

Expatriates

Joseph Herrin (05-13-2013)



Expatriate:

- to banish (a person) from his or her native country.
- to withdraw (oneself) from residence in one's native country.
- to withdraw (oneself) from allegiance to one's country.

[Source: <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/expatriate>]

You have likely never heard a sermon on the subject of expatriates, nor read a Christian book on the topic. Yet it is one of the most pervasive themes throughout the Old and New Testaments of the Bible. From the moment God drove Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden mankind has experienced displacement from the place that was once his home.

Genesis 3:22-24

Then Yahweh God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, lest he stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever" - therefore ***Yahweh God sent him out from the garden of Eden***, to cultivate the ground from which he was taken. ***So He drove the man out***; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim, and the flaming sword which turned every direction, to guard the way to the tree of life.

Eden was mankind's first home on the Earth. It was a paradise, perfectly suitable for the first man and woman. Yet, due to sin, a paradisaical existence was no longer optimal for mankind. Men needed to toil, to sweat, and to suffer, in order that they might learn obedience and be taught righteousness.

As sin increased, men were driven further from their Edenic origin. Toil increased, and a life of ease and comfort were further withdrawn. After Adam and Eve were driven out of Eden, their son Cain murdered his brother. As a result Cain was driven further into exile from mankind's original home.

Genesis 4:12-16

You shall be a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth [in perpetual exile, a degraded outcast]. Then Cain said to the Lord, My punishment is greater than I can bear. Behold, You have driven me out this day from the face of the land, and from Your face I will be hidden; and I will be a fugitive and

a vagabond and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me. And the Lord said to him, "Therefore, if anyone kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold." And the Lord set a mark or sign upon Cain, lest anyone finding him should kill him. So Cain went away from the presence of the Lord and dwelt in the land of Nod [wandering], east of Eden.
[Amplified Bible]

The concept of being a wanderer on the earth is closely connected to the theme of being an expatriate. Throughout the Scriptures, those who were driven from their homes, or directed to leave their homes by God, became wanderers. Many of them lived in tents, having no permanent place in this earth. When Cain was driven out from the vicinity of Eden, he became a wanderer. Many English Bibles state that "Cain went away from the presence of the Lord and dwelt in the land of Nod." This is a poor translation, however. The word "Nod" means "wandering." Young's Literal translation of the Bible provides a more accurate interpretation.

Genesis 4:16

And Cain goeth out from before Jehovah, and dwelleth in the land, moving about east of Eden.
[Young's Literal Translation]

Being an expatriate and a wanderer is not just a life appointed to those who sin flagrantly against the will of Yahweh. Eight chapters after the account of Cain's expatriation we read of the first example of expatriation as obedience.

Genesis 12:1-5

Now Yahweh said to Abram, "Go forth from your country, and from your relatives and from your father's house, to the land which I will show you... So Abram went forth as Yahweh had spoken to him... And Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his nephew, and all their possessions which they had accumulated, and the persons which they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan; thus they came to the land of Canaan.

Abraham did not *settle* in the land of Canaan. He built no house there, and the only land he purchased was for use as a burial ground. Abraham was a wanderer over the face of the earth. Abraham described his experience in the following manner.

Genesis 20:13

And it came about, when *God caused me to wander* from my father's house...

So pervasive is the experience of leaving one's home and wandering the earth among the saints of both Old and New Testaments, that finding godly men and women who settled in one place becomes the exception, rather than the norm. The book of Genesis closes with the story of Joseph. It is the longest single story in this opening book of Scripture. Joseph's preparation for promotion began at the age of seventeen when his father sent him away from his home to go find his brothers who were tending their father's sheep.

Genesis 37:13-14

And Israel said to Joseph, "Are not your brothers pasturing the flock in Shechem? Come, and I will

send you to them." And he said to him, "I will go." Then he said to him, "Go now and see about the welfare of your brothers and the welfare of the flock; and bring word back to me." So he sent him from the valley of Hebron...

A jewel of revelation is uncovered when one looks at the meaning of the name "Hebron." Hebron means "place of association." Joseph dwelt with his father Israel in Hebron. Joseph was the favorite son of his father, and his father delighted to keep Joseph nearby. Yet a time came when Israel sent Joseph away. Israel did not know that it would be twenty-two years before he would see his son again. For twenty-two years Joseph lived the life of an expatriate. He lived in a foreign land, among a foreign people, who spoke a strange tongue.

A common denominator among those who are expatriates in the Bible is that they experience more trials, and greater hardship, than those who remain at home enjoying the comforts that settled living affords. Joseph was sold as a slave, and later was falsely accused and imprisoned. The first thirteen years of his experience in Egypt were sorrowful, yet they were crucial for his development as a son whom Yahweh could elevate to a position of honor.

The second book of the Bible brings us the story of Moses. Moses, although a Hebrew, was raised as an Egyptian, in the home of Pharaoh's daughter. Egypt became home for Moses until the age of forty. Stephen, the first Christian martyr, describes Moses' life in the following manner:

Acts 7:20-22

And it was at this time that Moses was born; and he was lovely in the sight of God; and he was nurtured three months in his father's home. And after he had been exposed, Pharaoh's daughter took him away, and nurtured him as her own son. And Moses was educated in all the learning of the Egyptians, and he was a man of power in words and deeds.

Moses, like Joseph, was appointed for great purposes. Because of this, he too needed to be formed and fashioned to bear the power and authority Yahweh determined for him. At the age of forty Moses had to flee Egypt. He fled across the wilderness to the land of Midian where he dwelt as an alien and stranger for the next forty years of his life.

Exodus 2:16-22

Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters; and they came to draw water, and filled the troughs to water their father's flock. Then the shepherds came and drove them away, but Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock. When they came to Reuel their father, he said, "Why have you come back so soon today?" So they said, "**An Egyptian** delivered us from the hand of the shepherds; and what is more, he even drew the water for us and watered the flock." And he said to his daughters, "Where is he then? Why is it that you have left the man behind? Invite him to have something to eat." Then Moses was content to live with the man, and he gave Zipporah his daughter to Moses. And she bore him a son. ***He called his name Gershom (Geershom), for he said, "I have been a stranger (geer) in a foreign land."***

So influential was this experience of living in exile to Moses, that he named his firstborn son to bear testimony of his expatriation.

Gershom: *from 1644 (garash) a primitive root; to drive out from a possession; especially to expatriate or divorce.*

[Source: *Strong's Concordance*]

At the end of forty years of living the life of a stranger in the wilderness of Midian, Yahweh appointed Moses to lead the entire nation of Israel to a similar experience. Instead of individuals being expatriated, and wandering about as strangers in a foreign land, we see an entire nation of people being called of God to partake of this way of life. For forty years the children of Israel numbering 600,000 men, besides women and children, experienced a life of wandering in foreign lands. They lived in tents, having no permanent place in the earth. These experiences were necessary to prepare them for the high calling Yahweh had appointed to them. Israel was to be a holy people, Yahweh's representatives upon the earth, entrusted with the oracles of God.

This experience of leaving one's homeland, and laying aside any permanent possession in the earth, living as a stranger among a foreign culture, has been used repeatedly by Yahweh to shape men and women for His holy purposes. We can discern part of the effect that such a life has upon mankind from the following passage of Scripture.

Deuteronomy 8:16

In the wilderness He fed you manna which your fathers did not know, that He might humble you and that He might test you, to do good for you in the end.

Those who yield their lives to be directed by Yahweh; those who lay aside earthly possessions; those who give up homes and lands to go wherever the Spirit of Yahweh would lead them, experience things their fathers did not know. They become far more dependent upon Yahweh. Even their daily bread becomes an object of much concern.

Those who live settled lives can plant crops. They can erect barns. They can store up provision for days of need. Yet, those who wander about, following Yahweh wherever He leads them, are often unable to do the same. Yahweh becomes the source of provision for those who are aliens and strangers in the earth. He provided manna from heaven and water from the rock while the nation of Israel wandered for forty years in the wilderness. In all this time, Yahweh's provision did not fail.

Those who follow Yahshua as His disciples are instructed to look to the Father for their provision with the same calm assurance as one would have who anticipates that the Sun will rise in the morning. The birds do not plant seed, nor gather crops into barns, yet every day Yahweh feeds them. The flowers of the field do not spin, nor sew, but they are arrayed far better than Solomon in his splendor. Yahshua taught His disciples to maintain a constancy of devotion and trust toward His Father in heaven. He instructed them to pray, "Give us this day, our daily bread."

This daily dependence upon the Father for basic necessities encourages humility in the hearts of men and women. Knowing that each day a person is dependent upon the Father for the necessities of life is a safeguard against pride and willful sin. The man or woman who walks in daily dependence upon the Father's care and provision will not easily forget Him. In the book of Proverbs it is recorded:

Proverbs 30:8-9

Give me neither poverty nor riches; Feed me with the food that is my portion, lest I be full and deny You and say, "Who is Yahweh?" Or lest I be in want and steal, and profane the name of my God.

The person who leaves the stability and comfort of their home to follow wherever Yahweh leads them is more conscious of His presence, and their dependence upon Him. Many more examples could be given. I could speak of Jacob, who spent twenty-one years in a foreign land serving his father-in-law Laban; of David who lived as a vagabond and wanderer for many years, pursued by a jealous king, forced to live in caves, and to seek refuge in foreign lands; of Elijah and Elisha, both of whom were wandering prophets, moved about at the impulse of Yahweh; of Judah and Jerusalem, and men like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, who were appointed to endure seventy years in the land of Babylon. Indeed, the life of the alien and stranger were so important in Yahweh's work among mankind that He instructed Moses to establish laws that would give special consideration to this segment of the population who dwelt among them all their days.

Exodus 22:21-23

And you shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. You shall not afflict any widow or orphan. If you afflict him at all, and if he does cry out to Me, I will surely hear his cry...

Deuteronomy 24:17

"You shall not pervert the justice due an alien or an orphan, nor take a widow's garment in pledge."

Jeremiah 22:3

Thus says Yahweh..., "Do not mistreat or do violence to the stranger, the orphan, or the widow."

Why do you suppose Yahweh includes the alien and stranger in the same category as the widow and the orphan? Is it not because all three are vulnerable and must look to God to care for them?

One can live the life of an expatriate, or an alien and stranger in the land, without having to travel to a foreign country. Consider the example of the sons of Jonadab whose testimony is recorded in the book of Jeremiah. Yahweh wanted to demonstrate something to the prophet Jeremiah, so He instructed Jeremiah to invite the men of the family of the Rechabites, the sons of Jonadab, to a room and set wine before them and entreat them to drink.

Jeremiah 35:5-11

Then I set before the men of the house of the Rechabites pitchers full of wine, and cups; and I said to them, "Drink wine!" But they said, "We will not drink wine, for Jonadab the son of Rechab, our father, commanded us, saying, 'You shall not drink wine, you or your sons, forever. And you shall not build a house, and you shall not sow seed, and you shall not plant a vineyard or own one; but in tents you shall dwell all your days, that you may live many days in the land where you sojourn.' And we have obeyed the voice of Jonadab the son of Rechab, our father, in all that he commanded us, not to drink wine all our days, we, our wives, our sons, or our daughters, nor to build ourselves houses to dwell in; and we do not have vineyard or field or seed. We have only dwelt in tents, and have obeyed, and have done according to all that Jonadab our father commanded us."

How odd the lives of these men and their families must have looked to the other inhabitants of the land! The majority of the Israelites in the land were dwelling in houses. They had fields and vineyards. They lived settled, comfortable lives. This family, however, lived the nomadic life of bedouins. They could have lived like the majority of those around them, but they heeded the counsel of their father who yearned for his descendants to not forsake the ways of Yahweh, nor to forget the One who had brought them into the land. They chose obedience over comfort, the life of a wanderer over conformity to the ways of the people they dwelt among.

Yahweh found delight in this family, and their willingness to live set apart lives unto Him. He declared a blessing upon this family that is recorded only twice in Scripture.

Jeremiah 35:18-19

Then Jeremiah said to the house of the Rechabites, “Thus says Yahweh of hosts, the God of Israel, ‘Because you have obeyed the command of Jonadab your father, kept all his commands, and done according to all that he commanded you; therefore thus says Yahweh of hosts, the God of Israel, “Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not lack a man to stand before Me always.”””

The expatriate experience is not limited to the Old Testament. It is observed throughout the New Testament as well. Yahshua continues to call men and women to leave their homes, their possessions, and their settled way of life, and to follow Him as aliens and strangers in this world. Yahweh continues to call His people to live as aliens and strangers in the midst of a society that is at ease.

I Peter 1:1-2

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit...

I Peter 2:11

Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts, which wage war against the soul...

The church expanded and prospered after the Holy Spirit was given at Pentecost. It was centered in Jerusalem, and was made up mostly of Jews who lived in and around the city. Yahweh once more chose the expatriate life for His people. He used persecution against the followers of Messiah to scatter the church, sending them across Judea and Samaria and throughout the Roman Empire.

Acts 8:1

And on that day a great persecution arose against the church in Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.

Yahweh continues to mold and fashion sons and daughters for high callings, both in this age and in the ages to come. He uses the same methods, and calls His people to the same type of experiences, that He has always utilized to prepare a remnant for ruling and reigning.

Luke 18:28-30

And Peter said, "Behold, we have left our own homes, and followed You." And [Yahshua] said to them, "Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who shall not receive many times as much at this time and in the age to come, eternal life."

Matthew 8:19-22

And a certain scribe came and said to Him, "Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go." And Yahshua said to him, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head." And another of the disciples said to Him, "Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father." But Yahshua said to him, "Follow Me; and allow the dead to bury their own dead."

Yahshua continues to call men and women to leave their fathers and mothers, and to give up homes and lands, that they might follow Him. Those who have read the testimony of my life know that this has been my experience. The Spirit is testifying that this must be the experience of many others who would rule and reign with Christ in the age to come.

Revelation 20:6

Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.

That this type of life is rare among those who profess to be Christians today is not due to God having changed the way He molds and shapes sons and daughters, nor is it due to the cost of Christian discipleship being less than it was 2,000 years ago. It can be attributed to the generally low state of spiritual life among God's people. There are very few who are yielding their lives to the direction of the Spirit of Christ. The vast majority of men and women in the church are choosing the course of their own life. Their soul is leading the way. They refuse to hand over the reins of their life to the Son of God. Yahshua has always given the same invitation:

Matthew 16:24-25

Then Yahshua said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and **follow Me**. For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake shall find it."

Matthew 19:21

Yahshua said to him, "If you wish to be complete, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, **follow Me**."

Like Abraham, the father of faith, the invitation is set before the sons and daughters of God today to leave their homes and their comfortable lives to follow the Spirit of God wherever He would lead them. There is a remnant who are answering the call, and more will follow in the coming days. Yet it will ever be a small portion of the body of Christ who accept this invitation.

To set oneself apart from the world, to become an expatriate in spirit, embracing the life of an alien

and a stranger in this world, will always lead a person to a greater sense of vulnerability. The security of home, of a familiar culture, of a sense of place in this world, are laid aside and a dependency upon God the Father is embraced. Fears must be overcome. Covetousness, idolatry, a desire to be accepted, and the comfort of belonging someplace, or to some group, must be set aside that one may follow the Spirit of Christ wherever He would lead.

In coming posts I will share the experiences of some who are accepting this call. These ones stand out from the crowd of Christian confessors today. They are following God into experiences that are beyond the normal experience of the comfortable, no-cost, Christianity that is proclaimed in myriads of churches. These ones are seeing the hand of God move in extraordinary ways as He proves His faithfulness to care for those whose hearts are wholly devoted to Him.

II Chronicles 16:9

For the eyes of Yahweh move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His.

Expatriates - Part Two: Family Matters

Joseph Herrin (05-15-2013)



Expatriate:

- to banish (a person) from his or her native country.
- to withdraw (oneself) from residence in one's native country.
- to withdraw (oneself) from allegiance to one's country.

[Source: <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/expatriate>]

Genesis 12:1

Now Yahweh said to Abram, “Go forth from your country, and from your relatives and from your father's house, to the land which I will show you...”

One of the most difficult aspects of the life of an expatriate is experiencing separation from family. Although we are not given any details of the inner wrestling Abraham endured at the thought of having to leave his relatives and his father's house behind, I suspect that Abraham found the decision to be a painful one. Abraham understood that his journey was one way. Yahweh gave Abraham no reason to expect that he would ever see his relatives, or his father's house, again.

Let me take a moment to reiterate a thought here. The life of an expatriate, of an alien and a stranger in this world, is set forth from the first book of the Bible to the last. It is a continuous theme. There was rarely a man or woman of faith whose life was recorded in the Scriptures who did not share aspects of this experience. It is important for Christians to understand this Biblical theme, for everyone who accepts the call to be a disciple of Yahshua must adopt the mind and heart of one who is a wandering pilgrim on this earth.

This is not to suggest that men and women of faith will never be led of the Father to purchase a piece of land, nor to build a home to live in. Not everyone who has the heart of a Christian expatriate will have to leave their relatives, or depart from their father and his household. I can cite a number of examples of men and women at this present moment who I know to be walking by the Spirit, living the life He has chosen for them, who have land and homes and who still dwell among extended family. Many of these men and women have known seasons where they did not have their own home, and did not dwell among family, and this may be their experience again.

The key issue is whether a person will hold loosely all things of this world, being willing to surrender them at any moment as the Father requires. It should not be considered the norm to have house and land and to dwell among family. The words of Yahshua, and the testimony of Scripture, reveal that the true norm is to be asked of God to lay these things aside.

Matthew 10:37-38

“He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.”

Matthew 19:29

“And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms for My name's sake, shall receive many times as much, and shall inherit eternal life.”

All those who confess that they will follow Christ as His disciple will be tested in these matters. Abraham is given as an example for the saints today. His life is set forth as a testimony of the ways by which Yahweh deals with those whom He calls friends. Not only did Yahweh test Abraham's heart by asking him to leave his relatives and father's household, but after many years of wandering across the land of Canaan Yahweh tested this man again. God had given Abraham the desire of his heart. He was given an heir from his own loins, a child of his old age. Isaac was born to Sarah when she was ninety years old and Abraham was one hundred years of age.

Genesis 22:1-2

Now it came about after these things, that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." And He said, "Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah; and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you."

The church has erred greatly in deeming Abraham's experience to be unique, something that was exceptional, never to be repeated. I cannot envision a conclusion that is further from the truth. Yahshua would not have stated that a man must hate his father and mother, sons and daughters, wife, brothers and sisters to be His disciple if Abraham's experience was a one-off event. No! What Yahweh required of Abraham He will require of all those who are called to walk with Him.

Even as Abraham's great test came after he had been following Yahweh as an alien in the land for some years, the Father brought me to a similar test. Yahweh called me to leave all I was familiar with in 1999 and to go wherever He directed. By 2004 I knew that my wife was not going to continue this journey with me much longer. When she left, I knew she would take our son Josiah with her. Josiah was fourteen years old at the time. This may be close to the age of Isaac when Abraham was commanded to lay him on an altar.

On July 15th, 2004 my wife announced that she was leaving me. She longed to return to the life of ease that is the portion of most American Christians. The demands of a life of faith were too difficult for her, the trials too bitter. As anticipated, my son Josiah chose to stay with his mother. In one day I lost my wife of seventeen years, and my son. It was a bitter experience.

It had been my practice for some time to read out of a devotional book each day. At the time I was using the excellent book titled *Streams in the Desert*. On many occasions the Father used the day's devotion to speak specifically to the experiences I was passing through. When my wife decided to leave, the person whose home we had been invited to stay in dis-invited me. I was asked to pack up my things and leave. I loaded what little I possessed into the car we owned and I drove to the Walmart parking lot where I spent the night. I had only \$5 in my pocket, and had no idea what the future held for me. I felt stripped, and emptied, but I had peace with God knowing that I had not turned back from the path Yahweh called me to walk, even when it was exceedingly painful.

As I sat in my car at Walmart I read the devotional entry for the next morning, July 16. I was met with the following words, which the Holy Spirit brought to me with great force and affirmation.

Because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will... make your descendants as numerous as the stars of the sky... because you have obeyed Me. (Genesis 22:16-18)

From the time of Abraham, people have been learning that when they obey God's voice and surrender to Him whatever they hold most precious, He multiplies it thousands of times. Abraham gave up his one and only son at the Lord's command, and in doing so all his desires and dream's for Isaac's life as well as his own hope for a notable heritage, disappeared...

This is exactly how God deals with every child of His when we truly sacrifice...

We sometimes seem to forget that what God takes from us, He takes with fire, and that the only road to a life of resurrection and ascension power leads us first to Gethsemane, the cross, and the tomb.

Dear Soul, do you believe that Abraham's experience was unique and isolated? It is only an example and a pattern of how God deals with those who are prepared to obey Him whatever the cost. "After waiting patiently, Abraham received what was promised" (Hebrews 6:15), and so will you. The moment of your greatest sacrifice will also be the precise moment of your greatest and most miraculous blessing...

[End Excerpt]

People of God, there was no ram in the thicket for me. Yahweh did not restore my wife or son to me as soon as I proved willing to bear the cost of obedience. He is not obligated to keep us from suffering. Yahweh did not exempt Himself from suffering the bereavement of a Son who was sacrificed. There was no angel that appeared at Calvary to stop the sacrifice of the Lamb of God. There was a cup of suffering from which Christ had to drink. There is also a cup presented to those who would follow in His steps.

Philippians 1:29

For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake...

Some have asked me over the years why God would lead obedient sons and daughters to experiences of separation and loss among their families. Some have expressed difficulty reconciling the following passages of Scripture:

Matthew 19:5-6

“For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. **Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.**”

Luke 14:26

“**If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own** father and mother and **wife** and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, **he cannot be My disciple.**”

Why would Yahweh declare the marriage union to be holy in His sight, and then state that a man must hate his wife to be Christ’s disciple? Why would God command a man to honor his father and mother, and then say a man must hate father and mother? Why would God call children a blessing, and then take from a man that which He has given?

I think the answer has to do with priorities. Yahweh wants a husband and wife to love one another. He desires for children to honor their parents and for parents to love their children. Yet these relationships, as important and precious as they are, cannot take precedence over a man’s love, devotion, and obedience to Yahweh his Creator. All things must be kept in their proper order, otherwise chaos will enter into the creation. Even love for family will bring forth death if love for God is not greater still.

We read that Eve sinned in the Garden because the serpent deceived her. Adam, however, was not deceived.

I Timothy 2:14

And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being quite deceived, fell into transgression.

It was not Eve’s transgression that resulted in death to all mankind. The seed is found in the man. Had Adam not listened to the voice of his wife and joined her in transgression, death would not have entered into the creation. Mankind would not have become enslaved to sin.

Why did Adam sin if he was not deceived? The first clue we receive is found in the testimony of the man and his wife.

Genesis 3:12-13

And the man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate." Then Yahweh God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" And the woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

Again we find that Eve disobeyed God because she was deceived. Adam, however, was not deceived. **Adam ate because his wife entreated him to do so.** Adam placed his love for his

wife above his love and obedience to God. Yahweh confirmed this when He told the man what would result from his fateful choice.

Genesis 3:17

Then to Adam He said, "**Because you have listened to the voice of your wife**, and have eaten from the tree about which **I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat from it'**"

Yahweh expressed His will to the man, and Eve expressed her will to the man. Adam placed his love for the woman first. He listened to her, rather than listening to God. The result was death. The creation fell under the curse of sin and death because man had brought confusion to the proper order of all living things. Yahweh must ever be man's first love, his first priority. To alter this order results in death.

Matthew 22:35-38

And one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" And He said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the great and foremost commandment."

Adam did not transgress by loving his wife. His transgression was that he loved his wife more than he loved God. Christ said to His disciples, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments." Whose commandment did the man keep? Adam did the bidding of the one he loved the most. Adam chose "bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh" over his Creator.

Is it any wonder that this issue has been a point at which Yahweh has tested mankind ever since? Abraham was tested when Yahweh commanded him to leave his relatives and his father's household. He was tested when Yahweh instructed him to take his son, his only son, Isaac, and slay him on an altar. Did Yahweh want Abraham to hate his family? No! It is the will of God that we love one another, but our love for Yahweh must always be foremost of all.

I remember well a time when Yahweh was leading my family through some very painful experiences. He had provided for us a home during this season in a community called Payne City (Pain City). My wife did not want to be there. On a number of occasions during our stay in Payne City I remember her saying to me, "You must truly hate me." Every time she spoke these words I assured her that I loved her, affirming that it would not be love for me to disobey God by shrinking back from the experiences He had chosen for us.

People of God, this is what Christ meant when He said no man could be His disciple unless he "hates" his family. Yahshua will lead His disciples to experiences that their family members find repugnant. Like Eve, our family members will direct us to take another path. We must choose to obey God, or to obey our wives, our parents, our brothers and sisters, our sons and daughters. We will choose to love God foremost in our lives, or to put others before Him.

Some of those reading this writing can see a test looming before them. Yahweh has not changed the ways in which He deals with His sons and daughters. There continues to be a high cost to walking with Him. Some men who read this blog know that if they surrender their life fully to go wherever Christ leads them, and to do whatever He requires, that their wife, their children, their

parents, their brothers and sisters, will protest. The opposition may be severe. Parents may cut you off from an inheritance. Wives may threaten to leave you. Children may rebel. Brothers and sisters may betray you.

Do not think God will not bring you to the test. Christ has stated:

Matthew 10:34-39

“Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I came to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's enemies will be the members of his household. He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.”

Christ will put you to the test. He will require of you an obedience that is odious to the members of your household. Will you follow when He commands it? Or will you delay to appease wife, or son, or daughter, or father, or mother?

Know this, you who refuse to surrender all to the will of the Father; placing family before God will bring forth death. Adam condemned all his future generations when he put the love of his wife before the love of God. Do you suppose that you or I can make the same choice and reap a different result? Do not be deceived!

Yahshua has not misled any man. He proclaimed boldly to the multitudes that there is a high cost required to be His disciple. He said those who will not pay the cost are unworthy of Him.

All is not bitterness, however. There is a fellowship to be found with Christ as we partake of His sufferings. What we lose in earthly relationships, we gain in intimacy with God. “There is a Friend who sticks closer than a brother.” “Nothing can separate us from the love of God.” Yahweh is called “The God of all comfort.” He knows how to bind up the brokenhearted, and how to comfort the afflicted. There is also a great hope set before those who endure sorrow for a night, for joy comes in the morning.

Do you hear Christ calling you to the expatriate life? Know then that the call begins as it ever has.

“Go forth from your country, and from your relatives and from your father's house, to the land which I will show you...”

“Come, take up your cross and follow Me.”

There is no hope that by delaying the decision to follow Christ you might avoid the cost incurred among family members. One man came to Yahshua and said, “Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father.” I do not believe this man's father had yet died. The man was requesting that he might delay following Christ until his father passed away. He likely anticipated that his father would object to his commitment to follow Christ, and he wished to avoid the pain of division and strife in his family.

Do not say, “I will wait a little longer before I yield myself to follow Christ wherever He would lead.” There is no promise that there will be an opportunity tomorrow. We must choose to obey Christ while He is beckoning. Don’t wait for your entire family to get on board. That will likely never happen. The prophet Jeremiah wrote:

Jeremiah 3:14

And I will take you one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion.

One from a city and two from a family are not great numbers. It is ever a remnant who will heed the call to come out of Babylon and make the journey to Zion. Will you be one of them?

Expatriates - Part Three: Where You Lead, I Will Follow

Joseph Herrin (05-21-2013)



Expatriate:

- to banish (a person) from his or her native country.
- to withdraw (oneself) from residence in one's native country.
- to withdraw (oneself) from allegiance to one's country.

[Source: <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/expatriate>]

Genesis 37:13

And Israel said to Joseph, "Are not your brothers pasturing the flock in Shechem? Come, and I will send you to them." And he said to him, "***I will go.***"

The life of the spiritual expatriate always begins with an invitation, or a commandment. Though this may appear obvious to some, it is an aspect of life in Yahweh's kingdom that demands emphasis.

Yahweh never intends a person's journey through life to be determined by their own initiative and will.

Do not rush over this statement. Have you considered the manner by which you arrived at the various decisions that have shaped the course of your life? As a child and youth, our lives are largely shaped by the decisions of parents, or other guardians. A transition occurs as a child finishes High School. They have by this time typically reached the age of 18. In America the age of 18 (or 21) is considered the time of transition into one's majority. At this age the person is no longer considered a minor. They are responsible for their choices, being legally emancipated. (I do not imply that this pattern is in harmony with Yahweh's kingdom, merely that it is the societal norm.)

It is the rare individual who at this age yields the rule of their life to God. Most youth, even from Christian families, transition from the rule of their parents to self-rule. They begin to make choices and base life decisions upon their soul's desires and ambitions. After High School, the individual may decide to go to college, or to a technical training school, to receive the skills and education needed to obtain the job they desire. Their employment goals may be based either upon personal interest in a specific field, or upon the benefits that a job offers. The chief consideration for many is how much money they can potentially earn in a particular career, though some are

motivated by other aspects of a career, such as family tradition, travel opportunities, or generous vacation time.

All such considerations are soulish. They are not what Yahweh desires His sons and daughters to use as the basis for decision making. Nevertheless, in the vast majority of cases, Christians are led by their soul's desires, rather than by the Spirit of Christ.

Yahshua is given as the pattern for all who would be found pleasing to the Father. He demonstrated by His words and actions that every decision of His life was surrendered to His Father in heaven. Yahshua NEVER did anything of His own initiative. He ALWAYS did the will of His Father.

John 5:30

"I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me."

John 8:28

Yahshua therefore said, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and ***I do nothing on My own initiative***, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me."

John 8:42

Yahshua said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me; for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for ***I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me.***"

John 12:49

"For ***I did not speak on My own initiative***, but ***the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me commandment***, what to say, and what to speak."

John 14:10

"Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? ***The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative***, but the Father abiding in Me does His works."

Christian parents should be promoting a life lived according to the mind of Christ to their children long before they reach the age of emancipation. This requires that parents not only instruct their sons and daughters to yield their will and desires to the rule of God, but that the parents model this behavior. Abraham provides an excellent example of a parental role model.

Throughout his young life, Isaac surely had instilled in him the concept of living a surrendered life to Yahweh. I am sure Abraham and Sarah spoke to Isaac about their departure from the land of their forebears. Isaac understood that his father was living a nomadic life in Canaan because Yahweh had called him to leave his father's household and travel to a distant land. Furthermore, Isaac observed his father's commitment to do whatever Yahweh required of him. This firsthand knowledge included Isaac's experience as a youth when his father took him to the mountain of God to be offered as a sacrifice.

I cannot imagine a more impactful lesson. Isaac must certainly have been profoundly affected by his father's actions in this matter. The understanding that one must yield EVERYTHING to

Yahweh would have been indelibly impressed upon his mind as he observed his father's obedience and surrender to this terrible experience of self-sacrifice and suffering. Isaac understood by his father's example that the man who walks in the fear of Yahweh must yield every dream, desire, and passion of his soul to God. Where Yahweh says go, the godly man must go. What Yahweh says do, the friend of God must do.

Abraham's life reveals an aspect of this pilgrim existence that I have often spoken of in my teachings. Abraham did not leave his father's household of his own initiative. He did not wake up one day and say, "I am sure tired of this neighborhood. I think I will leave my father's household and travel, trusting Yahweh to take care of me and my household."

If this had been the manner by which Abraham arrived at his decisions, he would have had no foundation of faith upon which to stand when he encountered trials of various types. The confidence of the saints comes from the certain knowledge that Yahweh is ordering their steps. In my experiences I have frequently been brought to some trial, some extremity in my circumstances, where calamity loomed and I desperately needed Yahweh to deliver me.

Had I left my employment as a computer professional in 1999 of my own initiative, I would have lacked any confidence that Yahweh would hear my cry in a time of need. On many occasions as I was facing some threat I would seek a place apart with Yahweh and implore Him to intervene. I would remind my heavenly Father that I was brought to this place of danger, lack, or vulnerability, by yielding my will to His. It was by following the path He appointed to me that I was placed in harm's way.

I did not speak these words as accusation, but rather to establish the ground of faith upon which I was standing. I could entreat Yahweh to deliver my family because our lives were placed into His care at His commandment. I would often rehearse before Yahweh the various ways that He had affirmed His will to me, and how I had followed to the best of my understanding. I would stand upon the fact that He is faithful, and He had given me promises of provision and help when I called unto Him. Those who choose their own course in the world do not share the same assurance.

Abraham is called the father of faith. His life reveals various aspects of the life of faith. Observe in the following Scriptures how Yahweh initiated the acts of Abraham's life.

Genesis 12:1, 4

Now Yahweh said to Abram, "Go forth from your country, and from your relatives and from your father's house, to the land which I will show you..." So Abram went forth as Yahweh had spoken to him.

Genesis 22:1-3

Now it came about after these things, that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." And He said, "Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah; and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you." So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him and Isaac his son...

The apostle Paul reveals this pattern of faith and obedience in the following words:

Romans 10:17

So faith is from (ek) hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

The Greek word translated into English as “from” is “ek.” This Greek word means “out.” It is the prefix for the word “eklessia” which means “called out ones,” being the most common Greek word for “church” in the New Testament. Paul is saying that faith has to come out of something. Faith is not that which the name it and claim it crowd declares it to be. Faith does not originate in the soul of man, in his vain imagination, or his carnal desires. Faith is ALWAYS precipitated by a word from God.

When God speaks, when He makes His will known, then a man has something solid out of which faith might arise. Yahweh has spoken. Surely He will bring it to pass. Yahweh has commanded. Surely He will support those who obey. In the writing *Understanding Faith and Healing*, I shared the following:

If a man, woman, or child has not heard anything from God, faith is not present, and belief is not possible. What many are calling faith and belief is merely positive thinking, or misplaced confidence based upon a wrong understanding of God’s word.

Hearing from God is a necessary part of a life of faith. Without hearing there can be no true faith. Many are teaching a type of faith today that lacks this vital necessity of hearing God give us direction. Many are teaching a false faith that originates in man’s own mind and imagination. They encourage the saints to envision the things they want and then stand in confidence, claiming that they have these things. Elwin Roach wrote regarding this false faith:

Some have called this type of faith the “Prosperity Message,” although in less favorable circles it has been called “Name it and Claim it,” “Bless it and Confess it,” “Blab it and Grab it,” or “What the Heck, Write the Check...”

It is one thing to have the Faith of God as a result of an impregnation of His anointed word which will move mountains, but it is entirely another matter when a man carves an image in his positive-thinking mind and calls it faith, and then holds God ransom with the written word which his carnal mind has little or no understanding of. This, dear reader, is not faith, not even in the farthest stretch of the imagination. It is presumption, and God is not obligated to pay up!

Many of the saints today have built upon the shifting sands of a false faith doctrine. Its teachings rest upon a belief in a principle of faith. It is taught that if one can work up enough confidence to believe something when they ask for it in prayer, then they will be assured of having their request. The key to this type of faith is the ability of man to believe something. The saints are told that if they can conceive something, and believe in its fulfillment, then they can have it. This is not the type of faith that Abraham demonstrated.

[End Excerpt]

We see the Biblical pattern of God initiating acts of faith and obedience of His people throughout the Scriptures. Yahweh is ALWAYS the initiator of the Christian life of discipleship.

John 6:44

“No one can come to Me, unless the Father who sent Me draws him...”

The Father draws, and Yahshua beckons.

Matthew 4:18-19

And walking by the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers, Simon who was called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. ***And He said to them, "Follow Me,*** and I will make you fishers of men."

Matthew 19:21

Yahshua said to him, "If you wish to be [Greek “teleios”: complete, perfect, lacking in nothing], go and sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and ***come, follow Me.***"

The life of a disciple of Christ is of necessity a Spirit directed life. Yahweh never instructs a man to conceive some plan in his soul and then ask Him to bless and prosper it. Yahweh must be the initiator of all that is done in His kingdom. Observe the pattern by which the great missionary and apostolic calling of Paul was begun.

Acts 13:2-4

And while they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went...

What a critical point this is! Paul and Barnabas did not initiate their ministry. They went forth at the command of the Holy Spirit. This is to be the pattern of all Christian's lives. May it be the testimony of all of our lives that we are where we are today by the direction of the Spirit. May we all affirm as did the Son of God, “I did not even come of My own initiative, but He sent Me.”

It gives me tremendous peace and confidence to KNOW that I am where Yahweh has called me to be, and I am fulfilling that ministry He has directed me to fulfill. I can testify of the manner by which the Holy Spirit made known His call on my life as surely as Paul and Barnabas. This knowledge has been a steadying anchor when storms have assailed my life. I have held firmly to the knowledge that my ship has been steered by the only Captain qualified to direct the lives of men.

I would have broken under the strain and pressures of life long ago had it not been for the fact that I have handed the reins over to Yahshua. It is too great of a burden to take unto oneself the responsibility to decide what to do when storms and trials come. The crushing weight of decision would have overwhelmed me had I attempted to bear it.

Yahweh has led me through plenty of trials. There have been storms in abundance. I have often been in need, facing some threat, and did not know what to do. Yet, I always knew to Whom I could turn.

One of the most common prayers of my life has been “Father, my eyes are on You! I am looking to You to guide! I am looking to You to deliver!” Observers of my life, most of whom were critics offering reproach and condemnation, were quick to declare that it was my decisions that led to some trial, so they reasoned it was my responsibility to find a solution. Had their words been true, had I actually chosen the path that placed my family into peril, then I would have felt the crushing weight of responsibility. Yet, I knew my accuser’s words to be false. It was Yahweh who had directed my path. Therefore it was HIS responsibility to care for us, and to deliver us.

I have seen men broken as they sought to handle things in their own strength. Having failed to surrender the direction of their life to Christ, they never learned what freedom is found in a simple life of faith. They have acted as if it is their duty to come up with some scheme to provide, protect, and prosper their family. I have been amazed at times at the carnal scheming and unrighteous actions that some men embrace as they know no other counsel than their own, and no other strength than that which man can supply.

I know my inadequacy. The course of life is fraught with too many trials, calamities, and unforeseeable experiences. There are too many variables, too many details outside of my control. My own wisdom, strength, and ability is insignificant in comparison to Yahweh’s. It is far better to let God guide, and to leave the responsibility for one’s welfare in His hands. The days ahead are certain to be tumultuous. The nations will be shaken. The financial system of this world is tottering and will soon collapse. Who is adequate for such things?

I am not advocating laziness, or a careless attitude. A man should be very much concerned for the welfare of his family. Concern, however, does not mean “worry.” Worry is a form of fear. Worry displaces faith. The only sure way to combat worry is to be released from the belief that YOU are responsible to figure all things out and to make things happen. NO! This is Yahweh’s role. When we usurp the role of Yahweh we find that the weight of it is crushing. It will lead a man to despair.

Yahshua said, “My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.” I have heard many interpret these words through the symbolism of two animals, such as oxen, being yoked together to plow a field. Although some good lessons can be drawn from such a comparison, I do not believe this was the symbolism Yahshua intended. The yoke referred to is the yoke of a slave. We are called to be “bondservants” of Christ. The yoke He was referring to is the yoke of slavery.

Ephesians 6:6

As slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart...

Consider how fitting this analogy is. A slave does not have authority to do as he pleases. He lives for the will and pleasure of another. A slave does not direct his own way. His master tells him where to go and what to do. With human masters there is fear, for men are inherently selfish. The Adamic race is not inclined to seek the welfare of another if it impinges upon their own comfort

or security. Yahshua, however, is unlike men. He laid down His life for others. He ever seeks the welfare of His servants.

As a bond-slave of Christ I need not worry about whether I will have a place to lie down at night, or food to eat. If I do His will, He has promised to care for me.

Matthew 6:31-33

“Do not be anxious then, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'With what shall we clothe ourselves?' For all these things the Gentiles eagerly seek; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you.”

There is rest and peace to be experienced by those who yield their lives to the direction of the Spirit of Christ, a rest and peace that those who direct their own way can never know. When Christ says, “Come, follow Me,” and we yield our will and desires to obey, He becomes the surety and guarantor of our lives. As Paul declared:

II Timothy 1:12

For I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that day.

Whether you remain in the country of your forebears, or travel to a foreign location; whether you hold down a 9 to 5 job, or are led to circumstances and experiences where Yahweh has become your primary source for all things; the critical factor is that God be the initiator of the life you are living. If you will relinquish the rule of your life to Yahshua, you will find that in addition to being a guiding Shepherd, He becomes the protector and provider for your life.

I challenge you to test whether the life you are living is the life you have chosen for yourself, or the one Yahweh has chosen for you. There is great grace presented to those who yield their lives voluntarily to the rule of Christ. Do not wait for the life you are living to be violently wrested from your hands as the earth goes through its birth pangs. You can have treasure in heaven if you relinquish your life and possessions freely to Christ. There is only loss if God must take these things from you by force.

If you learn today to walk in faith, obeying and trusting Yahweh, you will be prepared to stand in days of tribulation. If you delay, you may find that your faith is inadequate for the demands of the days ahead.

For further reading on the subject of living a Spirit led life of surrender to God, the book *Sabbath* is recommended.

http://www.heart4god.ws/H4G%20Website_htm_files/SABBATH.pdf

Expatriates - Part Four: You Can't Take it with You!

Joseph Herrin (05-25-2013)



Expatriate:

- to banish (a person) from his or her native country.
- to withdraw (oneself) from residence in one's native country.
- to withdraw (oneself) from allegiance to one's country.

[Source: <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/expatriate>]

The tornado that devastated Moore, Oklahoma on May 20th provides an opportunity to reflect upon the transitive nature of people's homes and possessions. A recent report stated that as many as 13,000 homes were either damaged or completely destroyed by the tornado. Images of these homes have shown how quickly a lifetime of accumulated possessions can be lost.



Homes and Possessions Lost



Man Standing in the Rubble of His Home



Entire Neighborhoods Destroyed



Shattered Homes

A common sight observed in the aftermath of some of the most destructive tornadoes in recent times is the erection of an American flag over the site of destruction. Such iconic images were seen in Joplin, Missouri, and Tuscaloosa, Alabama. This week's tornado in Moore, Oklahoma gave rise to similar images, such as the one below.



Those who erect flags in the aftermath of destruction often do so as a symbol of hope, or even defiance. It is as if they are saying, “We will rebuild. We will come back stronger. We will not be daunted by the calamities of life.”

What is often not considered, even by Christians impacted by such losses, is whether it is the Father's will that they seek to return to the life they formerly knew, a life where home and material possessions is a major focus of their thoughts, time, money, and energy. When I see images such as the one above where a soiled and tattered flag is strung up in the midst of a scene of complete devastation, I perceive a parable of America's future. As I have shared in previous writings, RUIN is coming to America.



The images above were taken from Barack Obama's campaign website. In texting shorthand, which is so common among users of cell phones and Twitter, the phrase “Are You In?” would be

abbreviated as “R U IN?” Obama’s first campaign focused on the word “Change.” The change that is coming to America is not what people have been led to anticipate. America is being brought to ruin.

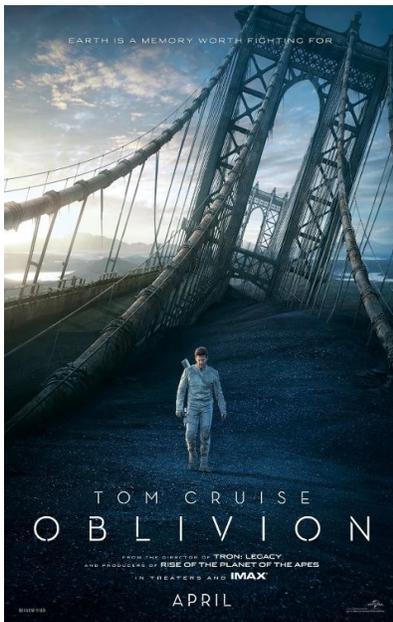
The tornado in Moore, Oklahoma damaged a local movie theater. News sites have shown images of the theater marquee after the storm. The words on the marquee serve as a signpost for what is coming to the nation.



Reading from lower left to upper right the three movies listed are “Pain and Gain,” “Into Darkness,” and “Oblivion.” The latter two movies focus upon destruction coming to the earth.



Into Darkness



Oblivion

Knowing that the U.S. government is preparing for societal ruin by purchasing billions of bullets and thousands of armored vehicles to be used on the streets of America, by pushing strongly to ban assault rifles and approving the use of drones for surveillance and the murder of U.S. citizens, by conducting a test run as they implemented martial law in Boston, etc., it is highly inadvisable that any person should continue on with a business as usual attitude. The following words of the apostle Paul seem particularly fitting for this present hour.

I Corinthians 7:29-31

But this I say, brethren, the time has been shortened, so that from now on those who have wives should be as though they had none; and those who weep, as though they did not weep; and those who rejoice, as though they did not rejoice; and those who buy, as though they did not possess; and those who use the world, as though they did not make full use of it; for the form of this world is passing away.

In a time of distress, those who will be the least impacted by economic and civil chaos are those who are the least entangled with this present world system. In an hour when global bankers are orchestrating the coming economic meltdown, leading to the overthrow of governments, rioting, and the implementation of martial law, it would be well to have as little involvement with the banks as possible. The recent theft of billions of dollars of deposits in Cypriot banks by international bankers, and the monetary controls implemented which are tantamount to a dictatorial rule over the lives of the citizens of Cyprus, is a sign of things to come. Christians who have a mortgage on their home, credit card debt, student loans, or other forms of financial obligations to the banks, will find that the Scripture is true that states, “The rich rules over the poor, and the borrower becomes the lender's slave” (Proverbs 22:7).

The vast majority of Christians are entangled with this fallen world system in ways that are contrary to the will of the Father and the testimony of Christ and His apostles.

II Timothy 2:4, 7

No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier... Consider what I say, and may the Lord give you understanding in all things.

If Christians will embrace the mind and attitude of those who are aliens and strangers in this world, they would find themselves lessening their bondage to, and dependence upon, this Satanic world system. As a result, their exposure to the upheavals that are coming would be greater diminished. Yet many, indeed, the majority, are like those citizens of Moore, Oklahoma whose homes were destroyed, and the accumulated possessions of a lifetime scattered to the four winds. They are heedlessly pursuing a material life, conformed to a fallen world system that Yahweh is soon to judge.

A profound lesson can be observed as one looks at the example of the early church that arose in Jerusalem following Pentecost when the Holy Spirit descended upon the 120 gathered in an upper room. Three thousand souls were added to the church on that day, and many more were to follow. Among the early church of Jerusalem a radical change was observed. Men and women who had formerly lived material lives, focused on accumulating houses and land, and the goods of this world, found their hearts changed. Those who were formerly focused upon consumption began considering the needs of others more highly than their own needs.

Acts 4:32-35

And the congregation of those who believed were of one heart and soul; and not one of them claimed that anything belonging to him was his own; but all things were common property to them... For there was not a needy person among them, for all who were owners of land or houses would sell them and bring the proceeds of the sales, and lay them at the apostles' feet; and they would be distributed to each, as any had need.

I have never heard a sermon that mentioned how this radical transformation of attitude and action served to deliver the saints in Christ from ruinous loss when some years later, in A.D. 70, Jerusalem was destroyed by the Roman army. Those who had homes and land in and around the city, and who were possessors of much material goods, suffered a loss as total and devastating as the citizens of Moore, Oklahoma. Yet, those believers who had sold their houses and lands, who had laid the money at the apostles' feet, were not only spared from great material loss, but they were guaranteed treasure in heaven.

Yahweh further protected His people from the depredations of Rome, as a persecution by the Jewish rulers occurred after the stoning of Stephen. This resulted in large numbers of Christians fleeing Jerusalem, relocating throughout Judea, Samaria, and the Roman Empire. When the Roman Army under the leadership of Titus, sacked Jerusalem, tens of thousands of Jews were slaughtered, many of them crucified. Those Christians who had embraced the expatriate lifestyle were saved.

Consider how these refugees from Jerusalem fit the description of the spiritual expatriate that we have been exploring in this series. These ones likely had lived in and around Jerusalem for generations. They had to leave their homes, and their father's household, just like Abraham did 2,000 years earlier. Many of them had already sold houses and lands as was testified in Acts

chapter 4. This freed them to relocate quickly when persecution arose. Because they were traveling, they had to lighten their load of material goods. Many possessions had to be sold, or given away. Their lives stood out in stark contrast to that existence they knew prior to being born again of the Spirit and becoming disciples of Christ.

There are few Christians today who are following this same pattern of disentanglement from the world. For this reason, many will suffer great loss when calamity strikes, as it did in Jerusalem in A.D. 70, or in Moore, Oklahoma this past week. Ruin is coming. I share these things to encourage the people of God to seek Yahweh now while there is still opportunity to make significant changes to your life.

In 1999 the Father challenged me to yield the full direction of my life to His Spirit. When I surrendered my will to Him, handing over the reins of my life, He quickly accomplished a radical transformation of our family's experience. We were led to surrender our home, our custom van, the majority of our furnishings and possessions, as we went from a 2,000 square foot home to a 28 foot long motorhome.

Let me be clear, for I am often met with arguments and accusations when I share these things, that I am not suggesting that Yahweh will lead every son or daughter to live in a motorhome. What I am seeking to convey, is that those who walk as disciples of Christ, having His mind and exhibiting His attitude toward material possessions, will find themselves thinking and acting in ways that are strange and alien to this world system. They will manifest contentment rather than covetousness. They will be focused far more on giving to the needs of others than to accumulating things for self.

I Timothy 6:7-8

For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. And if we have food and covering, with these we shall be content.

Hebrews 13:5

Let your character be free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you."

Tragically, the majority of Christians in this late hour are manifesting that attitude that the apostle Paul wrote about in his epistle to the saints in Philippi.

Philippians 3:18-19

For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things.

Christ came to transform men's lives. If we do not see a transformation in our attitude and actions regarding earthly possessions, then we should question whether we are truly living lives directed by the Holy Spirit. Christ said that those who would be His disciples must yield all they possess to Him.

Luke 14:33

“So therefore, no one of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions.”

It is quite evident from the four gospels, that Yahshua’s focus was upon giving, not receiving. He emptied Himself when He left heaven and came to earth. While here He accumulated no earthly goods. He did not own a home. He did not seek possessions. He died owning only the clothes on His back, and even these He freely surrendered to the Roman soldiers who cast lots for His cloak.

Whether you own a home, live in a motorhome, stay in rented quarters, or sleep out under the stars, the important matter is how you arrived at such an experience. Did you choose your manner of living in your own soul, or did the Spirit of Christ direct you? Do your possessions reveal an attitude of contentment? Are your home and furnishings modest, or extravagant? Do you live simply, and frugally that you might have as much money as possible to share with others in need? Is your life an example of one that is poured out for others, or is self-focus evident?

Acts 20:35

Remember the words of the Lord Yahshua, that He Himself said, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

This should be the attitude of Christians even in a time of peace. How much more so, in an hour when troublous days are seen drawing nearer? Those who make giving a focus are given many precious promises that they will be able to stand upon in the coming perilous days. Yahweh has promised to take care of the needs of those who have given themselves freely and generously to the care of the poor and needy.

Proverbs 28:27

He who gives to the poor will never want, but he who shuts his eyes will have many curses.

Isaiah 58:6-9

Is this not the fast which I choose, to loosen the bonds of wickedness, to undo the bands of the yoke, and to let the oppressed go free and break every yoke? Is it not to divide your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into the house; when you see the naked, to cover him; and not to hide yourself from your own flesh? Then your light will break out like the dawn, and your recovery will speedily spring forth; and your righteousness will go before you; The glory of Yahweh will be your rear guard. Then you will call, and Yahweh will answer; You will cry, and He will say, “Here I am.”

Proverbs 19:17

One who is gracious to a poor man lends to Yahweh, and He will repay him for his good deed.

Hebrews 13:16

And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

James 2:15-17

If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.

I John 3:17-18

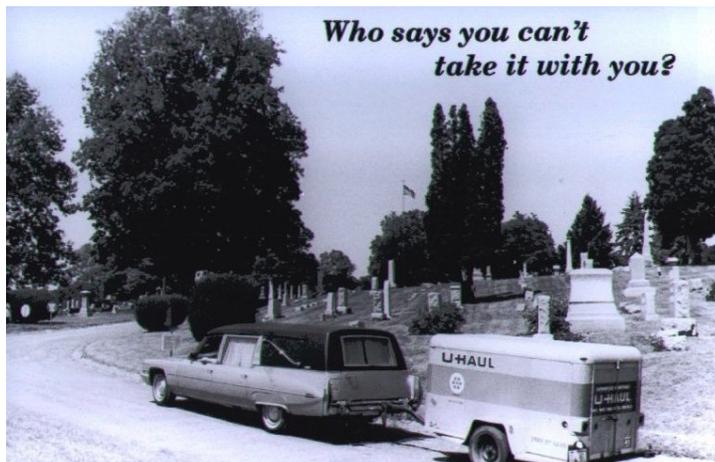
But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.

Matthew 19:21

Yahshua said to him, "If you wish to be complete, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."

Will the manner in which you have handled the financial and material resources of this world give you confidence in coming days that Yahweh will care for you? Can you draw on the bank of heaven, because you have lent to the Lord by giving generously to the needs of the poor? Will you have assurance that Yahweh will hear your prayers, because your ears were attentive to the cry of those in need?

Whether you have been called to a mobile lifestyle, or have a home and land, it is the will of the Father that you be a giver, rather than a collector. There is a popular saying that relates to mankind's accumulation of this world's goods. The saying states, "You can't take it with you."



Why wait until you die to give away what you have? The saints in Jerusalem did not. Christ admonished the young ruler with many possessions to sell all, give to the poor, and come follow Him. He promised that in return this man would have treasure in heaven. Are you earthly rich and heavenly poor? Or are you earthly poor and heavenly rich?

It is truly a strange and alien attitude, a sign of an expatriate from this world who has become a citizen of heaven, to travel light through this world. Why not see how much you can give away? You will never be able to out-give God. And when the storms of life descend, as they surely will, you will find that you have far less to lose than others.

Expatriates - Part Five: An Attitude of Gratitude

Joseph Herrin (05-30-2013)



Expatriate:

- to banish (a person) from his or her native country.
- to withdraw (oneself) from residence in one's native country.
- to withdraw (oneself) from allegiance to one's country.

[Source: <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/expatriate>]

An attitude of gratitude is essential if one is to victoriously embrace the expatriate life of a disciple of Christ. To follow Christ requires a surrender of all things. A man or woman who yields their life by accepting whatever experiences Yahweh has chosen for them will both lose and gain many things. Yahshua told those who would be His disciples to count the cost of following Him. He told them the cost was exceedingly high. The cost includes surrendering every relationship to God, every possession, laying down our dreams and goals for life. He has promised that every sacrifice will be repaid in time, multiplied a hundred fold, pressed down, shaken together, and running over.

We can choose to focus daily on what we have given up. This, however, leads to depression, to murmuring and complaint. It is not hard to find examples of unworthy attitudes among the people of God. One of the greatest epic narratives of the Bible recounts the experiences of the descendants of Abraham who were loosed from bondage in Egypt as Yahweh led them on a journey to inherit the land of Canaan.

Every man, woman, and child who departed from Egypt on the night of the first Passover were truly expatriates. They were leaving behind houses and lands and various furnishings. They could take with them only what they could carry. They would dwell in tents and embrace a mobile lifestyle. They became wanderers upon the face of the earth. Nevertheless, with most of them God was not pleased.

I Corinthians 10:1-5

For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and all ate the same spiritual food; and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a

spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ. Nevertheless, with most of them God was not well-pleased...



We learn the reason that Yahweh was not pleased with them. These people who adopted the expatriate lifestyle were continuously focused upon what it had cost them to follow God. They lamented the things left behind in Egypt, that fertile and prosperous land of slavery.

The inheritance Yahweh was leading them towards was far better. There they would live as a free people. They would inherit a land flowing with milk and honey. Yahweh was going to give them houses they had not built, vineyards and orchards they had not planted, cities they did not construct. Yet to arrive at their inheritance, the people of God had to first give up the life they had known and embark on a journey through the wilderness which Yahweh would use to test their hearts (attitudes).

Deuteronomy 8:2

And you shall remember all the way which Yahweh your God has led you in the wilderness these forty years, that He might humble you, testing you, to know what was in your heart...

Only in the hearts of a very small remnant was there found faith, gratitude, and an eagerness to follow Yahweh. Men like Moses, Joshua, and Caleb were the exception. The vast majority of men and women complained bitterly. Daily they murmured about the hardships and trials they faced. When Yahweh miraculously provided bread from heaven day after day, they complained that it was not as good as the quail, fish, leeks, onions, garlic, and melons of Egypt.

I Corinthians 10:6-12

Now these things happened as examples for us, that we should not crave evil things, as they also craved... Do not grumble, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.

During my years of public ministry I have had interaction with a large number of God's people. I have corresponded with thousands through e-mail, and many in person. I have encountered many

who manifest the same grumbling spirit of complaint that was observed among the people of Israel. Some find fault with every provision of Yahweh. They complain that the journey is too long, too difficult, that there are too many trials. Such ones seem to carry dark clouds around with them on sunny days. They speak at times of desiring to return to the life they once had. Their focus is backwards. Like Lot's wife, they look back to that which they are leaving behind, rather than looking forward to the divine inheritance that lies ahead.

Luke 9:62

But Yahshua said to him, "No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."



"I'm trying to develop an 'attitude of gratitude' but the best I can muster is a 'sentiment of resentment'."

Like the person in the cartoon above, many believers fall short of an attitude of gratitude. Instead they manifest a "sentiment of resentment." Their way becomes exceedingly difficult. They trudge on wearily, every step a herculean effort, for in their hearts they want to go backwards. They lack an eagerness to follow Yahweh to the new land of promise to which He would guide them.

There is a statement made in Moses' account of the people's wilderness wanderings that reveals that their main problem was not their experiences, but their attitude toward those experiences.

Numbers 11:1-6

Now the people became like those who complain of adversity in the hearing of Yahweh; and when Yahweh heard it, His anger was kindled, and the fire of Yahweh burned among them and consumed some of the outskirts of the camp... And the rabble who were among them had greedy desires; and also the sons of Israel wept again and said, "Who will give us meat to eat? We remember the fish which we used to eat free in Egypt, the cucumbers and the melons and the leeks and the onions and the garlic, but now our appetite is gone. There is nothing at all to look at except this manna."

These words, divinely inspired by the Holy Spirit, reveal a profound truth. Men and women can make their journey with Yahweh exceedingly more difficult than it actually is by manifesting a spirit of complaint. The statement "*Now the people became like those who complain of adversity*" is pregnant with meaning. There was no actual adversity. Look at what they were complaining about. They grew tired of eating manna every day. Manna was pleasant. It had the flavor of wafers with honey. It had everything necessary to promote health and sustain those who ate it. It was provided in a miraculous manner, daily demonstrating Yahweh's faithful care of His people. Yet, the people came to despise that which Yahweh had given to them.

Have you ever done the same? Have you come to despise something, or someone, that Yahweh placed in your life to provide something you needed? Have you ever murmured against Yahweh's provision, speaking as if it was some great adversity? The apostle Paul tells us that the experiences of the Israelites were given to us as examples lest we fall in the same way.

Every Christian is called to follow the Spirit of Christ as the Israelites followed the pillar of fire and the cloud. Christ has promised to provide and care for His people along the way.

Matthew 6:31-33

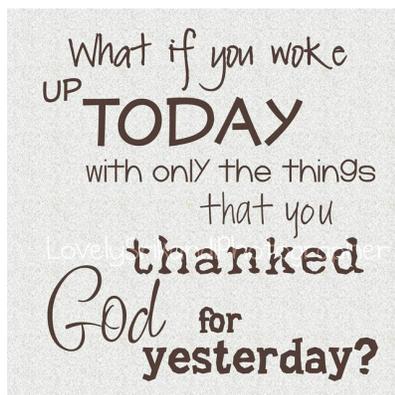
"Do not be anxious then, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'With what shall we clothe ourselves?' For all these things the Gentiles eagerly seek; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you."

The church has been corrupted in this hour. Ministers regularly make false declarations to the people of God. They declare that Yahweh has promised His people the banquets and feasts of Egypt while they follow the Spirit through the wilderness. The prosperity gospel that is so wildly popular today, leads the people of God to believe that they can take Egypt with them as they walk with Christ. This is gross deception. Those who imbibe the poisonous waters of the prosperity message become unwilling to lay aside the things of the world. They are unwilling to make sacrifices now to attain a far better inheritance later.

Christ has promised to meet every need of those who follow Him, but He has not promised that He will sate their soul's desires, nor give them that which is pleasing to the flesh. At times He chooses to feed His people with "the bread of privation, and the waters of affliction" (Isaiah 30:20). Surely bread of privation is better than no bread at all. It is the will of Yahweh that His people give thanks in ALL THINGS.

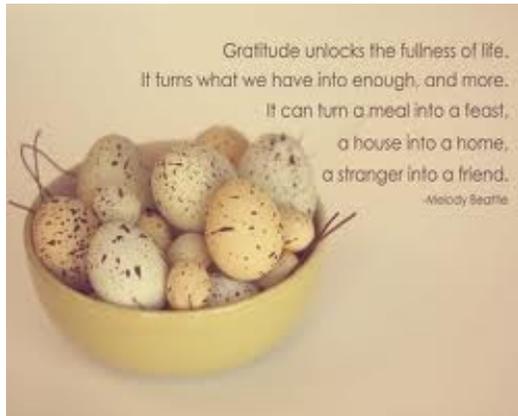
I Thessalonians 5:16-18

Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Yahshua.



I find myself daily giving thanks to God for His myriad of blessings. Some people have written to me and said they would not like to live in a converted school bus as I do. I remember one man's peckish comment as he compared my experience to that of the hippies of the 1960s. He asked me when I was going to hang beads up in the bus. Another dismissed such a life by suggesting that it would be nigh impossible to find a wife who would join a man in such an experience.

Despite the murmuring of others, I find myself frequently bursting forth in spontaneous praise and words of thanksgiving to my Father for the wonderful home He has provided for me. I am truly, sincerely, and ecstatically grateful for the bus He has provided for me. It has everything I need. It is dry. It keeps the bugs out and is climate controlled inside. Since I was able to install an instant-on hot water heater about a year ago I have rejoiced every time I am able to take a shower in my converted motorhome. I am truly blessed and I sense the Father's approval and pleasure when I give utterance to the thoughts of thanksgiving that arise in my soul.



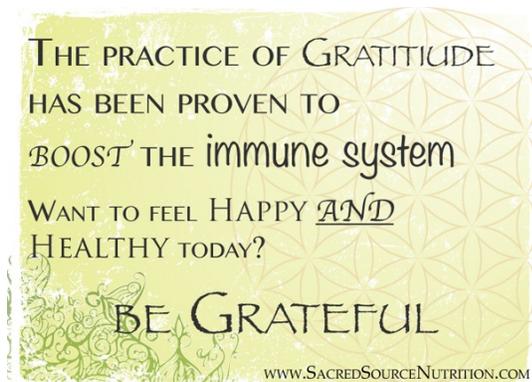
I have known times when the only roof over my head was a tent in the woods. I was extremely grateful for the tent Yahweh provided. When it rained it kept me dry. When the woods were full of gnats and mosquitoes, it kept them outside so that I could sleep peacefully at night.

For an entire summer my home was the camper van Yahweh provided for me, parked on the property of a rescue mission in downtown Macon, Georgia. Across the street was the county jail. Behind me were rows of crack houses. I had no electricity, sewer, or water connections at the location. Yet I remember telling the Father on many occasions that summer that I had never been happier. Yahweh opened the door for me to get a membership at a gym downtown. For \$32 a month I could visit every day, as long as I wanted. I could shower there. There was also a swimming pool, and all types of exercise equipment. There was a library nearby, and coffee houses that I could ride my bicycle to. I was able to spend my days writing, and return to my van at night to sleep.

There were some nights that the van stayed hot until after midnight. I lay on a towel so I would not soak my sheets with sweat. Yet, I was glad that I had a place of my own to lie down, for there were many homeless men and women in the town who had no such place. I also could look forward to a shower, and refreshment each day at the gym.

Even when I was twice cast in jail, once for 60 days, and another time for 74 days, I found that I had many things for which to be thankful. These experiences did not seem like unbearable hardships to me. Sure, there were elements that were hard to bear. I found the constant thunder of voices uttering profanity and obscenities to be difficult to bear. I longed at times for the peace of the countryside, and to experience the solitude that comes from being away from sinful humanity for a time. Yet, I appreciated the experiences for what they taught me. I was better able to understand the patience of Yahweh as He observes and hears all things every day. That He has not once more wiped the earth clean as He did in the days of Noah, is a testimony to His patience and longsuffering.

Through my experiences in jail, I learned a deep appreciation for things I had formerly taken for granted. I had previously thought little of the opportunities I had to pray out loud to God in my daily life. Yet, sharing a prison dorm with 80 other men, and always having another man in my small cell, made me relish the rare moments of privacy that I experienced in jail. I remember that one occasion my cell mate had to go to court. I had an hour or two alone in the cell by myself. It became a time of intense prayer as I paced from one end of the cell to the other, praying out loud, pouring forth my words of praise, hope, anticipation, and petition to my heavenly Father. That cell became to me a castle. It was my meeting room with the King of kings. His presence filled every corner. I relished the experience all the more because it was not readily available to me in that place.



I have frequently found that I have learned to appreciate something far more deeply by experiencing times when I had to do without. When the Father led me to experience two forty day periods of time camping in the woods, separated by a two day break, I came to appreciate a simple meal of bread and beans, or a bowl of soup. I learned this deep appreciation by having nothing to eat during much of this time, and little to eat the rest of the time. For the last seven days of my first forty day period of camping, I had no food. During the second forty day period, I ran out of food and had nothing other than water for my last seventeen days there.

Yahweh has taught me to look for the silver lining behind every cloud. He has taught me to praise Him in every experience. I remember during those seasons of fasting being grateful that I was out in a remote location. I was not tormented by watching others eat, or smelling food constantly, while I was doing without. I also experienced very little hunger, and knew this to be the grace of Yahweh. I thanked Him for these things. I found myself many times a day speaking out loud to the Father, confessing to Him my gratitude for the things I counted as blessings. I thanked Him for the former years of abundance that in my time of lack I was better able to appreciate.

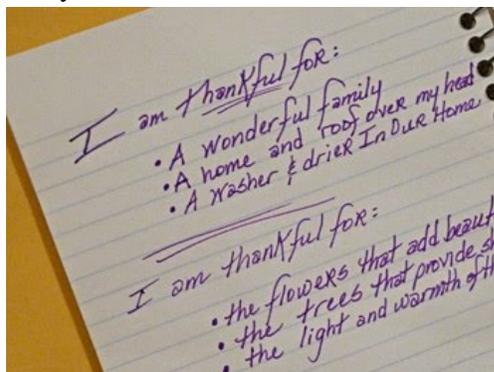
Yesterday I found myself once more expressing to the Father my deep gratitude for the provision He sends my way each day. My spirit feels lightened when I begin expressing thanksgiving to my Father. Clouds give way to sunshine, and despair flees as hope emerges. There is something inherently empowering in the simple act of thanking Yahweh for the blessings He provides. Thanksgiving has become a way of life for me.

I don't own a car. I ride my bike whenever I need to go to the store or post office. Some would find this to be a source of complaint, but I have found it to be cause for thanksgiving. I am

afforded exercise that my body needs by riding a bicycle. I also see and smell many wonderful things along my bike rides.

To exit the property I am parked on, I travel down a dirt lane. It is shaded and for the past month it has smelled wonderfully of honeysuckle. It is like taking a cool drink on a hot day to encounter the aroma of the honeysuckle. Every time I ride down the lane I remark to the Father about how wonderful it smells. Just think, Yahweh designed certain plants to exude aromas that cause pleasure when inhaled by mankind. What a loving and thoughtful thing to do!

Along my bike ride I have found wild blackberries growing. At times I will stop and pick a few handfuls and eat them. I love the taste of blackberries, a fact which the Father surely knows for I tell Him so every time I put them in my mouth. If I were driving a car, I would miss these experiences. We have a choice to either find cause for thanksgiving, or cause for complaint, in all of our experiences. Thanksgiving seems far more befitting a son of God, and it brings with it many rewards.



If you are finding your way to be difficult; if your experiences seem excessively bitter; they can be made easier and sweeter by the exercise of an attitude of gratitude. It is not possible to walk victoriously as an alien and stranger in this world, following in the footsteps of Christ, apart from embracing a heart of thanksgiving.



Gratitude Rocks!

Expatriates - Part Six: A Family Following in Christ's Footsteps

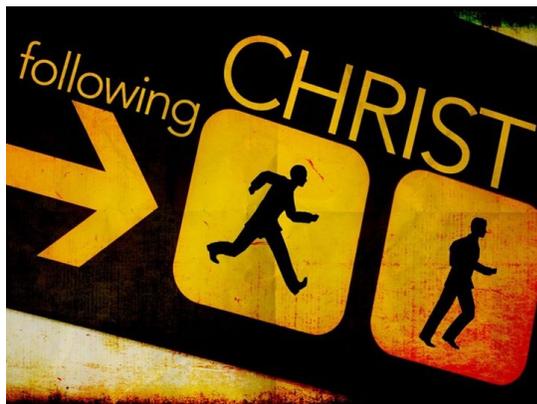
Joseph Herrin (06-30-2013)



Some weeks back it was my privilege to receive a visit from a young family who exemplifies the life of the sojourner upon the earth. Tom and Rachel, along with their young daughter Sela, were returning home to the upper midwest after spending some time in Florida. Since I am in Georgia, it was not far out of their way to stop by and visit. We had an enjoyable, albeit brief, time of fellowship, and they were off to continue their journey following the Spirit of Yahshua.

Tom is trained as a chiropractor and could be pursuing a comfortable career path in the United States. Instead, he has surrendered to follow Christ wherever He would lead, and to do whatever his Abba Father asks him to do. Rachel is similarly committed to living a life of surrender to the Spirit. It is a blessing that they began their union together as man and wife with a firm commitment to walk according to the Spirit, rather than pursuing a course of material accumulation that is so typical among professing Christians today.

The path the Father has led this young family down has been much more humble than that which they could have elected to pursue. It has been fraught with many perils, trials, and experiences where they have depended upon Yahweh to guide, empower, provide, and deliver them. Though they have been walking together in this journey for a brief period of five years, their testimony of Yahweh's faithfulness, and their examples of divine intervention, are already plentiful. I believe those who read their account will be both challenged and encouraged. I invited Tom to write up an account of his experiences. Here is the account he has set forth.



Five Years Ago

We are strangers and sojourners on this earth, but not traveling without a purpose. In the natural, the life that we have lived the past five years has been one that does not make full sense. We've been poor, yet rich; in sorrows, yet rejoicing; enduring trials while achieving triumphs. The world, and sadly, other Christians, often look at us and seek to correct us and the way of life we have been called to as if we somehow didn't understand and missed the obvious. The choice was there for us to go the way of worldly standards and expectations. Both my wife and I made a decision to walk the straight and narrow, not being mindful of what man thinks.

It wasn't easy and both of us have experienced great persecution and suffering from family and close friends. This fiery trial during our most formative years often left us standing alone upon our convictions. It was here that we discovered great solace in the outstretched arms of the One who knew us before the foundations of the world. He also knew the depth of isolation that testing can bring. There isn't any doubt in our minds that His hand was guiding our path and directing our steps, both as individuals, and now as a couple.

Shortly before we were married, the Spirit began to move in our hearts preparing us for great transition. Central America had been brought to each of our minds as a place that Yahweh was prompting us to go. It wasn't a prompting that we both had at the same time, but rather one that was gradual and without influence from others. This gave us the confidence and confirmation needed since we would soon be married and the usual questions of where to locate, what to do, etc., were being tossed about. It was important that we would be agreed upon this path prior to walking it together.

Soon after Yahweh confirmed our course, we were married. Due to the many life changes resulting from being newly married and anticipating moving to a new country, it was our desire to wait a year before having any children. We quickly found out that Yahweh deals in specifics not generalities. Three months into our marriage we discovered we were expecting and, almost as if to prove a point, our daughter was born the week of our anniversary.

We originally found out that we were expecting about seven weeks prior to leaving for Central America. We were caught off guard with the news and found ourselves scrambling to acquire items that would be needed for a newborn since they were not on our packing list. This wasn't a little deal at the time as we quickly realized that this would be the third major life changing event we would be facing in the upcoming year. A combination of marriage, first child, and adapting to life in a third world country appeared daunting at times, but Abba is good. Throughout these days He gave us the peace needed as we prepared.

Central America Part 1

Heading to Central America our minds were filled with many different thoughts and plans of what to expect and how we would benefit from our time there. We didn't realize it in the beginning, but our path was going to be changed from one of walking by our own understanding to one that is directed primarily by His purpose and intent. Our initial plan was to relocate for an indeterminate length of time, to establish ourselves in third world life, and to pursue opportunities for income. We also desired to serve, and anticipated getting involved with local

ministry in some capacity. To us this seemed a rational and normal plan, since we would soon be a young family.

Through many circumstances Yahweh began to show us that He didn't want us getting comfortable with a routine life, nor did He want us to establish and focus on business. Culture shock, language barriers, and challenges with building honest relationships and business dealings, all began to bring stress to our lives. Yahweh had begun to draw His sharp knife across the strings of our hearts desires. Several attempts at business opportunities, and some potential investments going sour, quickly began to drain the little money we did have with us.



To further challenge us we were given a test in connection with a local family. We often found ourselves spending money to help them buy food, clothes and books for their kids schooling since they seemed to always be in a financial crisis. It didn't take too much wisdom to realize that this situation was an unending money pit and sure to drain us. Yet the Holy Spirit would often prick our hearts to continue giving them help as they had need. We were able to share with them spiritually during this time and in particular the wife really held onto what we were sharing. We could see her heart opening and being drawn closer to the Savior and she always watched in amazement as we would be there to help in times of need.

Time moved quickly and we soon found ourselves at the three month point. It is a time when many who live in a third world country will "make it or break it," and head for home. We had faced a number of significant trials up to this point and now the added stresses of managing a pregnancy in third world conditions were beginning to increase the mental and emotional strain. We found ourselves in a quandary since we didn't feel led to pack up and move back to the States, but we also weren't being given a clear direction and understanding of where our path was leading. It was a difficult place to be in, and one that we weren't familiar with.

To increase the pressure, one of the couples that we were house sitting with decided to return to the States for good, and the house we were staying in was to be reoccupied by the original family that had asked us to house sit. In a nutshell this meant that our expenses would soon be going up as our finances and business opportunities continued down. Our finances were low. In fact we were down to less than \$100 dollars in hand. Not a very peaceful position to be in, considering our situation.

We had been praying and crying out for some time. It was at this point that we were released to look for tickets back to the States. We were stirred in our hearts that this would be a time to regroup, help my family on their farm with the harvest, and then we would return back for the

long haul, but in a new dwelling place. We searched and found a budget airline that had very cheap tickets back to the States and added them to the credit card total.

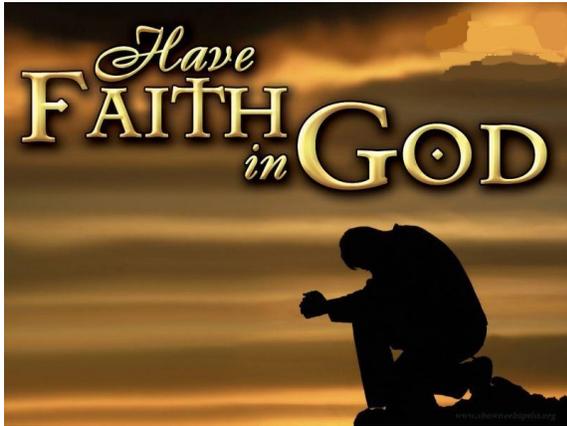
We were carrying a balance on our card prior to coming down and though we weren't specifically instructed to pay off the balance I would later wonder if we had used our cash to pay off the credit card prior to coming down whether this lesson would have to be learned so dramatically. Instead we found ourselves with enough money to buy bus tickets to the airport, pay for a taxi, and have roughly about forty dollars left. We figured we would use that for food on the trip home, but, since we didn't counsel with Yahweh about our idea, we didn't realize He had another plan.

A few days later, a friend of the local family that we had been helping stopped by and asked if we would be able to buy them a phone card since they were out of minutes. Of course our hearts and minds screamed out NO Way, but the Spirit prompted otherwise. We knew it was a test so we used twenty dollars to buy a phone card for this individual. We now had a week to go before heading back to the States and we were pretty much without any money at this point.

Because our faith hadn't reached the level necessary to trust Yah completely, I made a desperate move. This became the only time that I ever asked to borrow money from someone. We needed to find a new place to live upon returning and time was running out so I sent off the email. We then looked at several places. On our way back my wife wanted to show me one more place that she had previously seen without me. Upon seeing the house I knew it was the one. Though it was too big for just the two (soon to be three) of us, I had a Word given to me. "Rent this house and use it for gatherings to worship, and for housing others who would be coming down to look around for relocating here.

We told the landlady that we were very interested, but she was asking more than we wanted to pay. She told us she had several others looking at the house. We told her to please consider us and we would call her the next day. The next day didn't produce any response from my email and with time running out we decided to call the landlady and see if she would rent us the house and be willing to wait for payment until we returned. We went to visit her and felt that we should take her to lunch. She agreed. We used the time to tell her more about us, our reason for being down there, and possible future plans. She thanked us for the lunch and again mentioned another couple that was very interested in the house and that they were ready to give her the money for it. As we parted she said that she would think about it and let us know.

That night another check of email didn't reveal any response with regard to money. We did receive a call from the landlady though and she asked to meet us the next day. I felt at this point that I had to come clean on our financial situation. Again I asked her if she would be willing to wait for the money. She told us no and that she would need the money now and would most likely go ahead and rent to the other couple. We felt deflated and tried to encourage each other with the thought that we would find something when we returned. After all, we were leaving in two days. What more could we do?



Our prayers seemed to go unnoticed and we couldn't really understand the whole situation, but we were committed to wait upon His ways. Before going to bed again that night I did one more check on emails and this time there was a response. The way the day had gone for us I was expecting the worst. I was still looking at things using my own logic and understanding, however our faith was to receive a much needed boost that night. It became a turning point in our hearts with regard to the miracles of Yah. I read the email and was quite shocked and delighted to see that not only was my wonderful sister going to loan us money, but she had already found a way to deposit it into my account in the States. We rejoiced and gave thanks to the Almighty One that night as we lay in bed. We cried tears of joy, but also of repentance for our failing to trust in His Word, His promises, and His character.

All of this time He was grabbing at our hearts and prompting us to let go of everything and just trust. His knife was cutting deeper and deeper. His cross was beginning its work. His path was slowly being uncovered before us. Our eyes were being opened to His ways. The next day we were packing and getting ready to leave, having made arrangements to keep our stuff where we were staying until our return, when we received a phone call from the landlady. She told us that she really wanted to rent the house to us and not the other couple, but she would need half of the money and then she would hold the house for us until we returned. With great enthusiasm I told her that we would be able to do that and so the house became ours.

Central America Part 2

Coming back from the States began our second foray to Central America. We had less than two months to go with the pregnancy and getting a little nest ready was our focus. As usual Abba had other thoughts and plans for us. Upon moving into the house we had secured in Central America, we ended up renting two of the four bedrooms to people we knew that came down from the States on a semi-permanent basis. It was good to have the company, but also tense at times since we were a relatively newly married couple and preparing for our first baby. The trials and tests we were now facing seemed to deal mostly with interpersonal relationships and spiritual warfare.

It was quite a challenge at times but in the end our personal relationship with our Heavenly Father grew sweet and deep. The life of Christ was manifest as we saw how forgiveness and blessings need to fill our hearts rather than anger and irritation. We learned to deal with little idiosyncrasies, while discovering how judgmental we could be toward other believers and people in general. We found ourselves entering into protective mode. Instead of letting the knife

continue to cut us deeper, we pushed it towards others. When we realized that the fruit of the Holy Spirit was not maturing and coming to fruition, we sought the Almighty to grant us wisdom in the matter.

It came to mind we had received a word of direction when we rented this particular house. Now it was time to uphold our promise, regardless of our circumstances. Several weeks before giving birth, we had received a request from a man who wanted to come down and look around to see what was available. He was going to come with a friend. This man knew a friend of ours and inquired if it would be possible to stay with us. "Well, we may be having a baby, but come on down," we told him. It turned out that the baby came a little late, so their visit was uninterrupted by the cries of a newborn. We had much on our minds at this point, obviously, but we did begin to open the house to meetings and gatherings as requested. It was small in the beginning, but grew over the next six months.

A week after our guests had left we had a six hour home birth to a beautiful, healthy, alert little girl. What a blessing entered our lives, but we weren't prepared for the lack of sleep. I'm sure we looked like dead people walking for the first month as our daughter just didn't like to sleep. Too many things to experience, I guess. She quit napping altogether at two years, so we could have seen it coming. It is at the times of greatest stress, or testing, that Yahweh likes to push us beyond what we think we are able to bear.

Several more families had contacted us about coming down to look around for places to stay. We couldn't say no since we agreed with Abba to do this when we rented the house. So a few weeks later we had eighteen people staying at the house for two weeks. It was a beautiful sight to see these bodies sprawled on any couch, chair, bed or even spaces on the floor that they could find each night. They didn't seem to mind the cries of our daughter, and we all grew to know a closeness that can only come from close quarter living. To have eighteen people, two dogs, and a newborn all together praising Yahweh and living the lives of selfless servants was such an incredible reward to our hearts and a testimony of Yeshua. Once again the fruit of the Holy Spirit was manifesting its sweetness.

These families soon moved on and located nearby. Thus began the times of sweet fellowship. Over time we experienced many wonderful gatherings and seasons of early morning prayer. Other families came and went, but the closeness we experienced, as well as the inspiration and revelation of Yahweh, still live on today. Many of the lessons we learned during those times of spiritual intimacy continue to be brought forward in clarity and understanding. It was a wonderful time that we dearly miss.

We all know that our ways are often not the same as His. Yahweh used our initial reasons for going to Central America to get us up and moving on our wilderness journey. We can look back and see His hand in all of it, moving us from our purpose to His, with the result of our faith growing and our understanding of what is important being clarified. We had already been downsizing in our life, but now we were beginning to realize that we could get by without much of what is available to most. We had to learn to trust in Him for all things on a daily basis, including fellowship and growth in our spiritual walk. The depth of the words written in proverbs began to come to life in new ways.

Pro 3:5 Trust in YHWH with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

Pro 3:6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.



Our learning to make our requests known to Him, crying out to Him for all needs, has given our faith a much needed dimension. Living on necessities rather than luxuries taught us to live day by day and to never question His desire for our good. There were many challenges, but everyone was in the same boat and we all learned to deal with adversity as He directed. We also began to see that many people in the world do have it better than people in the United States for the simple fact that they aren't burdened by so many things. We had become sojourners in this present world and had to learn to live light and stay mobile.

The Call to Israel

Nearly two years of living in Central America stripped us down and taught us how to press in and seek His face while looking to the author and perfecter of our faith. We had learned many lessons and had much revealed to us with regard to how much we could take without breaking mentally, emotionally, or spiritually. As we learned to take our eyes off of us and look upward in prayer, and most importantly, in praise, we were able to endure and strengthen much in the way of our resolve to endure faithfully to the end.

It was at this point that we had our highest and lowest moments occur in the same day. As is often the case, when great victory is acquired, the adversary is quick to attempt to steal, kill or destroy. This was to be a pattern that we became familiar with over the next few years, yet we have learned how to defuse these attempts by the enemy of our souls, most of the time. I won't mention the low point, but the high point was getting an invitation to go to Israel for an extended period of time to serve alongside an established christian kibbutz. We were invited by some dear friends of ours, who had been bringing groups of people over to this kibbutz in Israel, to not only experience the Land of Israel, but also to learn about community living while blessing the people of the kibbutz and the people of Israel by serving wherever they needed help.

Our friends wanted to start a pilot project of having others come and stay longer than the normal allotted time for such groups in the past. If it could work out to be beneficial to all involved then perhaps this would develop into a more permanent position for us. Our friends wanted us to be

there to see how the dynamics and logistics would work out since we were not going to be joined to the kibbutz, but rather helping them from the outside in. If successful, then it would be expanded for others to join us and we would oversee their interaction with the kibbutz. Our hearts jumped for joy at this opportunity since we both have loved our previous times in Israel and really desired to go back. If it worked out that we would be able to spend the rest of our lives in Israel, or at least until Messiah returned, it would be a dream come true for both of us.

By this time our finances were really dwindling again since we didn't have opportunities to make income. Prior to the phone call from our friends we were not sure what lay before us since it was soon going to be financially impossible for us to stay much longer in Central America. Our enthusiasm was dampened by the realization that, with our current financial situation, it would not be possible to buy tickets to Israel, let alone live there. We had to fly to the States first where we would then spend some brief time with family, but the costs of travel to the States would use up most of the cash we had left. On our knees we went. We lifted up our needs though we still didn't understand the ways of the All Sufficient One.

We did have a credit card, but it was still carrying a balance from the time of our wedding and it wouldn't have the credit limit available for buying tickets to Israel. We continued to pray. We also began to share our exciting opportunity with some of our close friends so they could pray with us though we never told them of our financial situation at the time. As we shared our opportunity with two of our dearest friends, one of them an older lady who doesn't have much in the material sense, but has much in the spiritual, who lives daily by faith, told us that she was led to pay our fee required by the group going to Israel. Another dear sister in the faith told us that she was led of the spirit to make it her priority to get us over to Israel. She told us that she was going to buy our tickets and wanted to know what dates to have the return on. I told her that the tickets should be one way only, as this was impressed in my spirit.

It is very unusual to purchase one way tickets when going to Israel since they are very strict about length of stay in that country and often check for return tickets upon arrival. We knew that we wouldn't have opportunities to make money while over there, so I wasn't sure how we would leave Israel when the time came. Nevertheless, we went ahead with purchasing one way tickets. Our friend that was so generous with us regarding tickets took us to the airport on the day we were to leave and handed us a handful of cash as we got out of the car, indicating to us that this was for our journey. It was a much needed boost to our finances at the most opportune time and we continue to pray bountiful blessings back upon her.

Our time in Israel was filled with wonderful examples of how faithful Yahweh is to provide even the smallest of items. With little money to buy our food, we kept our meals very basic. One day when the kibbutz moved us to an apartment that we were to occupy for the length of our stay, my wife was thinking that it would be nice to have some good butter. For some reason dairy is a very expensive item in Israel, so it was not an option for us. As we looked around our small apartment for the first time, my wife was taking inventory of what was there. To her great delight when she looked in the refrigerator she saw there was only one item in the entire refrigerator, a large square of sweet cream butter. We are embarrassed to say that it didn't last us very long.

The next day the couple who had invited us to be a part of this in the first place called us and said they were coming over and bringing dinner with them. Looking at the fresh Israeli food sitting on

the table, a bottle of wine to share on the next Sabbath meal, some utensils for the kitchen, a few items for the cupboards and a new plastic tub to bathe our daughter in, we felt truly blessed. Our apartment was small and had only the very basic necessities since it was used occasionally by members of the kibbutz in case they had family staying at the hospital nearby. That night our friends shared more good news with us. They had decided that they were going to pay the rent of the apartment for us during our time there. This was a great relief to us since our finances weren't going to let us get past the first month considering the expense of buying food and paying utilities.

Abba began to open our eyes and we began to see many little miracles that in the past would have normally slipped past our eyes. One example was the time we began to teach our daughter potty training. There were stores nearby that offered small potty chairs, but they were cheaply made and rather expensive for what you would get. We really didn't have the luxury to just drop the money they wanted for it at the store, so we added it to our prayer request list. About a week later we decided to go for a walk after dinner and for some reason headed up a street that we had never walked on before. In Israel, people will set their trash out and if there is something that they don't want and it is still in working condition, they will often set it on the sidewalk beside the trash container. At the first house we came to we both glanced down and there staring up at us was a nice potty chair in rather good condition. It was a double blessing as the need for diapers decreased, which can be quite expensive as well.

Another example of Abba's provision occurred later that week. As we were having an evening meal consisting of the usual lentils, vegetables, and rice, my wife mentioned that it sure would be nice to eat some pizza for a change. About 15 minutes later we had a knock on the door and my wife left to answer it. When she returned she was carrying something and had a funny grin on her face. I asked her what she had and she told me that the elderly German woman who occasionally stayed on the top floor, and who only spent one weekend a month in the building, decided to stop by to welcome us to the place. She told my wife that she wanted to bring us a housewarming gift, but all she had to give us was an extra pizza that she had made for dinner. It was a German style pizza with a strange combination of toppings. We laughed as we ate it and remembered to be very specific in our requests from now on.

After our first month of helping the kibbutz, I found myself mostly serving in the agricultural areas. It was hot, hard work, with long hours. I would often be gone from the apartment for twelve hours coming home exhausted. It was a test for me physically as well as learning how to serve under others who have a different language and culture. After a time I was called in to meet with the leaders. I didn't know what to expect and was very surprised at the outcome. Good reports had come in from those that I had been serving with, and the kibbutz wanted to reward me in some way. Since we weren't members of the community, they couldn't offer me the same as those who had sacrificed so much, but they decided to offer us a portion of the food that the community grew, plus the use of their vehicles, and a small monthly stipend to help buy things that they weren't able to provide us with. They also decided not to charge us for utilities and they were dropping the requirement of rent which our friends were paying.

It had been a challenge to serve anywhere, everywhere, and however people needed, so this was a blessing and great turn around in our situation. This wasn't going to allow us accumulate wealth, but it gave us some breathing room. Throughout this time we hadn't told anyone our financial

situation including our close friends. Over the course of our stay there, we had numerous situations occur where people known and unknown to us gave us money. Some gave it to us directly as a result of a movement of the Spirit, others left it anonymously under our door mat or in an envelope. One gentleman offered us an extra Nokia cell phone to use while we were there. Another couple bought us some kitchen appliances.

When we had originally arrived at the Kibbutz we had made the commitment that if anybody needed help we would say yes and serve them with a cheerful heart. We found ourselves doing many things including washing windows, picking up trash, landscaping, sweeping the balconies, helping at the children's school, picking and peeling fruit, helping out in many of the departments of the kibbutz businesses, as well as working in the fields. We really saw the hand of the Father blessing our decision to answer the call of "Will you go and serve no matter what? Will you lay down your life and be willing to sacrifice all for rewards that may not come until later?" Simply put, we were learning how to be servants of the Most High, and at times suffering servants of men.

Overall we loved our time in Israel, not realizing this was an advanced level of training for us as well. Everything is accentuated in Israel spiritually, both in the good and the bad. Ancient principalities still lurk in those corners of the world and are quite capable of challenging the strongest understandings of spiritual warfare. Scriptures teach that in our weakness, He is strong. It was a promise hard to understand until He alone was the One who brought us through the swirling, powerful spiritual attacks that came in the early morning hours. They were attacks designed to bring us to destruction in many ways and it was at this same time we were being called to do our greatest level of prayer and intercession. It wasn't unusual for us to be woken up at three or four A.M. to fight off an attack from the enemy, or to have Abba call us to prayer and intercession.

Worn out from lack of sleep, and physically exhausted, we would sometimes try to hit the "snooze" button on the Spirit's wake up call. It never failed that if we didn't get up to answer the call, our daughter would wake up crying until we finally roused ourselves from bed. This was the beginning of our understanding of what would be required to fellowship in the sufferings of the Messiah. Time after time we were shown places in our hearts where self was still there standing erect as an idol. Though we would often take the ax to the root, it was becoming clear that this was not going to be an easy task.

To compound the situation we also saw and learned how difficult community living can be. We found our love and compassion for others challenged to the point of realizing how much ugliness we still allowed to fester within us. Grumbling, and complaining were often at our door wanting to take over, along with condemnation and accusation. We saw our eyes drifting to the natural rather than seeing the Spirit of Yahweh within others. We saw the challenges of having to serve man without limit, and yet not get consumed with the concerns of life which would pull our eyes off of the path of Christ and cause us to walk by sight rather than by faith.

It got so bad that at one point, both of us received a word from the Spirit telling us that we were close to leaving our First Love. Later as we read and reflected in the scriptures, the verse discussing the issue of "what began in the Spirit was now trying to be perfected in the flesh" came to our attention. We knew that there would have to be a circumcision of our hearts so that

we would be willing to follow the Lamb wherever He went, trusting in Him rather than leaning on our own fleshly understandings.

Exit Out of Israel



The Spirit had been intensely dealing with us during this season of life. We were tested and tried in many ways, and found quite lacking in some. At this point our hearts were still desiring to stay in Israel, however that wasn't going to be possible for us in the long term without some miracles. A three month visa is all you get and then you have to leave for a time. We had now completed our first three months, so the Kibbutz paid for us to leave for a few weeks, and then we returned for three more, plus an extension. We were thrilled to be able to stay so long, however during our final three months we began to feel the Spirit prepare us for a time of transition.

Following the path of the Suffering Servant was a very difficult task and often required more than we thought we could give. Our time in Israel was one of great blessings, but also great challenge, introspection, questions, and being pushed to the limit. Towards the end we never seemed to have much time to catch up in our spiritual lives due to the high demands on us physically, mentally and emotionally. We both knew that it was very likely we wouldn't be coming back for any further time of service at the Kibbutz, though they offered to have our visas extended and eventually have them become permanent.

When presented with this option our hearts were torn. Even though there was much to challenge us in this situation, it was a dream come true for us to think that here we had a chance to live in Israel for the rest of our lives, with a community that would give us work, some income, housing, transportation and fellowship like a family. It was a challenge to make the decision against this, and even harder to notify those with whom we had gained great trust and respect. Yet we felt the call of Abba and He had shown us issues that He wanted us to correct in our lives during this next season we would be entering. We knew we must go and most likely wouldn't return, though we did remain hopeful.

We knew that it must be time to transition as we still didn't have much money since the stipend and gifts given to us were small and living in Israel is expensive. As we drew close to our final month of stay, once again I realized that we didn't have the money to buy tickets back to the States. My wife began to prompt me to check on tickets anyway, yet in my spirit I didn't have the release to do so. We continued to pray and seek direction with each passing day and grew more

concerned over the timing of our departure. It wouldn't be good for us to overstay our visa, yet we weren't getting any clear answers other than to wait.

Each time I would think about checking on prices, the Spirit would again prompt me to wait, informing me that it wasn't time to look. Finally with about ten days to go on our visas, I was released to look for tickets. My wife had friends that knew someone whose family member worked for an airline. We didn't know her personally and at first I was hesitant to consider this option. Yet as I looked at tickets and their prices, I told my wife to email the contact and see what happened. I wasn't too hopeful and continued to ponder the ticket situation.

Before heading to bed that night we checked emails once more and, with the time difference, our contact had gotten a chance to see our email during her day's work and responded quickly to us. She was about to go out of town for the weekend, but she would be willing to get us the passes we would need. If we would promptly send her the info requested, she would have them issued and emailed to us. She also had taken time to look at the flight loads and suggested a particular date that wasn't too full as of yet. The date she suggested would take us into our final week on the visas. We quickly sent off the info and began packing.

These tickets would be standby, without guarantee of getting on the flight. If the plane filled, we would have to try again the next night. We were told to get to the airport early as the standby seats would fill up in a first come, first go order. We arrived at the airport four hours ahead of time and quickly got into the line where we would be questioned by security and have our luggage screened. All of this takes place before getting to the ticket counter.

If one has flown into Israel, they will understand this procedure. This line seemed to take forever and we found out later that there was another line feeding into it from the other side. It took over two hours for us to clear this line. We went to the ticket area and waited only to be told that we were in the wrong line and that at the far end of the counter there was a little window and that was where we needed to be. We were told that after seeing that person they would put us on a list and we should return to a particular spot pointed out to us and wait until all counters are closed and they begin to hand out the standby seats.

We glanced at the "particular" spot and noticed that more people were beginning to hang out there. Our brains began to speak the lies of the adversary to get us thinking that we wouldn't get on the plane even though both of us had peace in our spirit that we would get on this plane. When we got to the window, we found out that our contact had pre-listed us from her work place the night before though we didn't know where we would fall on the list. We were about an hour and a half prior to when the plane should take off when we got to our little "spot" to wait, with the lines still quite long at the counters.

As we waited we heard others in our area tell of night after night of not getting on as the planes were full. Zingers to the brain from the father of lies began. Maybe we wouldn't get on after all, and what will we do? Our friends that dropped us off were now in bed and the train was shut down for the night. Would we have to sleep here in the airport with a little child? Would there be seats tomorrow? I have to admit that some of those thoughts did creep in and gain a little foothold. Deep down we still had peace but it was being challenged for the moment. I watched

the clock tick to forty minutes prior to departure. The counters were still open for the last travelers with paid tickets who were having their baggage examined.

Finally with thirty minutes to go, a man stood up by the counters and stated that he had a list of those who would get on the plane. If your name wasn't called, then you wouldn't be getting on the plane. If your name was called, then quickly come up to the counter to get your ticket, and quickly get through security upstairs, and be at the gate by the time of departure or the plane would leave without you. At this point we had talked ourselves back into some faith with the knowledge that we had been pre-listed and most likely would be near the top. The man stood up between the counters and called the first name. A family stepped up. The same thing for the second name called. Name three still wasn't us and we glanced at each other with eyes a little larger. Name four was another family of five people.

At this point I knew that Yahweh was going to make us sweat it out, but I didn't realize how much so at the time. Name five was called and it was a couple. Name six was called and it was a single lady. Name seven was the sweetest sound as I heard my name called. We did as the man said and quickly went to the counter. There were now twenty minutes left before departure as I stood waiting for them to print out our boarding passes. Wouldn't you know that our printer ran out of ticket stock as they began to print our passes. Seems that they had a hard time finding more printing stock and the clock kept ticking. Eighteen minutes to go and finally the printer began again. Seems like an hour but it could have been the sweat dripping down my face that obscured the time on my watch. Finally with boarding passes in hand, we ran to the elevators.

We caught up with the lady who had been called before us. She held the elevator for us and we began our marathon together. Up and out we quickly proceeded toward the glass doors that would open into the final security section. I was pushing the stroller with my daughter, and half of the carry-on luggage while my wife was carrying the other half plus the car seat. We arrived at the glass doors and there were six people waiting for the security guard to check passports against tickets before allowing them to go through into the security zone.

The lady that was with us said something to another gal who was in charge of the handicap door. I don't know what she said, but the girl agreed to allow us to pass through her area after checking our information. At this point I had forgotten to look at my watch because as we passed through the glass doors, my heart sank. The room was completely full of people waiting to go through two metal detectors at the far end. It was wall to wall, front to back.

I quickly went over to the man who was examining those in wheelchairs to see if we could go through that line as it was much shorter, but I was refused. My heart sunk as we tried to find the shortest of the lines heading toward the far part of the room. For some reason I turned to look back toward the glass doors in the hopes of finding another security personnel. Coming toward me in my line of sight was a young lady that I recognized from downstairs at the counter. Her name was called after us and she was the last person that received a boarding pass that night. As I looked at her, there was an airline worker walking in front of her. They both happened to pass immediately to my right and as they did so, I heard the worker telling the gal to stay very close to her and keep moving. I quickly yelled out to the worker that we were on the same flight and she motioned us to get in line behind this gal.

Here we were about to witness a great miracle. I call it the parting of the Red Sea in reverse. Instead of water parting, it was people. I don't know what was said to the people as we moved forward, but everyone stepped to the side without question or challenge. People in Israel don't do that sort of thing. With me pushing the stroller, holding bags, etc... my wife was behind me and the other lady we had come up with was behind her. We moved forward like a snow plow from the back of the room all the way up to being the next in line for the x-ray machine and metal detector. In record time I pulled my daughter out of the stroller, gave her to my wife, put our bags on the belt, collapsed the stroller and placed it on the belt, told my wife to meet me on the other side of the machine and then emptied my pockets. Thankfully you can still wear your belt and shoes while going through the detector. The airline worker waited until we all made it through, then took us into the next room.

Again my heart sank as we entered the immigration part where our passports needed to be stamped out. Every window had at least ten people waiting. The worker told our little group to wait in the middle of the room for a few minutes. She disappeared out of the room and we all just looked at each other not knowing what to say. Finally after what seemed like a half hour, the worker returned with another woman. This lady collected our passports and went into an empty office. A few minutes later she returned with our passports and a paper both stamped. We were instructed to go around the corner and show the paper and the passports to a man at the door. She then smiled and said.....Good luck.

We didn't wait for the others at this point and took off. I put all of our passports together and open in one hand and the papers right behind them. The man was taking his time with each passenger going through the door and was carefully checking each item. I didn't know what to think at this point but we were next and as I approached him, I held everything up for him to see easily. He glanced at it and waved us through without even touching any of them. We were through the worst, but now it was off to the races.

We entered the passenger section and now it was only time and distance to our gate. We knew we would have to run and we took off. Thankfully the airport on this side was rather empty. We found out later that people had waited in the security line for over two hours to get through it and we had actually beat them to the plane. So as we drew near to the finish line which was our gate, the man who originally had called out our names at the ticket counter was there to encourage us on. He clapped his hands and shouted that it isn't much further and to go straight to the counter. I had a quick mental image of the great cloud of witnesses who must also be clapping and cheering the faithful and determined to finish the course as the end is getting closer.

Arriving at the counter, the girls working there had already figured out which passengers we were by the fact that there were three of us yet only two tickets. They had our seat assignments in hand and quickly exchanged them with us. We had to gate check the car seat and the stroller so that was our next stop, and only after that when we were walking up the ramp did I even think about our seats. One of us would have to hold our daughter the entire trip. Getting seats together was not even a consideration. We were just wondering how far apart we would be in case the other would need a break. My wife asked where we were sitting and I looked down and all I could do was shake my head, smile and say "sweetheart, Abba is so good." He had given us two middle seats beside each other. Now our daughter could lay on our laps and stretch out, and hopefully sleep. On all of our overseas flights in the past she never slept until the final hour of the flight.

Though elated with getting on the plane, we were exhausted so my wife uttered a simple prayer to have our little girl get some sleep so we could too. She slept most of the way back.

Expatriates - Part Seven: A Family Following in Christ's Footsteps (Conclusion)

Joseph Herrin (07-01-2013)



The Exit Part Two

The story of our trip back doesn't end there. We landed at our connecting airport in the states and needed to take another flight to get to our final destination. Like the first leg, this would be standby and first come basis. Getting through immigration and customs took forever so by the time we arrived at security, our time to meet the connection was getting close again.

We weren't so concerned this time due to jet lag and our recent experience. However we were anxious to reach our destination. Upon arriving at the gate we saw that they were already beginning with pre-boarding. I happened to look out the window and saw that we had a really small plane at our gate. It wasn't looking good for us to get on, but we tried anyway and went to the counter. They quickly confirmed that it didn't look good for us as there were already a number of people rolling over from the last flight and the next one in two hours was already overbooked. They suggested we wait for the flight after that which was another three hours later and then they still said we may not be able to get on.

Not happy with our options we went down the hall to the customer service area. I let my wife deal with them while I waited with our daughter. They suggested that all they could do was to put us on the list for the later flight. As all of this was happening, just like in Israel, I felt the need to turn around and look back towards the gate. Again in my line of sight I saw a lady walking toward us quite a distance away. She was looking at us and continued in our direction. By this time my wife had finished and we turned to leave. Just as we did, this lady arrived and called out to us by name. She introduced herself and we realized that it was the lady that we had gotten the airline tickets from. She worked in this airport, had followed our journey and realized that we wouldn't be getting on so she decided to come and meet us. It turned out that she worked for the presidential club for that airline and she took us up to the lounge to relax.

After our long flight we weren't going to refuse. We told her the flight details given to us by the customer service and she took us over to her friends in the lounge that book flights for customers and had them look up some options for us. They told us go sit down and relax and that they would find us. In a little while, they came and got us. They had some great news. They found out that by routing us through another airport then to our final airport, they could get us there quicker than the next direct flight out of this airport and each of our segments had large numbers of seats open, so getting on and sitting next to each other wouldn't be a problem. On top of that they told

us that all of our bags had already been loaded on the last flight that we couldn't get on and they would be waiting for us at the luggage counter when we arrived.

We knew then that Yahweh had delivered us on a journey of a lifetime and there was a purpose to it all. While sitting in the lounge waiting for our next flight, I reflected on our recent series of events. The Spirit impressed upon me two important points. The first is that we need not fear in days ahead as Yahweh guards our comings and our goings as mentioned in psalm 121. He is able to deliver no matter how difficult the circumstances appear to be. The second point was to show us that in days ahead, people doing their normal jobs could be used to show us favor during times of difficulty and stress to help us move about or accomplish our task at hand.

What Do We Do About Our Stuff?

Upon returning from Israel, my wife daughter and I went to stay with my parents on their small farm as it was close to the time of harvest. This would give us time with our families, as well as being a blessing to my elderly parents by helping with the physical labor required on the farm. We didn't have any intention of staying much beyond that as we were seeking our next season.

Meanwhile, as it was becoming the norm for us, our finances were at rock bottom. We still had some belongings in Central America stored with friends. Since we knew that we weren't going to move back to that country to live, we would have to do something with our small amount of stuff that remained there. Not wanting to be a burden to friends who were kind enough to house our boxes of stuff in their small house we began to pray about what to do. We didn't want to just tell them to give away or sell the things down there because there were some items that we desired to keep. We had left them behind only because we didn't have the room to take them with us when we left for Israel. We figured that we would have at least two big suitcases, possibly more, of things that we wanted to bring back. I was going to have to go down and make some decisions. We didn't have the money for me to buy a ticket down, so we lifted our request up to our Heavenly Father once again.

Sometime during the next day or two I received an email update in my in box from a frequent flier program that I had once belonged to years ago when I was single and flew more often. I opened the email and clicked the link to access my account to see if it was still active. Of course, I had long ago forgotten the password. After working through the whole "forgot your password" sequence, I was finally able to access the account. To my surprise I saw that all of my miles were still there in full. It turns out that this program didn't have any expiration date for miles at that time. (Later in the year the airline merged with another and switched to their frequent flier program which did expire miles.) I quickly checked my total with the awards program and found that not only did I have enough for a round trip ticket, I was actually able to get a first class round trip ticket. So instead of only being allowed one free suitcase of up to 50 pounds, I was now able to bring back two suitcases up to 70 pounds each free of charge. It was a blessing we needed because I didn't have the money to pay for an extra bag.

In the book *Reese Howells - Intercessor* there is mention of the Royal way for the Kings kids. For this trip it looked like I would be traveling first class. It's becoming more and more clear to us that we don't have to look in the gutter for change to meet our needs, just listen, trust and obey. Seek Him first along with His righteousness and He will take care of the rest.

With my ticket secured, I flew to Central America to gather my things and have a quick visit with our friends. The little money I did have would allow me travel resources for food and bus fare. While I was there I didn't want to laden our friends with the extra costs of food or fuel should they drive me around. I didn't know how I would repay them for their acts of kindness, but, as always, I wanted to be a blessing and not a burden.

Upon arriving and fellowshipping with the small group of believers, it quickly came to my attention that one of the families was going to be having a yard sale for many things that they had and didn't need anymore. It was perfect as I would then go through all of our stuff and pull out what we wanted to have with us, sell what I could, and give away the rest to friends, or to a local orphanage. As it turned out I made enough money on the sale of our things to not only cover my costs while down there, but to also come home with more money than I had left with.

As a further demonstration that He is more than capable of sustaining and providing all of our needs, Yahweh did one more astonishing act for me while I was down there. It was a few days after the sale, and very shortly before I was to take a bus to the airport, when our wonderful believing friends whom we had initially house sat for had me over for a meal. While talking with them and waiting for the food to be served, my friend came over and dropped a small bag on the table beside me and says, "did you forget about this?" I opened the pouch and looked inside to see some small gold coins and silver bars that I had given to him several years earlier to hold for me in his safe.

I had completely forgotten about these and at first thought he had made a mistake. Then realizing that we had originally stayed at his house when we first moved down there I remembered giving him these items since we were in such transition and I didn't want to misplace them. The All Sufficient One had kept these in reserve for a time when we would really need them. After receiving this nice surprise, you can imagine what was going through my mind. The first was how do I get this stuff out of this country and back to the states without inspection and questions, the second was what do I do with it.



The first question was answered within days as I traveled home. After having passed through not only an x-ray of my bags, but a physical hand inspection at the departing airport, not a word was spoken about them. Upon landing in the states, I ended up at an airport that would eventually make me pass through three separate security points with x-ray of my bags prior to getting my connecting flight. Every single time my bags would go through an x-ray machine, including in Central America, the person looking at the screens would stop my bag holding the silver and

gold, back it up and stare at the screen. Then with puzzled looks they would pass the bag on to my waiting hands. Not once did any in the states make me go through secondary searches.

It's not the same as smuggling bibles into China, but reassuring all the same. Even though it is not illegal to take these things with you in your luggage, countries do get suspicious as to why you are carrying them and usually will have questions. The country I was coming from did have a history of confiscating these types of items at airports. It was a demonstration to me once again that Almighty Yahweh is in charge and He can cause confusion, or blindness, when He desires. Nothing is too difficult for Him.

What Do You Mean "No Job"?

After returning from my trip and arriving back to my parents' home, my wife and I talked. We knew that we would have to do something for money since my parents weren't in a position to allow us to live off of their land. We didn't want to be a burden, so, as often has been the case, I exchanged physical labor on the farm for housing. We did what we could to help with food and other necessities.

The money was very meager and when we began to get close to our three month time of staying, we both realized that Abba wasn't giving us any direction, insight, or timing as to our next chapter. Completely frustrated, and dangerously close to grumbling and complaining, we began to look for solutions to our problem. By this time our sensitivity to hearing from Yahweh had been dulled by all of the swirling, confusing spirits of mammon, pride, and Babylon. We began to look for answers within our own physical means rather than going back to what worked during times of duress, or great challenges in the past.

Funny how we forget so quickly, yet I can now begin to see why the children of Israel circled the mountain in the desert so many times. At this point we needed money and I didn't want to sell the silver and gold even though Yahweh was beginning to prick my heart with thoughts of "are you putting your trust in your silver and gold instead of me?" I quickly suppressed those thoughts. Though my wife and I weren't big credit card people, we did have a balance. My wife was getting the message to pay off our credit card, yet I knew that we would need to have money for food, transportation, and other things that were now needing to be replaced from years of wear. It didn't make sense to me in the natural to sell the silver and gold to pay off a credit card debt since I knew that silver and gold were real assets and the credit card balance was all just digital money. It went against every fiber in my being to use real assets to pay off fake ones even though they were a burden to us.

Over the next few weeks my wife continued to share her spiritual insights concerning the silver and gold with me as we searched for jobs. I puffed myself up with pride and listened to the lying spirits that told me that certainly my wife doesn't understand the real value of assets verses paper money. I reasoned that she just wanted to liquify everything so that the credit card could be paid off. Ouch! A hard lesson was awaiting me since I failed to heed the wisdom that Abba was giving through my wife, choosing instead to lean upon my own understanding.

IN GOLD WE TRUST

Over the next six to nine months my wife would periodically urge me, yet I still resisted. (As I will share later, I did finally let go but it took quite an effort to pry my fingers off of this object of security.) When finances are low, relationships seem to take on the greatest testing. It wasn't any different for us. We had some significant challenges in our relationship even though we had come through some significant victories in our spiritual walk. Concerns of providing for my family, combined with thoughts of future provision for my young daughter, occupied much of my thoughts. I often would cry out to Abba and wonder why it had to be such a tug of war between doing what was responsible and reasonable in the natural versus fully trusting and obeying in complete faith in the spiritual.

Every time I would look for a job things would fall through. Finally exasperated, I cried out and said, "Abba Here I am. I will go where you want me to go. I will stay here in the States if you want me to stay here in the States. I will do what you want me to do. Just please let me hear from you and receive direction."

After I finally quieted down, His still small voice gave instructions to me. I was not to look for a job any longer. I was not to start a new career, or get training for another career. I was not to go back into the health sector and practice in any way. Instead, I was to take on any work that He would bring to me. I was to do the work with joy. I could not suggest the wages desired, or needed, but take what was offered. I finished my time of prayer, agreeing to this arrangement. Reluctantly, I shared this with my wife who by now was pushing me pretty hard to get some income coming in. To my surprise she took it much better than I thought. She also had come to the conclusion that if we were going to be in the area for awhile, that she wanted to begin teaching our daughter rather than working a job.

A few days passed and my mom shared with me that she had talked to some friends of the family who own a popcorn packing business. She told them that we were back in town and the gentleman asked her if I would be able to work as he had a large order coming in the next week and he needed help. I knew that this man didn't pay his help very much, especially in consideration of the physical labor involved. My recent conversation with Yahweh let me know I was to take the job. The business is seasonal so I knew that it wasn't going to be anything steady. However I was grateful for whatever time he needed me.

It turned out to be a four day packing job and on the last day he paid me the wage that he paid the other helpers who were home school students earning extra money. I was tempted to see if he could pay me more, but my promise to the conditions set out for me by Yah kept my mouth closed. After the others left, this man asked me how long I would be in town and told me that he would have another order coming due in a couple of weeks if I wanted more work. He then asked me if the money he paid me was enough, or if I needed to make more money. While biting my lip I smiled and honestly told him that whatever he felt was fair I would be happy with. I knew that I was being tested to do as I said I would. With the next packing job came two pieces of good news. The first was that this man took it upon himself to pay me more per hour. Secondly, he asked me if I would be interested in having a set of keys to the warehouse and coming in on my own at times to fill smaller orders that came in.

It was also at this time that my neighbor, whom we've known for a while, came down one day out of the blue and asked me if I could help him with one of his jobs. He did reconstruction/remodel

jobs. At times he needed a second person to help him on some of the jobs. Would I be interested? Of course, I said yes. The next day as I got in the truck with him he asked me the question, "So how much do you want to get paid?" Again I said, "Whatever you feel is fair is fine with me." So he responded with a laugh, "Ok, is five dollars an hour good?" I'm sure my eyes got big, but I responded with "If you feel that is fair, then I will take it." He laughed again and said he was joking. He then gave me a rate much higher than I was expecting.

The job took us several days to complete, but he was very happy at my effort and work and told me that he had another job coming up soon and he would need help. I told him that I'm available for any job that he needs help with. Thus began my season of working jobs sent to me which continues to this day.

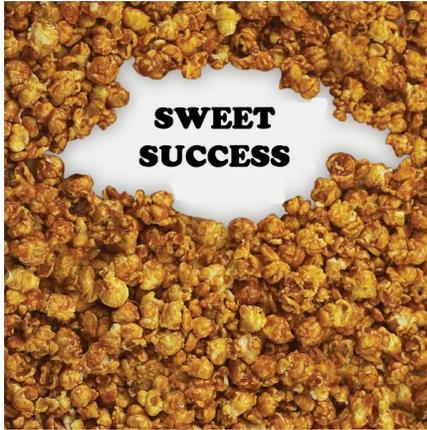
As we look back it is amazing to see how the ebb and flow of money came in to us based on increased needs. Every time we had larger expenses anticipated I would get hours of work placed upon me, and at one point was working for three people putting in around 10 to 12 hour days in total. Going from job to job was hard on me physically but I had to take the work as I promised.

Other times we hit dry spells where I wouldn't work for two weeks. Yet it was at these times that I was most needed around the farm. This was the time that Abba taught us so many lessons. He never failed to be with us along the way. He showed us that if we can learn these lessons here in a country of plenty with anything available anytime, then we would be confident in those lessons learned when He took us to places of less abundance. This was not necessarily a new lesson for us, but one which He wanted us to pass that we might have confidence in His provision.

Test of Sweetness

In the middle of our time at my parents, with work coming in and fading away, I was sent a major test. When we returned from Israel my wife and I both heard through the Spirit that we were not to get settled or plant roots, but were to remain mobile and stay light. After several months of working with my friend who owned the popcorn business, he came to me with a proposition. He was wanting to start a new business which centered around gourmet caramels. Part of his thinking was to use the business model and finances earned to start some small home businesses in a third world country which would fund the missions being done in that area. My friend would be putting up the money to get the business off the ground, as well as handling product design and company focus. He wanted me to consider being the manager or vice president of the operations side while another man would be in charge of sales and marketing.

My friend made me an offer that consisted of paying me a monthly salary for the first 12 months at a reduced level while I invested through sweat equity. At the end of the first year, all things would be evaluated, my salary level raised to the norms of the industry, and the company divided into percentages for each of us. My commitment would be to a set number of hours each week to do any necessary research, evaluation of equipment and supplies, and the setting up of the production facility. Once production took place, most of my time would be focused on the actual product and order fulfillment.



When he first told me about it, I was honored and thought “Great! Look what Yahweh has brought to me.” I didn't tell my wife about it immediately as I wanted to take it to prayer for a time then proceed to share accordingly. As I thought about the offer, I was excited, because this would give me a set income per month, we could pay off the credit card, I would have a percentage of ownership in one year, and it would ultimately be used to help ministry in another less fortunate country. Surely this was a great opportunity sent from above. Yet I had a check in my spirit.

I knew that I was supposed to take any work that was brought my way, however, Yah had to show me that there were other higher callings that had to be considered. He reminded me that I wasn't to start a new career, and most importantly I was to stay mobile and light as we were only here for a season of time. Finally He showed me that I still wanted to put my trust in something for security rather than trust Him on a daily basis.

I knew what the right choice was and, though it was difficult, I turned down the opportunity at the risk of losing the other work I had available with this man. As it turned out, Abba gave me grace and mercy, and the gentleman took the news with sadness but understanding. It was a very difficult decision in the end as the temptation was there to work for a period of time, save money and then have a reserve to fall back on. However, Yahweh wasn't going to let this give me peace. I told my wife after I knew the decision from above. She was in complete agreement and supported me in the decision. Once again the Spirit was speaking the same to both of us.

What Makes a Car Go?

When we returned from Israel we didn't have any immediate need for a vehicle since we didn't travel much and any runs to the store could be done with my mom, or the use of my parents' vehicle. Once the work began to come in for me things changed. I couldn't take my parents' car for the day, yet I had to have transportation to work at unusual intervals. A car that I had used prior to being married still sat in my parents' drive with a need of some repair. With a great need for a vehicle and no money to buy another, my remaining option was to fix this one as best as possible. With the help of my dad, I got the car up and running. It wasn't in the greatest condition, but it was an answer to my needs.

Abba has a wonderful sense of humor, and He has a way of bringing things full circle. Many years ago when I was a teen, my cousin who was a missionary kid from South America was

visiting. He had bought a small car to use while he was here in the States and it often broke down on him. One day my brother and I saw him standing in the driveway just staring at his car. We went out and asked him what he was doing? Without a moment of hesitation, he answered that he was praying for his car to be healed so it wouldn't break down anymore. My brother and I thought this was funny, did Yahweh really care about healing an inanimate object??

Back to present realities, I found myself contemplating this issue once again. For whatever reason, whether it was to remind me that He was in charge, or to keep me in practice of prayer, the car developed a fuel issue that nobody yet has been able to figure out. It didn't have any rhyme or reason to it, but it led to the most beautiful prayers when my little girl would hear the car trying to start and she would pray out loud, "Abba Yahweh please let the car start so we can go home." Shortly after this time my wife and I were talking and she mentioned to me that every time she gets in the car she prays for the car to be healed. I laughed as I told her about my cousin so many years ago, but I realized that the car did seem to be behaving better. In short, I have come to the conclusion that we can pray for inanimate objects to be healed. They may not repair themselves, however it does help to remember that Yah is creator of all things and we must turn to Him to help in all of our times of need.

The Gold has to Go

As I mentioned previously, shortly after my return from Central America with our belongings, it was impressed upon our spirits to let go of the silver and gold. A great internal battle took place in my heart and mind as I wasn't ready to let go of all security and place myself fully in the hands of a loving Heavenly Father who has promised to meet all of our needs according to His riches in Glory through Messiah Yeshua. When my wife began to prompt me to sell our gold and silver, the prices at that time were near the all time high point in history. My carnal thinking began to rationalize that this proved that tough times were coming and that the prices of silver and gold would only go higher in the days to come. As I look back I see that Yahweh was being merciful to me. However by walking according to my understanding, I failed to capitalize on this time of blessing.

I held onto the assets because by now I had started to get some jobs and the money coming in was being used to continue paying the minimum monthly payments on our credit card. About every month or so, Abba would prick my heart and remind me of His desire for me with regard to trusting in Him fully. He wanted me to pay off all debt and not hold onto anything for security. As often is the case, when we go to obey our Master, circumstances in life will often change to challenge our commitment to doing what we say we will do. This happened numerous times with me whenever I would go to sell the metals. Just as I would get ready to call a local man dealing in these things, the prices of the metals would start to climb. Again my understanding and rationale would kick in thinking that if I wait another week or two I could get more in return for my sale. Every time I would do that the price would drop, which then triggered the opposite type of thinking which said if I hold on a little longer the prices will turn around and go higher again. Over and over I repeated this cycle, never satisfied with the price that was available. I would also never see the high prices that were in place when first prompted to sell as they have never returned to those values.

I needed a little motivation, so out of His loving kindness Yahweh gave me a vivid dream. I won't share the dream here, but there were two significant pieces of the dream that stood out to me and were impressed upon me upon waking. The two scenarios of interest were as follows. The opening scene of the dream looked to be a Colorado mountain side being consumed, houses and all, by a raging fire. My cabin was at the base of the mountain, and the back corner of the cabin was just catching on fire. The second important impression was of me already having left the burning cabin but realizing that I didn't take any money with me. I had forgotten to grab the silver and gold that I had with me in the cabin.

Without going into the entire dream and its significance, the two important messages that I want to share are these. The image of the entire mountainside being engulfed in flames was a signal point for me to be aware of with regard to timing. The second was that in leaving the burning cabin I didn't take any money, or the gold and silver with me. I didn't have need of them to function later in the dream, so He was showing me their real worth. There wasn't any way for me to go back to the cabin and get them since everything was being consumed and I was now standing on the other side of the valley. With the significance of this dream impressed in my mind, I began to earnestly start thinking about selling the gold and silver regardless of price.

Within a month of the dream, the real fires out in Colorado started burning. I remember looking at a picture on the internet of the fire and I took pause for there in the picture was an almost exact replica of the burning mountainside I had seen in my dream. That was the trigger that I needed to see for several things, but in this case it also told me that if I didn't sell the metals soon, I would lose access to them. Within the week they were sold, the credit card was paid off, and we were now living completely by faith on His provision and security.

It has not been without challenges as there have been times when He has taken us down to our last dollars and little food or gas. Yet we have resisted the urge to go and spend on the credit card thinking that we will pay it off again later. As He began to trust us more, He opened the way for us to use a credit card at times, but only for the convenience of buying online, or renting a car, etc.. We already had the money set aside for the purchases and would go to the bank shortly after and pay the amount due even before the statement would come out. We have not paid one dollar of interest since we made that commitment and He has been faithful to bring in the finances just prior to our needing them to make the purchases.

It has been a time of challenge, testing, refining, and building of faith step by step. These days everything is centered around money, or future security. While it has been gut wrenching at times, we have stuck with it faithfully. To follow Christ means to abandon all for the sake of the upward call in Yeshua.

The Next Level

A few months prior to my selling the gold and the silver, my wife and I had been crying out for Yahweh's direction and next season of life for us. We were content with staying where we were if that is what He wanted, but in our hearts we desired to be out doing other things for which we had a greater passion. We cried out many times, and it really didn't seem like He was hearing us, so we challenged ourselves to see if there was anything within that was placing blockages between Yahweh and us.

The idol of self was shown to be the main root that was buried deeply and surrounded by many thorn bushes of fear, insecurity, desire for control, etc.. It was at this point that we surrendered our desire to be serving Him as we thought or wanted, and yielded ourselves to be used in any way Yahweh decided. We are still whacking at that root of self as we learn to die daily.



Abba saw that we wanted to serve in our fullest capacity, and not hang on to things that were dear to us. The problem was that we didn't know how to let go of some things. We didn't know at the time, but His plan for us was not one of saying, "Very well, go here and do this." Rather it was to help us work through the process of learning how to remove blockages from our life so they wouldn't hinder us in the future. There wouldn't be much time or opportunity for us to go through such times of testing and reproofing when all was being called into action.

The next nine months became our classroom. Before we came to understand that He wasn't going to take us somewhere like an African orphanage, or something similar, He sent a little message to us, though we didn't quite recognize it at the time. We received an email from someone that we knew that simply said, "Yahweh has been putting you on my heart during my times of devotion. Why don't you come back down to Central America (a different area) and see if this is where you are to be." The location suggested was an area that my wife and I had not previously considered, and in the natural we wouldn't have chosen it. Our minds were still desiring to go and do something exciting and significant, so we took only a casual interest in this email.

We prayed about it, thought about it, and reasoned about it. We received much info on the area, some of the things that were available, and opportunities that could be looked into. However, without much money, we were not in a position to go and look at land, houses, etc.. We continued to pray and do some research even getting excited at times. "Maybe this is our next stop rather than heading overseas in some other big commitment." It took quite some time and much prayer before finally one day (after much chopping on the root of self) we finally said, if this is what He wants for us, then let's begin to move in that direction since He can always stop us.

We really didn't see how all of this would fit into "His" plans for us (read that as how we understood His plans for us), but we began to make more contacts and gather more info, preparing what we thought we would need to make the jump down there. At a certain point in time, my wife and I both felt we were given a time to go. There was peace about it and we had a couple of months to make final preparations though once again we still didn't have much in the way of finances. It appears that for the time Yahweh was going to keep us at a financial level of just getting by.

Gathering basic things is tough when you have to wait for a little extra money to come in, but it caused us to prioritize our prayers. He was clearly showing us that He was going to take us step by step, and no faster, revealing only what we needed to know at the time and no more. This is a truly frustrating thing for those raised in America where we like to have our days, weeks, and life planned out with options available that we might be able to plan accordingly. We found ourselves often going back to more whacking at the root of self.

As the time for leaving drew closer, I was prompted by my wife to get tickets. Having obtained release from Yahweh to look for tickets, I began to do so in earnest as our time for leaving was getting close. I found tickets and went through the entire process of getting ready to buy them and just before pushing the purchase button, the Spirit prompted me with "Wait." I knew that I heard correctly but was confused. I listened, and didn't purchase the tickets, though I had many questions.

Perhaps there will be a sale and the tickets will be cheaper I thought. So I gave it another week and repeated the same procedure. Again I filled out all things and just as I was getting ready to click the purchase button He spoke to my spirit, "Wait." Now I was really scratching my head and wondering if this was to be another scenario similar to our departure from Israel.

I proceeded to go to prayer seeking direction of the Master Planner. As I pressed in, He affirmed to me that He was planning to take us down to Central America again. He originally wanted to teach us and train us down there in some ways that we needed to learn. He saw our heart and our willingness to go in faith without understanding why, so He chose to keep us here. He showed me He would now teach us these lessons here, showing us how to win these battles now while in the land of plenty, so we could effectively use them in lean times.

My wife and I thought that His calling us back to Central America was done now. Our focus was on what He wanted to teach us here. We resigned our hearts to being here in the States for another season. We earnestly pressed forward with the task of culling the dead branches from our lives. The Spirit brought light into our lives to expose areas of our hearts where self was hiding and inhibiting our advancement of the Kingdom.

My parents went south for the winter leaving us an empty house where we could stay and be free to worship, praise, and proclaim the goodness of Yah. We could do so without concern for the time of day, and unhindered by others who didn't understand our calling of being set-apart unto Yahweh and His purposes.

Work continued to pick up for me. Both men I worked for told me they were having their best years ever in spite of a down economy. With finances starting to increase I noted that every time I tried to save up money an unexpected expense would be brought into our lives and it would effectively take the cash we had saved up. We finally learned that our attitude was just as important as our obedience to Him. Did we really want to honor Him in all that we did, or just do things because He has asked us to do them. The path of Christ, and the way to Life asks us to circumcise our hearts and imitate our Master Yeshua as He spoke the words, "not my will, but your will be done."

Next Season is Here/Living the Exodus

With my wife and I so focused on the many deep and long lasting lessons being taught to us, we didn't realize that Abba was slowly bringing Central America back into our laps. At one point our communications had really slowed with the families we had been emailing. Our communications consisted of one or two sentence emails, with random topics being discussed, though not with any specific intent.

It had been a little over a year since I received the email asking me to consider whether I was to relocate to this new area of Central America. Around this time my wife and I had been starting to sense a time of transition coming to our lives, and we began to get excited. Perhaps we had progressed to a point that Yahweh was about to show something more to us. We were about thirty days before the celebration of Passover when we began feeling this time of transition entering our lives.

In our house we observe and celebrate the Feasts of Yahweh, not out religious obligation, or legalistic purposes, but rather to honor the One who gave them, learn from them, and have them as shadow pictures to glean from. This year we felt a particular appreciation for the upcoming Feast of Passover. The children of Israel certainly could teach us much about being uprooted from a pagan land and taken on a journey filled with lessons and challenges to one's faith and obedience. Would we be as they were and murmur and complain when the daily provision is smaller than we want? Would we demand to go back to the ways of old, laboring to fill our stomachs, our lives and our every waking moment, with pleasurable things? Would we believe that He is taking us to a land of promise, a land of good and not bad, a place where He will not only provide, but protect us from the giants that seem to inhabit the land and stand before us?

As we pressed in and prayed about what He wanted to show us during this Passover season, the words kept coming back, "This year I want you to live the exodus." It excited us to know our next journey was soon upon us. As the children of Israel prepared and ate the Passover in anticipation of leaving, we assumed the same attitude. Having been covered by the blood of the Lamb already, having partaken of the body of Messiah, drinking the cup of His covenant blood, and entering into His suffering, we knew we must put our sandals on our feet, put our garments about us, and have the staff in our hands. These thoughts and more drifted through our minds as we removed the leaven from our hearts with a committed purging.



Around two weeks prior to Passover, answers started to come for us. Emails from contacts in Central America started to come in again but with a different focus. Up to this point our inquiries

and communications were rather general in nature. Those we had been in touch with knew our hearts and the direction our lives were taking, but never probed beyond that to determine what our desires were. As an act of faith on their part, emails from both contacts resumed, specifically requesting us to pray and open dialog about coming down and being a part of what they were/are doing.

My wife and I immediately went into prayer to see if this was what Abba really wanted from us. Was this going to be our exodus destination? Would it be a stop over point? As we prayed we asked for confirmation. Twice when we did this we received emails the next day with keys words of confirmation. At that point we committed to going once again. We turned our hearts toward this new chapter in our life, lifting our requests up to the Almighty. If this was to be our exodus journey then He was going to have provide a way out. We didn't have the money to buy tickets to fly down to this Central American country, so did He want us to put it on a credit card, buy the tickets and just pay it off when money did come in?

The next morning, which was the morning leading up to the Passover evening, I received a call from some friends living in Israel. They are newly married, with a young child, the husband not able to find work, the wife working part time while residing in a land where living is expensive. They knew that we were praying about Central America and had asked about our plans in past conversations. When my conversation started with the husband, he asked me if I had checked my email recently. I told him no since I don't get online that often anymore. I assumed he had sent me something he wanted me to see, so I told him that I would check it while we were talking. When I opened the inbox I saw that he had sent me several emails so I asked quickly which I should open. He directed me to a particular one and it wasn't very long so I quickly read it. With mouth dropped open and tears filling my eyes, I saw the words written, "my wife and I both agreed that we want to pay for your tickets to Central America. Please send us the way to wire you the money."

I called my wife in and let her read the email as our friends were listening from Israel. We both cried tears of joy and thankfulness as this was the ultimate confirmation on the morning before the Passover that the Almighty had prepared a way out. He had provided ahead of time, and He would go before us in all things with regard to this journey. We thanked and blessed our friends over and over as they were led to be used of Yahweh in His purpose. We knew that they didn't have much and this was a great sacrifice for them as well. We pray that they are blessed in return a hundred fold for their faithfulness.

The excitement of our journey continued as another friend who moves powerfully in the Spirit had called the week before and told us that they would be coming through our area the day after Passover. We had been trying to get together with our friends for at least six months, but since they are busy with ministry and live over twelve hours away, it just never worked out to get together. Now they discovered they were going to be passing within three miles of our house and wanted to know if they could stay with us for about three days as they were heading between two places of ministry. It was during those three days the Spirit used our friends to help us finally break the bands that held us back from the fullness of our calling in Messiah. Finally the yokes of bondage and slavery to the ways of this world could be cast down and we would walk in the fullness of our freedom in Christ.

We could only imagine the children of Israel walking away from Egypt in disbelief after so many years of slavery and bondage to the taskmasters of this world. We were now free and heading towards the highway in the wilderness. We both knew two things would be facing us over the next few weeks. One is that we would have to make some difficult decisions that we wouldn't be able to turn back from, and the other is that the adversary was going to come after us in a rage. Praise Yah we were victorious on all accounts.

As we progressed on our journey, a move of the Spirit impressed upon us another word from Yahweh. Our exodus journey, though it resembled much of the exodus from Egypt, was closer in reality to the exodus from Babylon. It was an exodus of few people, whose hearts were towards Yahweh and desired Him and His ways above all. It was an exodus that each individual would have to make, and was one of choice. Only a few would go and face the dangerous journey ahead as the rest were too comfortable in the ways and living of Babylon. As we heard this word, a responsibility was given to us to encourage others to join the small, but growing, exodus of determined pilgrims heading home.

The Trip

At the time that we received the blessing of provision for our tickets to Central America, we had less than one hundred dollars to our name. Just prior to this call we were moved in the Spirit to go and visit several families to encourage them before we would leave. I knew that the money we had just received couldn't be used for this particular trip so we had to be very frugal if we were going to be able to do it. We had been looking for tickets to fly, but there wasn't anyway we could afford to go with the money that we had on hand. My work had really slowed down and we were in a dry spell for awhile. We took it to our knees and the next day I received an email from the man with the popcorn business. He had an order just come in and needed me for about four days work. This was an answer to prayer, however the money that it would bring in still wouldn't cover round trip tickets for all of us.

With further searching and prayer, I finally found our answer. If we could find someone to drive us to a small airport about an hour away, there was a budget airline that had very cheap tickets on the days we wanted to go, however the prices for the return portion were still going to be too much. I had heard that some of the car rental companies had deals near the end of spring that would allow you to rent a car one way, waive the drop off fee and give you an option of dropping the car off at a number of different locations. We would have to be responsible for the gas and insurance. I checked into it and the price I was getting from all of the companies came to about twenty five dollars a day for the rental portion. With the amount of days needed for rental due to our travels home and visiting with others, this would push us to the limit of our finances and depending on gas most likely put us over the top.

I felt peace about the option of doing this, but I didn't book a car prior to us departing. I looked into it more when I arrived at our destination and received the same price on each company's website. I concluded that this was going to be the rate after all and was about to book the car when I had a check in my spirit. A thought passed through my mind. I didn't check any of the major search engines so I quickly pulled one up. I found a car regardless of size for only ten dollars a day including taxes. I had a doubting moment hit me and checked another search engine and they gave a price two dollars higher. I thought the prices had changed so I went back to one

of the car rental websites to check but it still listed the price as twenty five dollars a day. Once again I went back to the original search engine and there was the ten dollar price. After checking to make sure they weren't going to sneak a drop off fee on me I quickly booked the car. When our Father gives us a gift, it is a good gift. The car we rented got over 33 mpg and with strategic gas stops we were able to get home with the money we had plus a little left for food.

The Journey Continues

As we continued to pray for our time of departure to Central America, we had several other requests to lift up on high. We prayed for a temporary residence until we could get something else. We asked for an opportunity to earn some money shortly after arriving. We would need access to a form of reliable transportation once there. We needed a clarification of our purpose for being there, and some opportunities for ministry. We made our requests known to Yahweh and never to man.

Over the course of two days various emails came in unsolicited with answers to all of our requests. Our only explanation for this has to be that the Spirit was moving on these people to prompt their hearts in these matters. In a short time we went from having many questions to having some solid answers. This is the beginning of another exciting adventure with our Savior and Redeemer. He has promised to show us more when we arrive at our destination. In the meantime we have learned to be grateful for all things.

It hasn't been an easy road, but the rewards will be worth it in the end. We have learned a much deeper respect for the One who gave all for us, even while we were still sinners. A man's life is not his own, we have been bought with a price. The One who endured all without complaint, He is our Beloved, our Master, the One who has shown us the Way to Truth and Life. Throughout the times of our trials, tribulations and triumphs He has been with us all of the way revealing profound truths.

Yahweh is Elohim and we are not. His ways are not our ways and His thoughts not our thoughts. We must conform to His dear Son, not striving to make Him conform to us, or our ways. Yahweh is looking for those whose Hearts are toward Him and fear Him as Most High. As our souls get crushed in His olive press, the pure oil that results will keep the lampstand in our hearts burning bright. He will take His place as the Almighty King teaching us how to enter in and live in His Kingdom while here on earth.

May we all find the faith necessary to endure until the end.

Heb 11:6-16 (ESV) And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him. (7) By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith. (8) By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. (9) By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. (10) For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God. (11) By faith Sarah herself received

power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised. (12) Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as many as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore. (13) These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. (14) For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. (15) If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. (16) But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.

May Yahweh be honored and glorified in all that we think, say and do.

Permission granted to share our story with any that might find encouragement from it. If shared in part, please include opportunity to access and read the whole.