

***"If I then, your Lord and Teacher,
have washed your feet..."***

John 13:14



Summer blessings in Yeshua,

WALKING AS YESHUA WALKED

Going to Israel always brings us back to the reality of the land and culture that our Messiah knew. Yeshua was not a 21st century American. He was a Jew, living almost 2,000 years ago in a Middle Eastern culture, observing customs which are very different from ours. This month we'd like to take you back to both Abraham's and Yeshua's day. How did they live during the hot summer months? Perhaps there are ways in which we can follow their examples, even in our day, helping us to feel closer to our Messiah and more connected with our Jewish roots.

WEAR SANDALS! WASH FEET!

Sandals were the most common foot covering in the Middle East at the time of Yeshua. Preservation in burial chambers has allowed us to know what sandals in Yeshua's day were like. A long strap, attached at one end to a leather sole, was wound around the foot and ankle and secured to the sole again. The idea of "binding on" or "tying on" a sandal is expressed in Acts 12:8 when the angel who freed Peter from prison said to him, "Gird yourself and tie on your sandals..."

Jamie usually wears sandals on our Israel trips. A famous Israeli brand, Neot, are very comfortable, high quality and long lasting. After a day of touring in Israel, anyone wearing sandals needs to wash their feet. It was the same in Bible times. Foot washing was a priority upon entering a home. Middle Eastern hospitality dictated the washing of a guest's feet as the most basic courtesy. When Simon the Pharisee invited Yeshua to his home for dinner, but neglected to wash His feet, this was an insult and an example of bad manners. Yeshua contrasted Simon's lack of hospitality with the love and ministry of the woman who washed His feet with her tears (Luke 8:44).

Right before His death, the Messiah washed His students' feet and told them: *"If I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet."* (John 13:14) He gave them an example to follow. It was an example of humility, of serving one another in love, and of preferring one another. Have you ever washed someone else's feet? Try it this summer.

In Bible times, sandaled feet were washed not only upon returning from a journey, but upon retiring to bed. This is mentioned in 2 Samuel 11:8 and Song of Songs 5:3. The rest of the body might be clean, but there was always a problem with dirty feet. Feet come in contact with the world. We need to be cleansed daily from the corrupting influences that surround us. God has given us His Word and His blood as powerful cleansing agents. Be aware of your feet! As you put on your sandals this summer, remember Yeshua. Wash His feet by welcoming and worshipping Him.

You never wear sandals? Neil never wore them until last year. Now he really likes them. He even bought himself a new pair in a shop on Ben Yehuda Street in May. Don't worry about ugly feet; your feet are beautiful if you bear the Good News of Yeshua HaMashiach (Isaiah 52:7).

OFFER HOSPITALITY

The Hebrew term for hospitality is "*hakhnasat orhim*," literally "gathering in of travelers." Hospitality in the Hebrew mind is a sacred duty. Biblical law specified that it was an obligation to extend hospitality to the stranger (*ger*) since the Jewish people were strangers in Egypt (Leviticus 19:34).

When Rabbi Saul (Paul) tells the believers at Rome to be "given to hospitality," he follows this exhortation by saying: "*Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.*" (Romans 12:13-14) According to Middle Eastern hospitality, if, in desperation, a man comes to his enemy for food or asylum, his enemy is expected to treat him as a guest! That's why David found safety with his enemies, the Philistines, when he fled from Saul (I Samuel 27:7). Middle Eastern hospitality is radical!

The intifada in Israel has definitely affected hospitality in the market place. Shopkeepers no longer offer the traditional cup of coffee to tourists because the days of leisurely chatting while shopping and socializing have vanished under the horrific threat of potential terrorist bombings. Nevertheless, some of the members of our Mercy Mission trip to Israel were still invited to the homes of local Israelis whom they had just met. We personally look forward to visiting the home of our bus driver, Eli, and his Sephardic Jewish wife from Uruguay on our next trip to the Land.

Hospitality has been a regular part of our lives since the Lord called us to Florida and then saved us in 1973. Our first home in Florida was a small townhouse. While there, God called us to begin Temple Aron HaKodesh, a call that included welcoming the first Rabbi and his wife into our home until they could get established in the area. Then the Lord began to send single women to live with us. Next came a large home on Fort Lauderdale beach (Jamie saw it in a vision and 17 days later we miraculously possessed it). We had more than 65 people live with us in the beach house over the next eleven years. When Jonathan was two, we moved away from the beach into a small home in a family neighborhood. Jesse was born shortly after the move and it was difficult having guests there with two children and no guest room. So, the Lord provided another, larger home with a guest room and large area downstairs for all kinds of gatherings. We have always felt that our home belonged to God, and was His to use as He pleased. We are sure that we have entertained angels over the years (Hebrews 13:2). We have also experienced OUTSTANDING HOSPITALITY from others in our travels.

Abraham, who really did entertain angels, is often used as the Hebraic model of hospitality. In Genesis chapter 18 we find Abraham sitting in the door of his tent in the heat of the day, presumably at meal time. Some scholars say that the tent-dwellers of Abraham's day ate by the door of their tents in order to notice any strangers passing by, so that they might be invited to a

meal. When Abraham saw the three strangers, he ran to meet them and prostrated himself before them (*shachah* in Hebrew) saying: *"My Lord, if I have now found favor in Your sight, do not pass on by your servant."* (Genesis 18: 3) This shows that the company of travelers was considered a personal favor (rather than a burden!) to the host. Visitors were a blessing. Showing hospitality was an honor.

Abraham and Sarah prepared a hasty meal for their guests which included meat cut in small pieces, put on skewers and broiled over a fire. No doubt the origin of shishkabobs, this dish was undoubtedly enjoyed by Yeshua years later, as it still is today all over the Middle East. Small pieces of lamb marinated in olive oil, vinegar, garlic, onion and other spices, and broiled until almost crisp, is a delicious taste treat. Try it this summer!

Hospitality is central to the Jewish roots of our faith as believers. The rabbis teach: *"Great is hospitality; greater even than early attendance at the house of study or than receiving the Shekhinah."* (Shabbat 127a) Open your home this summer. When Yeshua stands at the door and knocks, let there be room at the inn! A simple meal with abundant love equals great hospitality. (And when you go to someone's home, remember what mama used to say: "Don't go empty handed.")

GO FISHING!

Going fishing is a good way to get alone with the Lord. We both love to fish. Jamie grew up in a family in Westchester County, N.Y. that went fishing almost every evening during the summer months. Her mother packed a picnic supper and their family of four fished in Kensico Reservoir from 5:00 until 8:00 P.M. or until Jamie's father and brother were satisfied with the evening's catch. Fishing can be a great exercise in patience, faith, quieting one's soul and stillness. It is a peaceful pastime.

Yeshua loves fisherman. The three that we met in Israel on the Sea of Galilee in May reminded us of the men like them that Yeshua knew, and called, to follow Him. In His day, early mornings around the Sea (actually a fresh water lake, eight miles across), would find boats returning from a night of fishing. Nets were set out to dry and fish were sorted into baskets.

Fishing gear for the Galilean fishermen consisted of mesh nets of different sizes, baskets to hold the catch, a stone anchor, torches for attracting the fish, food and water jars, ropes and oars. Four methods of fishing were used on the Sea of Galilee. The first was the **drag net** which was secured between two boats that were steered in a circle to enclose the fish. **Cast nets**, weighted on all sides, were also used. When a **gill net** was employed, the gills of the fish were caught in the net. The fish were counted by hand, hence, the 153 fish recorded in John 21:11. The **draw net** is mentioned by James in chapter 1:14-15 in an analogy concerning the entrapping nature of sin.

Since fish were abundant, they were a staple of the daily diet of the Jews who lived by the Sea of Galilee. This most certainly included Yeshua. Of the 23 varieties of fish in this beautiful lake, talapia, also known as St. Peter's Fish, is the most popular. Today talapia is exported to nineteen countries around the world. This summer is a good time to begin eating more fish, including talapia

One more aspect of fishing that we must not forget is the fishing mentioned by Yeshua in Matthew 4:19, *" Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."* Have you heard that call? We have, and as we seek to follow the Messiah, He gives us a burden for lost souls, both Jewish

and gentile. Yeshua leads us to the fish, and shows us which bait to use for which fish. In Jewish ministry some respond well to testimonies, others to Messianic prophecies, others to signs and wonders, others to the presence of God in a worship service, others to genuine friendship and love demonstrated over a period of years, others to being exposed to a consecrated Christian with a Jewish heart, and others to the simple message of salvation and peace with God found in the Holy Scriptures. God, who knows each heart, knows what will touch each one. Even in the midst of vacation time this summer, may you be able to say with us, "Gone Fishing".

READ A GOOD BOOK!

At the luncheon for tour guides in Israel in May, we had the privilege of sitting opposite an Israeli man whose life story has been documented in a book titled Haver Zvi of Israel. Zvi Givati is the Retired Brigadier General of Israel's Ministry of Police. His story has touched our hearts in a profound way. Zvi's life has been a life of selfless giving, particularly on behalf of prisoners in Israel. He epitomizes the Jewish soul that has apprehended the love and mercy of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Zvi, a traditional Jew and lover of God, is the official Israeli representative for the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem (ICEJ). His journey from a childhood in which he was persecuted by "Christians" until his present day position with the Embassy, testifies of the divine touch and call of God on Zvi's life. We are sure that you will be very blessed and challenged if you decide to order this book and read it this summer. Neither of us could put it down!

With Love,

Neil and Jamie

P.S. Your continued support will keep us fishing and using our beautiful feet to the glory of God!