God's people.

Every legitimate means and method must be employed by the church to proclaim and blaze it abroad. The goal for this year's publicity is to involve every member in effective and productive publicity. Emphasis will be placed on one-on-one contact. *Operation Andrew* cards will be handed out to all members to enable them monitor and follow-up on their contacts. This specific effort will be supported with (1) special Retreat jingles in English, Yoruba, Igbo and Pidgin and given to music sellers to broadcast on their public address

equipment, (2) market and community awareness using Deeper Life Buses to convey brethren to designated venues for mass publicity, (3) public transport publicity by volunteers who will ply the metropolis announcing the Retreat, (4) use of handbills to create awareness. These methods of publicity must be sustained until all people hear, all places covered and all are sufficiently convinced to attend the Retreat.

## **PARTICIPATION AND PRAYER FOR THE PROMISED BLESSINGS**

Luke 14:18-23; Numbers 10:29-32; Zechariah 8:21-23; Revelation 22:17; Psalm 2:8; Luke 18:1-8; 11:1-9; Isaiah 45:11; Lamentations 2:18,19; Ephesians 3:14-20; 6:18-20.

Often, there are people who give excuses when they are invited to attend great beneficial programmes like the forthcoming Retreat. Specifically, all prospective participants, both members and invitees are to be persuaded to attend the Retreat by all means and at all costs. Being a general public holiday period, we must make ourselves available and make it a priority to attend. Everyone should be encouraged not to travel out during the period of the Retreat, not to fix any other programme at the time, not to accept visitors or visitations during the period and to attend from the beginning and stay through to the end.

Our preparation for, proclamation of and participation in a great programme that promises great things like the coming Retreat will not be complete without earnest prayers. The fervent prayer of believing seekers will always enjoy God's attention and action. Prayer secures partnership with God; so, for God to work mightily for us, in us and through us, we must rediscover the priority of prayer in our preparation. While we pray for ourselves to experience God's favour and the fullness of His promised blessings, we must pray for the preachers, ministers and workers to be empowered by the Holy Spirit and be clean, unhindered channels of blessing to the participants. With faith that will not be denied, we should pray for the conversion of sinners, the transformation of lives, outpouring of the Spirit and divers kinds of blessings on all. At the end of the programme, we shall all have cause to celebrate Christ's resurrection and power.

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