

## A 40-Day Journey of Preparation (for the Bride of Yeshua)

To accompany the book: *Ready or Not – He is Coming* by Stephanie Cottam

**READY OR NOT – HE IS COMING**

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**See the leader notes at the end of this document**

### **AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION**

Making ourselves ready for our Lord Jesus' return can seem daunting, but Jesus is our example and He has left His Helper, the Holy Spirit, to lead us to being more like Him. As the Bride of Yeshua, there are many areas we can work on, preparing us for the day when we will be made perfect in Yeshua at His return.

This 40-day journey of preparation is not an exclusive formula of how to make ourselves ready for Jesus, but it is intended to provide you with prayer points, reflection and thought-provoking questions aimed at encouraging you to begin the preparation process for yourself. The author hopes and prays that everyone who studies this book in relation to what it means to make oneself ready, will be encouraged to continue the journey after the 40 days.

In the meantime, let's make this our prayer:

*Father God, as you prepare the Bride of Jesus for her glorious appearing before Your Son, we pray that You would send Your Holy Spirit to move among the Bride, cleansing her, transforming her and renewing her so she can stand before Jesus pure and holy in His light. Help each person who embarks on this Journey to find out what it means to them personally, about being ready for Jesus' return.*

## Section 1 - Introduction – Self-reflection

1. On Page 15, the author mentions the idea of the Bible being like a mirror. How does this relate to some of the Scriptures you have read recently?
  - a. Read through **Psalm 139**

As we go through our studies together, pray that the Holy Spirit will shine His light on areas He wants to challenge / change within you.
  
2. On page 20, the author quotes from Song of Songs 2:10-13. Read through this passage then close your eyes and imagine being in this kind of garden, walking with God just as Adam and Eve had done.
  - a. Now read the account of the Garden in Genesis chapters 1 -2.
  - b. Read also Psalm 104: 5-31
    - i. What thoughts / feelings do these passages evoke in you?
    - ii. What would you say to Jesus, if He was physically walking with you through the Garden?
    - iii. Pause and remain silent for a moment. Can you hear the Lover of your soul speaking to you? What is He saying?
  
3. On p24, the author shows how “good”, as declared over all of God’s creation, means “absolute rightness”.
  - a. How do you think this has changed today?
  - b. How do you think this relates to you, as part of God’s creation?
  
4. Read Romans 8:22 – what do you recognise as the “groans and labours” of the whole of creation today?
  
5. Read Revelation 21 – 22:5, how do you see, from this passage, the end restoring what once was in the beginning, before sin separated us from God?

6. On page 25, the author talks about the idols which man has created to fill the God-shaped hole in their lives.
  - a. Can you think of any idols you have allowed to displace God?
  - b. Read Ezekiel 14:3, what does this verse show you about how it makes God feel when He is displaced?
  - c. Reflect back over your life, can you recognise the times when Jesus was pursuing you?
  - d. Take some time to repent of anything which the Holy Spirit showed had displaced God in your life. Give Him His place as Lord over all.

## **Section 2 - In a Covenant Relationship**

7. On Page 33, the author discusses the Lamb's Book of Life, as the ultimate Guest List – any other list is not worth having your name on it, if your name is not in the Lamb's Book.
  - a. Read Revelation 20:12, Revelation 3:5, Revelation 13:8, Revelation 20:15 and Revelation 17:8. What understanding can you gain, from these verses, about the Lamb's Book of Life?
  - b. Yom Kippur is the Jewish Fast dedicated to the "Book of Life". On Rosh Hashanah, ten days prior to Yom Kippur, Jewish tradition holds that God inscribes the name of those who are considered righteous before Him in the Book of Life. For the next ten days, until Rosh Hashanah, those whose names are not recorded have the opportunity to make amends, seeking forgiveness from God, and from other people they have wronged during the year. Once Yom Kippur arrives, God seals His verdict. Man's destiny for the year is sealed until next year (Read Leviticus 23:26-32 for the Biblical account of this Feast).
    - i. How does the Jewish understanding of The Book of Life relate to your own understanding?
    - ii. What can we learn from Jesus' sacrificial death for our sins in relation to the Book of Life? What passages support this – for example, Hebrews 10.
8. In chapter 3, the author describes the *Kiddushin*.

- a. Outline what *Kiddushin* is in Jewish tradition.
  - b. Outline how *Kiddushin* relates to you.
9. On p39, the author talks about the idea of an “adulterous relationship” regarding our relationship with Yeshua.
- a. What does a spiritually adulterous relationship look like?

The author also talks about a Jewish woman being “set apart” for her betrothed husband.

- b. How does this relate to the Bride of Yeshua?
  - c. How does this relate to you personally?
10. On p40, the author describes some of the tactics used by the “father” of Yeshua’s Bride to hinder her from entering into the fullness of a relationship with Him.
- a. Can you think of tactics satan used against you?
  - b. Can you think of people around you against whom you see satan using similar tactics to hinder them? Spend some time praying for them – asking the Holy Spirit to bring people to mind – that they would be set free in Yeshua.
11. On p41, the author describes the *ShtarTena’im*, relating it to what we have been given in the Scriptures.
- a. Have you ever considered the possibility of our relationship with Yeshua being conditional?
  - b. Find verses from both the Old and New Testaments, which indicates how the Bible is our *ShtarTena’im* – some of the conditions by which our relationship progresses with our Heavenly Bridegroom. For example, 2 Chronicles 7:14 states “**IF** My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, **THEN** I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land” (Emphasis is author’s own).

12. On Page 41, the author also describes the *Mohar*.
- What is your understanding of the *Mohar*?
  - Reflect on Micah 6:3, 1 Corinthians 6:16, Romans 8:31, Mark 9:41, 1 Corinthians 6:11 and Hebrews 10:10. What do these tell us about the *Mohar* paid by Yeshua?
  - What does this tell you about your own worth to Yeshua?
13. Read the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20, and the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew chapters 5-7.
- Where can you see an overlap in these two “lists of rules”?
  - Where can you see Jesus building on the Ten Commandments?
  - What areas do you think you “do well” in your daily walk?
  - What areas are you struggling with? Spend some time praying about these and ask the Holy Spirit to help you overcome, as He cleanses you and transforms you in preparation for Yeshua’s return.
14. On p49, the author describes the *Chuppah*.
- What is your understanding of what the *Chuppah* is?
  - Read Psalm 91, how does this passage demonstrate the “spiritual” *Chuppah* to you?
  - Can you think of any other passages which demonstrate the *Chuppah* of Yeshua over His Bride-to-be?
15. Throughout chapter four, the author looks in detail at the Cup of *Kiddushin*.
- What is your understanding of the Cup of *Kiddushin*?
  - How does this relate to the Jewish weekly Shabbat and the Christian Communion?
16. Read the author’s description of the Jewish Passover Festival which Yeshua celebrated before He was arrested on pages 50-54.
- What elements can you see from the text is symbolic of Yeshua?

- b. As you consider Easter, how does this tie in with Passover?
- c. Consider the Four Cups of Passover which the author outlines on P53. What do you think to the way she reflects on the third and fourth cup in relation to Jesus' death and resurrection and of His return?

17. Cup of *Kiddushin*:

- a. If you are in a Group, consider sharing together the Cup of *Kiddushin*, reading the Prayer of Blessing as outlined on page 47, with a fresh understanding of the vows we have made with Yeshua.
- b. If you are studying this alone, consider affirming your covenant relationship with Yeshua in drinking the Cup of *Kiddushin*, reading the Prayer of Blessing from p47.
- c. In either instance, reflect on the New Covenant we receive through Yeshua, and the affirmation of the betrothal relationship He made with us, through His own blood.

18. From the bottom of page 57 – page 58, the author talks about how a Jewish Bride would check her conduct as a betrothed woman.

- a. How should the betrothed of Yeshua check her conduct while we wait for Yeshua's return?
- b. Read Jeremiah 17:9, 1 Corinthians 7:23, 1 Corinthians 3:3, Ephesians 2:2, Isaiah 55:9, Colossians 2:8, Titus 2:12-13 and 1 John 3
- c. Reflect on whether there any areas within your own walk you need to "keep in check", listen to the prompting of the Holy Spirit as He brings conviction. Praise God for the work He is doing in you.

### Section 3 - Looking ahead to Yeshua's return

19. Read Matthew 24:3-14

- a. What recent events would you consider to be some of the "signs" such as Jesus described in this passage?
- b. Spend some time reflecting on these signs, praying for the Harvest (Read Matthew 9:37-38 and Revelation 14:14-15), as the Day of the Lord's return for His Bride draws ever nearer.

20. The author mentions Judges 21:25.

- a. What do you see happening around you which demonstrates this is the state of our world today?
- b. How difficult, or easy, do you find living "against the flow" of this type of society – in compliance with the *ShtarTena'im* – or do you find it too difficult?
- c. Ask the Holy Spirit for guidance in living out His way, instead of the way of the world, to be ready to share the hope that is within you (1 Peter 3:15), to give you the words to say and the actions which demonstrate the power and authority we have received in Yeshua.

21. Read 1 Thessalonians 5:4-6, Matthew 24:4, 2 John 1:7 and 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4, and the author's text on page 62 which relate to these passages.

- a. How do these verses relate to each other?
- b. How do they relate to you?
- c. If you are in a group, pray for one another, that you won't be deceived in these days.
- d. If you are studying alone, ask the Lord to be with you each day, protecting you, leading you and guiding you so that you do not become deceived in these days.
- e. Pray for your Church Leaders, that they too will not be deceived, and would be strengthened in the Lord in these days, as they lead the Bride of Yeshua – that they may present her to the Lord, a pure and clean Bride.
- f. Pray for the Bride of Yeshua, as a whole.

22. Read 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4, Daniel 9-12 and Matthew 24:15-31.
- How do each of these passages relate to each other?
  - What are the signs we should be watching for?
  - It is so easy for Christians to become caught up in trying to work out “who” the prophecy relates to, but what is the more important issue in this warning / prophecy?
23. Read Isaiah 5:20
- How do you see this prophecy being played out today?
  - Do you agree with the author in her reflection of this verse on Page 63?
  - Have you ever found yourself in a situation where you have had to / wanted to challenge this mindset in others?
  - What can the Bride of Yeshua do to counteract this attitude? Read Matthew 5:13-16 and 1 John 3:13-24, for example.
24. Read Romans 1:20-32.
- As you read through the list Paul offers – were there any areas which caused you to pause over / giving you a “check in your spirit”?
  - Find other passages relating to conduct of the flesh versus conduct of the spirit.
  - Is there anything you need to repent of before your Heavenly Bridegroom?
25. Romans 1: 32, Paul states, “who, knowing the righteous judgment of God... not only do the same **but also approve of those who practice them** (Emphasis is author’s own). Being “set-apart” for Yeshua means there are many things which are acceptable to the world, but which are contrary to the *ShtarTena'im* Yeshua gave to us.
- Remind yourself of what your understanding of being “set apart” was, based on your answer to question 9.
  - Is there anything which the Bride of Yeshua accepts and approves of, which Paul is challenging in this passage? How do you think this affects her relationship with her Bridegroom?

- c. Spend time in silent reflection of this passage, are there areas within society which you accept and approve, which the Holy Spirit is convicting you of? How do you think this affects your relationship with your Heavenly Bridegroom?
26. Read the letters Jesus sent to the seven Churches, as recorded in Revelation 2-3.
- a. How do they relate to the passage in Romans 1:20-32?
  - b. What letter do you think would be sent to the Western Church today?
  - c. What letter do you think would be sent to the Eastern Church today?
  - d. What letter do you think would be sent to Israel today?
  - e. Which letter do you think Jesus would send to you personally?
    - i. Pray for your own Church Fellowship
    - ii. Pray for the Bride of Yeshua in your Nation
27. Read Ephesians 4:17-24, Philippians 1:27 and 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8 and the author's text on P68-69.
- a. How can you apply these passages into your own conduct as you, like the Jewish Bride, await your soon-coming King?
  - b. When did you last encourage someone in their own walk?
  - c. Ask the Holy Spirit to bring to mind someone / or many people you can encourage in their walk as we await the return of Yeshua.
28. Read John 14:2-3, 28 and the author's text on page 83.
- a. What would a Jewish Groom be doing while separated from his bride?
  - b. Does this give you an idea of what Yeshua is doing while separated from His Bride?
  - c. Read Mark 13:32. Why does Yeshua Himself not know when He will return (see author's explanation on P83).
  - d. What does this tell us about how to treat the "prophecies" relating to the date people say Jesus will return? See also Matthew 24: 23-28.
29. Read Esther 2:12-13 and Ruth 3:3 and the author's text on pages 71-72 regarding being washed, being perfumed and being dressed.

- a. How can you relate the physical acts of preparation to the spiritual act of preparation?
  - b. How can you relate the spiritual act of preparation to yourself?
30. On page 73, the author states that the Jewish bride begins to reflect the one she loves.
- a. What are some of the ways the Bride of Yeshua can reflect Jesus to the world?
  - b. Can you think of the ways / instances you have reflected Yeshua to those around you?
  - c. Ask the Holy Spirit for more opportunities for you to be a reflection of Jesus to the world.
31. Read Revelation 19:8, Romans 13:12-14a and Colossians 3:12-14.
- a. What do these passages tell us about the way Yeshua's Bride will be dressed?
  - b. How can you "clothe yourself with the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ"?
32. On page 85, the author states, "we are certainly in a spiritual night".
- a. Do you agree or disagree with her statement? What would you define as a "spiritual night"?
  - b. Read Leviticus 24:3. The Lampstand, which was lit before the Lord in the Holy Place could NEVER go out – even during the night. As we are in a spiritual night, how can we keep our lamps burning before the Lord?
  - c. Do you think the Church, like the Jewish People before her, has given up on Yeshua's promise?
  - d. What can we do to encourage Yeshua's Bride? Ask the Holy Spirit to give you an opportunity to encourage His Bride not to give up on the promise that Jesus will one day come back to take her home with Him.
  - e. On page 86, the author states "This causes us to look down instead of looking up, leading us away from watching out for the signs of the return of our Groom. Be alert Church! Be ready!" How does this relate to your own life?
33. Read Matthew 25:6-10 and the author's discussion of the Lamp on pages 86-91.
- a. How do the author's reflections relate to you?
  - b. How are your "oil levels"?

- c. How is the wick between the oil and the flame looking in your life? Are there areas you need to allow the Lord to trim in order to make the flow of oil more effective?
34. Read Matthew 25:10-12.
- a. When the Jewish Wedding took place, the doors were shut, once the bride and groom were in place, NEVER to be opened – even for latecomers. What is the stark warning you can learn from this?
  - b. Is there anything you need to do to ensure you are ready, like the wise virgins?
  - c. Although we cannot “share our oil” with others who are waiting for the Groom’s return, is there anything we can do to encourage them to be ready with their own oil supply? Ask the Holy Spirit to lead you to help someone.
35. On pages 95-96, the author describes the final act of preparation for the Jewish bride.
- a. What is her final act of preparation?
  - b. What does this symbolise?
  - c. How does this relate spiritually, to the Bride of Yeshua? Read Matthew 27:51 and Hebrews 9-10.
  - d. How does the Jewish Bride know when to complete her preparation?
  - e. What does this tell us about our role?
36. In Chapter 9, the author discusses the Groom of the Old Testament.
- a. Who is the “Groom” of the Old Testament? Which verses support this?
  - b. Who is the Bride of the Old Testament? Which verses support this?
  - c. On page 102, the author surmises that the relationship between the Bride and Groom has not been broken. Do you agree or disagree? What verses support this?
  - d. What does this tell us about our relationship with God today?
37. Read Chapter 9.
- a. What is the difference between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies?
  - b. What passages in the Bible can you find which discuss the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies?

- c. What role did the Priest play in these areas?
  - d. Read Hebrews 4:14-16. What does this tell us about Yeshua's role as our Great High Priest?
  - e. On page 107, the author described how the Lord showed her the state of many in the Church in relation to the Temple of God. Which section of "The Temple" do you think you are standing at the moment? (See 1 Kings 5 and 6 for a description of the preparation process and building of the Temple, by King Solomon).
38. On page 117, the author describes a vision she had relating to the return of Jesus.
- a. What are your thoughts on this vision?
  - b. How true do you think this vision relates to the Bride of Yeshua at the moment?
  - c. What do you think this tells you about what we need to do as the Bride of Yeshua, to be ready for His return?
  - d. How do you relate to that? Are you prepared to "stand and fight with the Bridegroom" (page 120)
39. In Chapter 15, the author relates the children's game of Hide and Seek to three types of people.
- a. What are the types of people the author describes?
  - b. We all want to be like the last child, described by the author, but in reality, does this really reflect you? Or are one of the other types a better description of you?
  - c. What can you do to change this?
  - d. What can you do to maintain being like the final child?

40. Read Matthew 12:36-37, Matthew 10:33, 2 Corinthians 5:10, 1 Corinthians 3:11-15 and Matthew 7:1-2, and pages 111-112.
- a. It is so easy for Christians to think we will avoid God's Judgement on Judgement Day, but what are the stark warnings to the Bride of Yeshua about the Day of Judgement?
  - b. Reflect back on your life. How does it line up with the three areas highlighted by the author?
  - c. We all get it wrong, at times, spend time asking the Holy Spirit to help you get it right more often than you get it wrong, as you live in accordance with the standards God has set for us. Ask for each of these areas to line up more with Him, than with our own flesh, as we make ourselves ready for the return of the Lord.

## LEADER NOTES

**This series of notes and questions is designed to help you use *Ready or Not – He is Coming* as a Bible study resource, both for personal and/or for group study. The notes are in 40 sections, with the intention of being used by individuals over 40 days (e.g. during the Lenten period) for an intensive study.**

**If you are a group leader and want to use this material for group study, you may want to restructure the material. The subject is important enough to warrant exploration over 40 weeks if a group leader really desires to explore *in-depth* all the ramifications of the Lord's return, and the demands this return makes upon Jesus' disciples in the here and now.**

**But a leader could select, say, four studies for the group sessions and encourage individuals to work through the other 36 studies privately, or in prayer triplets etc. Be flexible and diligent, and really enjoy exploring God's holy Word in this singularly important, but all too often neglected, aspect of our Lord's ministry to His Church.**