



October 2013

Please pray for the Mercy Mission 2013 as we journey to Israel this month.

PLEASE PRAY FOR OUR 2013  
MERCY MISSION TO ISRAEL:

6 AM-8 A.M. A,B,C	4 P.M.-6 P.M. P,Q,R
8 AM-10 A.M. D,E,F	6 P.M.-8 P.M. S,T,U
10 AM-12 P.M. G,H,I	8 P.M.-10 P.M. V,W,X,Y,Z
12 P.M.-2 P.M. J,K,L	10 P.M.- 6 A.M. Those whom our Father wakes up to pray!
2 P.M.-4 P.M. M,N,O	

(FIRST  
LETTER OF  
LAST NAME) Oct 11 - Oct 22

ISRAEL IS 7 HRS. AHEAD OF EST.

Dear Fellow Journeymen,

### Jewels From My Journey

My name is Neil Abraham Lash. I am writing this on September 2, 2013. It is my fortieth "Born-Again" birthday. Forty years ago on this date I prayed and asked Yeshua to forgive my sins and become Lord of my life. That was the day we began our journey together. It wasn't until a few years later that I realized that He had been walking with me since I was born (Psalm 139).

My parents immigrated to the United States as young children in the early 1900's. I am their "mid-life" child born in 1936 at the height of the depression. I was circumcised on the eighth day of my life in accordance with the Biblical command (Gen 17:12) and became Bar Mitzvah in 1949 at a Conservative synagogue at the age of thirteen. At that point, I turned away from Judaism, claiming it never really made sense to me (1949).

Jamie and I were married on February, 7, 1971 by a Methodist minister, with a Catholic priest and my Jewish brother as witnesses. Friends sponsored us to a Marriage Encounter weekend as a gift for our second anniversary. As I read Jamie's response to the final session, "How do you feel about the role God plays in your marriage?," I began to weep profusely for the first time in my adult life. Suddenly I felt God speak into my spirit and say: "I am calling you into the wilderness for a time of preparation because I have a work for you to do."

We notified our employers that we would be leaving at the end of the school year. We sold our ski house in Vermont and our home on Long Island and moved to the "wilderness." Davie, Florida. God supernaturally provided teaching jobs for both of us, as well as a lovely townhouse to live in.

The night before we left, Jamie prayed to make Yeshua Lord of her life, using a small booklet called "The Four Spiritual Laws." Six weeks later we found ourselves in a church because she wanted to be baptized in the ocean. Before we left the church, I had prayed to receive Yeshua as my Savior and Lord. When I finished praying, I looked up and saw (in the spirit) Yeshua standing nine feet tall with His arms open wide saying, "Welcome home my son. I have waited 2,000 years for this."

### My Heart Is In The Wall!

As we rode home from church one Sunday morning I tearfully said to Jamie, "My heart is in the wall." She responded, "What are you talking about?" and I explained. That morning the minister had preached on Matthew 6:19-21 which concludes with, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Some months before, I had been led to invest our \$2,000 of savings in silver coins. I didn't know that two brothers in Texas had just decided to try to corner the market on silver. Every day my investment was increasing in value. Fearfully, I cut out the sheetrock behind our clothes dryer and hid the bags of silver coins in the wall. My treasure was in the wall, and so was my heart.

That day I learned that **with God, it's always about the heart.**

## What Are Your "These?"

Yeshua had to deal with Peter's heart too. In John 21, we read about a fish fry on the beach. It occurred after Jesus was crucified, resurrected, and had already appeared to His disciples twice. Peter decided to go fishing, after all he was a fisherman, and the others went with him. After breakfast Yeshua called him aside and asked him, "*Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?*" While many consider that "these" referred to the other disciples, I am convinced that it referred to the FISH. After Peter responded, "*Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.*" Yeshua said to him, "*Feed My lambs.*" Fishing was a macho occupation. Shepherding was not. Yeshua was asking Peter to leave "his **these**," to follow Him. What are your **THESE**? Are you willing to leave them to follow Him?

## The Morning "Yeshua Wept" Came Alive For Me

I knelt at the altar of the church at 6:30 A.M. one Thursday morning in July, 1976. As I began to pray, I experienced the most intense grief I had ever known in my life (Luke 19:41-44). I began to sob and sob and sob. Finally I said, "God, what is this?" He answered, "This is how I feel about the Lost Sheep of the House of Israel." I responded, "What do you want me to do about?" He said, "I want you to start a Messianic Synagogue." The first meeting of Temple Aron HaKodesh took place on August 27, 1976 in our living room. God had made it very clear to me that I was not to be the Pastor/Rabbi, but the founding Elder.

By the end of the year, we moved into a building that God supernaturally provided. The congregation is presently in its third building, with its third Rabbi. It is attended by almost four hundred people each Sabbath. On three different occasions, I had to briefly take over as Rabbi, but Jamie and I have never left. We are still there sitting in our same seats, doing our best to fulfill God's plan for our lives, knowing that **Messianic Judaism is not merely a good idea. It is a God idea.**

## Now Brother, We Are Not Under The Law!

We learned a lot of things as we began the Messianic Synagogue. We learned that Mary (Miriam) called her son "Yeshua," and we decided to call Him that also. We also learned that Yeshua went to the synagogue on Shabbat, our Saturday, so we moved our services to that day. Then we learned that there were many of His followers who thought we were trying to put people under the Law.

That led me to an intensive study of the Torah, the first five books of the Bible, which under Greek influence were called the Law. What I found was very interesting. In addition to a lot of history and genealogy, there were five distinct categories of rules for living, or laws. First there were civil laws about things like debts, crimes, and oxen. The principles undergirding these laws have become the basis of our own system of **civil law**: stop signs, penal code, tax laws, and others.

Then I noticed that there were **moral laws**. Don't lie, or steal, or murder, or commit adultery. Certainly these laws still apply to us. Then I saw a third group that I called the **ceremonial laws**. These primarily applied to the Feasts of the Lord as outlined in Leviticus 23. I realized that these were the curriculum that God gave us to teach our children about Him (Gen 18:18-19) and what He had done for us, so that they would know what He would do for them now and in the future. We began to celebrate these Feasts, and invited everyone to join us.

Another category I identified and called the **separation laws**. God wanted His people to be different from all the other people, because He was different from all the other gods (Leviticus 11:44). The separation was accomplished by how we dressed, how we worshipped, and what we ate. It was all about externals, and that made sense, since the sign of God's covenant with Abraham was external (in the flesh). In the New Covenant, where the sign is God's Holy Spirit dwelling in us, the sign is on the inside and becomes our character. Do we love as He loved? Do we have a peace that passes understanding (John 14:27)? Do we demonstrate the "*fruit of the Spirit*" (Gal. 5:22)? I concluded that we are still under laws of separation, but they have moved from the outside to the inside.

The final category of rules or laws are the **sacrificial laws**. These are explained in great detail in the first seven chapters of Leviticus. It is obvious that Yeshua, the Lamb of God, fulfilled the sacrificial law. Even the Talmud, the writings of traditional rabbis, makes this clear in a reference to Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) which tells us that “for about forty years before the Temple was destroyed, God no longer accepted the Yom Kippur sacrifice (Yoma 39b).” When I asked a Talmud teacher why, I was told it was due to “baseless hatred.” Who was hated and persecuted for forty years before the Temple was destroyed? Those who followed Yeshua as Rabbi and Savior.

## Hebrew Thinking Vs. Greek Thinking

I continued to read and study the Scriptures. Sometimes I found Yeshua confusing. One moment He was telling someone to, “Go and tell everyone.” And the next person He told, “Don’t tell anyone.” I just didn’t understand until I met Dr. Randall Smith (randalldsmith.com), a brilliant teacher who taught me the importance of geography in understanding some of what Yeshua said. The east of the Galilee was inhabited by Gentiles. When Yeshua performed a miracle there, it was TELL EVERYONE (We are called to be a light to the Gentiles (Isaiah 42:6.). The Jews lived on the west side of the Galilee and were ruled by Herod who had already murdered John. He was trying to capture Yeshua, so on the west side of the Galilee it was DON'T TELL ANYONE.

Dr. Smith also taught me the difference between Hebrew and Greek thinking. Greeks focused on “What do you think? What do you believe?” We can see this in Acts 17 where Rabbi Saul (Paul) is in Athens, the capital of Greece, and we are told, “...*all the Athenians and the foreigners who were there spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing*” (Acts 17:21). The Hebrews focused on relationship and action. These two aspects are mentioned over and over again in the Scriptures, both in the Old and the New Testaments.

First, and most important is RELATIONSHIP. “*I am the **God of your father—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob***” (Exodus 3:6). The second is ACTION, which proceeds from relationship. “*I am the LORD your **God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt...***” (Exodus 20:2).

Action and relationship comprise the very nature of God in whose image we are made. The Scriptures tell us, “*So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them*” (Genesis 1:27). Man was created for action: “*Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it*” (Genesis 2:15). Woman was created for relationship: “*It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him*” (Gen. 2:18). The two together represent the nature of God - Action and Relationship: Hebrew thinking.

## A Song Of Deliverance

I was diagnosed with prostate cancer in the summer of 1999. I knew I had to hide in God. Psalm 32:7 was my hope: “*You are my hiding place; You shall preserve me from trouble; You shall surround me with **songs of deliverance.***” I asked God for a “song of deliverance,” one I could sing to lift my spirit when the battle became difficult. He gave me Psalm 118:24 as **my** song of deliverance. To this day I sing it whenever the going gets tough: “*This is the day the LORD has made; I will rejoice and be glad in it.*”

In 2004 I was diagnosed with bladder cancer. These two episodes have helped me develop an **attitude of gratitude**. I find this to be true of most cancer survivors. We have a greater appreciation of life. Greens are greener. Flowers are prettier. Birds sing more beautifully. We tend to appreciate everything more. We have learned to have our **BUT in the right place**. “I know what the doctor said, BUT, the Word of God says He is my healer,” instead of “I know the Bible says He is my healer, BUT, the doctor says ...” The Rabbis teach that he who appreciates any part of creation without thanking God for it is stealing from God. That’s why there is a blessing for everything in Judaism. Even for “openings in the body that function.”

## Original Blessing

As I continued to read and study the Bible, I noticed that the first thing God did after creating man was to bless him (Genesis 1:28). Not only did He bless us with His provision of everything we needed, but He blessed us with His presence. Meeting with us in the cool of the evening. Talking over the activities of the day as one does with a friend. Giving us wise counsel saying, *“Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die”* (Genesis 2:16-17). Notice it was the tree of the knowledge of Good and Evil. We already knew everything good because we knew God. But, we couldn't resist. We gave in to the temptation to know evil and in doing so, we broke the intimate, wonderful fellowship we had with our Creator. The results were terrible. In just a few generations the Bible tells us, *“God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth”* (Genesis 6:12). But God found a righteous man who became His friend. As a result, the world was spared and the story of the interaction of God with mankind was allowed to continue.

Eventually God found a man named Abraham who became His friend. God entered into covenant with Him, promising that through him, all the families of the earth would be blessed. That blessing would be the restoration of the personal, intimate relationship with the Creator. God continued His plan to restore relationship through Isaac, and then Jacob, and eventually through all the sons of Jacob who had become known as the Israelites.

So God entered into Covenant with the nation of Israel. He was present with them for forty years as a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, protecting them, and providing for them. But He only met with Moses face to face, as a man meets with a friend.

The nation of Israel wasn't faithful so God promised, *“I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah— not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more”* (Jeremiah 31:31-34).

It was sin, disobedience to God's instructions, that had broken the fellowship in the Garden, and now God's plan was revealed: a New Covenant in which He would no longer remember our sins. Once more, we would have access to Him in friendship, as at the beginning.

## Life Is Full Of Choices

Life is full of choices, and every choice comes with a consequence. God fulfilled His promise of a New Covenant, but it required that we turn from the traditions of our Rabbis and accept Yeshua, the sacrificial Lamb that He provided. Just as God set a choice before the nation of Israel in Deuteronomy 26-28, He also set a choice before them “about forty years before the Temple was destroyed.” Many chose to follow God's plan and were restored to their Creator. Others did not, and have wandered through time and geography seeking the desired relationship with God.

Yeshua said: *“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me”* (John 10:27). Notice the Relationship in “My sheep,” and the required action “hear My voice.” “I know them,” again speaks of that relationship, while “they follow me,” is the action necessary to know the Creator in the intimacy that Adam had in the Garden. Have you made YESHUA, THE LAMB OF GOD, **your lamb**?

As you continue on your journey I encourage you to Choose God, choose good, and choose to be a blessing.

*Love in Messiah,  
Neil (\*Jamie)*