



Jesse Lash, Bar Mitzvah, January 19, 2002

Dear Friends in Yeshua,

BEGINNING 2002 WITH A MIRACLE

Something very exciting happened recently in the Lash household. We are sharing it with you because we believe that there is a message for the Body of Messiah in what happened to us. As most of you remember, last January we were dealing with cancer in Neil's body. We were passing through a "winter season" in our lives, just as some of you may be experiencing trials right now. Take heart! Springtime is right around the corner. We cannot conceive of the wonderful surprises that our Heavenly Father has in store for those who love Him! Our God is a God of MIRACLES. Last January we experienced a miracle of healing and deliverance. This January we experienced another miracle from the loving hands of God: A miracle of provision. Here is what happened:

Last August, Jamie read about a contest sponsored by the Tommy Hilfiger Corporation that was open to any resident of the U.S.A. It required producing a video of one minute or less on the topic: "What the American Flag Means to Me." Jamie was intrigued by the fact that there would be thirty winners nationwide with a grand prize of \$25,000 and 29 runner up prizes of a family vacation for four with a value of up to \$10,000. Since she grew up in a very patriotic family (one of Jamie's ancestors was George Washington's personal physician), Jamie showed Jesse (our twelve year old son) the ad and insisted that he enter the contest as a tribute to his grandparents whom he never had the blessing of knowing. Although reluctant at first, Jesse soon got excited about the idea as well, and with a little help from his mother, decided to use the theme of "security" and the American flag. Jesse appears in the video and says:

"When I was a baby, this was the special blanket that I loved. Some people call this kind of blanket a security blanket. It seems pretty small now, compared with the old green comforter that I wrap myself in when I watch TV. I guess you never outgrow your need for security. That's what the American flag means to me: SECURITY. When I see it, I'm reminded of what a free country we live in. I feel safe and protected. The American flag is a great security blanket, for me and for so many others."

The contest was sponsored during a time when very few people in this country were thinking about the American flag. Jesse's video was finished on September 10, 2001. Notice the date. On September 11, 2001 Jesse awoke with a sore throat, so we kept him home from school. He was watching television when the Twin Towers and the Pentagon were attacked. We were all

shocked. OUR SECURITY HAD BEEN BREACHED. We discussed Jesse's video and felt that we'd been given an opportunity by God, so we changed the ending of the video to include the following:

Screen goes black, a loud explosion is heard and the words September 11, 2001 appear on the screen. Then Jesse's voice is heard saying, "DEAR GOD: PLEASE HELP US KEEP IT THIS WAY."

We realized that before September 11, we probably would not have been able to mention God in a secular contest of this type, but after September 11, things were different. God knew all. He knew what the American flag would become after the terrorist attacks. He knew that there would be an increased opening to spiritual things in this country. He knew that Jesse would be one of the winners!

THE WEALTH OF THE WICKED

At the end of November we were notified that Jesse was a runner-up winner in the contest. A few weeks later Jesse was told he had the option of either a \$10,000 family vacation for four or \$10,000 in cash. Jesse chose the cash! Our family's reaction: "This is a gift from God! THANK YOU, LORD!" Jesse has now experienced first hand the fulfillment of Proverbs 13:21: *"The wealth of the sinner is stored up for the righteous."*

Jesse has been interviewed three times by phone so far. The first newspaper article to tell his story also had the first official mention of our country being in a recession. God seems to be speaking loud and clear, to us as a ministry, and we believe to you as well: THERE IS NO RECESSION IN HEAVEN! This is not a "prosperity message," but rather a statement that God is able to provide for His children in ways that we cannot imagine! He is Creative, even in His giving.

Jesse's win has reinforced our belief that wherever the money comes from, GOD is our source. James 1:17 says it so well: *"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation, or shadow of turning."* The Lord wants YOU to trust Him to provide for you as well, even in very UNUSUAL WAYS.

"A LITTLE CHILD SHALL LEAD THEM..."

This phrase from Isaiah 11:6 is speaking about the coming Millennial kingdom. However, we believe that it applies to us now as well. There is something in Jesse's life that God wants us to follow. It is called **tithing**. Jesse has had a giving nature since he was a little boy. If we gave him a cookie, he would ask for another to give to his brother Jonathan. It will come as no surprise to most of you that when we told Jesse that we give 10% of everything we earn to the Lord, he decided to do the same thing. Jesse has been tithing since he was about four years old!

We have heard people say that "tithing" is something that only applies to the Old Testament, or that tithing is "coming under the law." We believe that tithing is really a question of LORDSHIP. It is an outward expression of our belief that all we are, and all we earn, actually belongs to God. What we do with our money shows where we place our trust. The currency of the United States bears the inscription: "In God we trust." Do we trust Him enough to give Him at least a tithe (10%) of our income?

In Genesis 14:18 we read about a mysterious "priest of God Most High" named Melchizedek

(Hebrew for King of Righteousness) who blessed Abram. Abram then gave Melchizedek (who the New Covenant identifies as Yeshua) a "tithing of all." It was right after this that we read in Gen.15:1 that the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision saying, *"Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward."* Abram tithed and God promised to be his reward. **What a deal!**

In Genesis 28:22 we see Jacob at Beth-El saying: *"How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!"* Jacob had just had a dramatic encounter with the living God which prompted him to make a vow: *"If God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I am going, and give me bread to eat and clothing to put on, so that I come back to my father's house in peace, then the Lord shall be my God. And this stone which I have set as a pillar shall be God's house, and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You."* JACOB (who has a reputation of being a taker) TITHED TO THE LORD. This was even before Jacob's name (and nature) were changed). TITHING LED THE WAY TO GREAT THINGS FOR JACOB.

These examples of **tithing occurred before the law was given at Sinai**. We see tithing as a basic scriptural principle and just one of many ways that God provides so that His children can be blessed. God is a Giver and His children must be givers as well. The "new nature" of a believer is a giving nature.

GOD'S PROMISE OF BLESSING

Tithing has always been a voluntary act on the part of God's people. There is no punishment for not tithing, but the consequence includes the withholding of blessings. Malachi 3:10 states:

" 'Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and prove Me now in this,' says the Lord of hosts, 'If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it.' "

We believe that the storehouse referred to in this verse is the House of the Lord, the place where we are fed spiritually. Usually that is the place where a believer regularly goes to worship. We tithe to Temple Aron HaKodesh, the congregation we attend.

The Biblical purpose of the tithe was to support the Levites, the priesthood (Numbers 18:24-29), which today would be pastors and other staff, as well as missionaries and evangelists. It was also to feed the Hebrew widows and orphans and the Gentile poor living in the Hebrew community. (Deuteronomy 14:28-29) The modern equivalent of these two groups would be the widows and orphans within the local body of believers and the unsaved poor in the local community.

The function of the local congregation also includes ministering to the sick, teaching families to care for themselves, and taking the Gospel to the lost at home and abroad. To the extent that a local congregation lacks in a specific area of ministry (i.e., bringing the Gospel to the Jews), we believe that a portion of the tithe should be given to the individual or parachurch organization that is "filling in the gap." But remember, you can't be part of a congregation and not support it. (1Timothy 5:17-18)

Personally, we try to be led by the Holy Spirit in our giving. We also give above the tithe because we know that God loves a cheerful giver (2 Corinthians 9:7). If all God's children were tithers,

there would be no lack in the House of the Lord, nor in ministries such as *Jewish Jewels*. Ask the Lord to show you the truth about tithing. Then obey and be blessed! Remember also that our Messiah Yeshua taught that tithing alone is not enough (Luke 11:42). God looks for the attitude of the heart which is always the most important to Him.

Before Jesse knew that he was a winner in the Tommy Hilfiger contest, he had expressed to us that it would be great if he could win a cash prize so that he could tithe to *Jewish Jewels*. This was in his heart from the beginning. When he won, there was no question about tithing. The newspaper reporters were very surprised at Jesse's decision. (They also got a mini sermon from Jamie.)

GOD IS ALWAYS ON TIME

Jesse turns thirteen on January 10, 2002. Following the Jewish tradition, he will read from the Torah in Hebrew for the first time on Saturday January 19, 2002. His Torah portion is Exodus 10:1-13:16 and includes the Passover. You are all invited to the service at Temple Aron HaKodesh here in Fort Lauderdale. A luncheon will follow the ceremony and all are invited. If you are from out of town, or do not regularly come to the Temple, please let us know if you plan to come so that we can plan accordingly.

We see Jesse's prize as a Bar Mitzvah gift from His Heavenly Father. We believe that once again, God is showing our children how very real He is. Since Jesse was a baby he has had a small plaque in his room giving the Hebrew meaning of his name: WEALTHY, SMART, FREE-SPIRITED. That's Jesse! God has provided for Jesse's Bar Mitzvah, and if he needs them, braces, and when the time comes, his college education will be provided for too. We are encouraging Jesse to keep giving. **You can never outgive God!**

P.S. We'll be ministering in Denver at Roeh Israel on Feb. 7-8. Tel: (303) 337-6254

P.P.S. We'll be conducting a Marriage Retreat in Bradenton, FL on Feb. 15-17 (sponsored by Ohr Yeshua)

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