

Thanks, You Tube

I hope everyone had a better week than I did. Not that it was terrible on a grand scale but as we have all come to experience, the trials and storms always increase and precede the Holy Days. Again, nothing monumental or critically harmful but the level of spiritual challenges was definitely above average. Again, this is to be expected and nothing new.

We know that from Tabernacles to Passover is a time for preparation. A time for self-reflection and change. Just when you think you get your checklist of faults down to a minimum, God hands you another list. But that is not a dreadful thing either.

Hosea 10:12-13- “Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground, for *it is* time to seek the LORD, until He comes and rains righteousness on you. You have plowed wickedness; you have reaped iniquity; you have eaten the fruit of lies because you trusted in your way, in the multitude of your mighty men.”

The time presents us an opportunity to really dig deep into ourselves and take a good hard look at where we are at in our walk with God. As God loves us so much, He will permit the trials and storms to bring us into alignment with His will.

Revelation 3:19-22- “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore, be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me. To the one who overcomes will I give *authority* to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and sat down with My Father in His throne. The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

The issues with this are that we must *truly* be seeking Him and His guidance and His will for our lives. An all-out earnest effort *from our hearts* is what it takes and trust me, He will know if what we are putting out is *our best* or if it is not. If we are not applying our energies and living His word, we are failing in our character and spiritual growth. *It takes work.*

This was the topic in Today’s Berean, which really made the point hit home for the trials I experienced this past week. Getting to work on the second list was not

something I thought would present itself so quickly. Well, my first problem was, “*I thought.*”

Isaiah 55:7-11- “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return to the LORD, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. “For My thoughts *are* not your thoughts, nor your ways My ways,” says the LORD. “For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.”

Keeping this mindset and focus can be difficult at best, with all of the chaos and moral decay around us. But if we *truly* are walking with God *in all our ways*, He will show us where to step to avoid the pitfalls Satan sets before us. As I mentioned earlier, this is the time for preparation and reflection. Time to build our character *will not come later*. It must be in place and solid before the trumpet sounds or we may not be ready to serve in the Kingdom of God.

With these thoughts in mind, looking back over the past several months, did we produce spiritual fruit? If this fruit were an actual edible food source, how long

could you survive on what you produced? Could you feed others with what you produced? Or would they starve along with you? Tough questions.

God has provided us with the source of wisdom in His scriptures. The Greatest Commandment should be first and foremost in our hearts and in our thoughts.

Matthew 22:37-38- “And Jesus 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* first and greatest commandment;”

Looking to God and His word, love, wisdom, and guidance *first* will keep our spiritual motion in the right direction. What God tells us in the Bible gives us the tools to overcome Satan, the flesh, and the things of this world. Christ’s sacrifice and shed blood gives us *the authority* and *God’s Holy Spirit gives us the power*. We cannot be self-centered or carnal, blaming circumstances on others without giving ourselves a close assessment. In our pursuit for the wisdom of God, our heart must be right before Him. We must seek Him in sincere faith.

James 1:5-9- “However, if anyone lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, Who gives to everyone freely and does not reproach *the one who asks*; and it shall be given to

him. But let him ask in faith, not doubting at all because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven by the wind and tossed *to and fro*. Do not let that man expect that he will receive anything from the Lord. *He is* a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. But let the brother who is in humble circumstances rejoice in his elevation,”

If we get the feeling that we are jogging with one foot nailed to the floor and are running in a constant circle of trials, it may be time to take step in front of the mirror again. I found myself there a few times this week alone.

Psalm 55:17-22- “Evening and morning, and at noon, I will cry aloud in my distress; and He shall hear my voice. He has redeemed my soul in peace from the battle that was against me, for there were many against me. God shall hear and afflict them, even He who is enthroned of old. Selah. Those who never change their ways and have no fear of God. He has put forth his hands against those who were at peace with him; he has broken his covenant. The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart; his words were softer than oil, yet they were drawn swords. Cast your burden upon the LORD, and He will sustain you; He will never allow the righteous to be moved.”

I am grateful that He loves me enough to have trials and storms. The realization of how much work there is to be done is motivating as my heart desires to please Him and be worthy and ready for that trumpet to sound. Reading His word and living it will bring about the changes I need, and it will for anyone else who seeks the same.

Isaiah 55:11- “So shall My Word be which goes out of My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall certainly do what I sent it to do.”

There is a line from the movie *Gladiator*, where General Maximus Aurelius tells his troops before a big battle, “what we do in life, echoes in eternity.” It most certainly does, especially for those God has called. Our character, our works and our love and devotion to God will be the deciding factors whether we are fit for His Kingdom. Our spiritual growth and Biblical knowledge set an example for others.

Jeremiah 29:11-13- “For I know the purposes which I am purposing for you,’ says the LORD; ‘purposes of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you shall call on Me, and you shall go and pray to Me, and I will hearken to

you. And you shall seek Me and find *Me*, when you search for Me with all your heart.”

What we do *now* and how we are prepared is critical for what we know is coming.

John 16:31-33- “Jesus answered them, “Do you now believe? Listen, the time is coming, and has already come, that you shall be scattered each to his own, and you shall leave Me alone; and yet I am not alone because the Father is with Me. These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you shall have tribulation. But be courageous! I have overcome the world.”

Being courageous in the face of storms is not easy, especially when they are relentless. But even *greater* courage is needed to stand fast and face them and the fact we caused them through our own actions or disobedience. Repentance will hopefully follow. It always amazes me how quick God is to forgive and get you back on track...when your repentance is genuine. He knows the difference.

Joshua 1:7-9- “Only be strong and very courageous so that you may observe to do according to all the law which My servant Moses commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, so that you may prosper wherever you go.

This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth, but you shall meditate therein day and night, so that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it, for then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you shall have good success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage. Do not be afraid, neither be dismayed, for the LORD your God *is* with you in all places where you go.”

He is always with us through every storm. It is for this reason and reassurance He gives us that we can stand fast in our faith and ask ourselves the tough questions we may have avoided. Our daily walk and devotion to God will reenergize and renew our spirits every day.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18- “For this reason, we do not lose heart; but if our outward man is being brought to decay, yet the inward *man* is being renewed day by day. For the momentary lightness of our tribulation is working out for us an immeasurably greater *and* everlasting fullness of glory; While we consider not the things *that are* seen, but the things *that are* not seen. For the things *that are* seen *are* temporary; but the things *that are* not seen *are* eternal.”

We have been saved by grace through our faith for an eternal purpose. There is nothing on earth that we could have done to earn our redemption that Jesus paid so dear a price for.

Ephesians 2:8-10- “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this *especially* is not of your own selves; *it is* the gift of God, Not of *your own* works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, being created in Christ Jesus unto *the* good works that God ordained beforehand in order that we might walk in them.”

I almost forgot, you might be wondering why the title is “Thanks, You Tube. As you may know, these renderings are spontaneous as I do not know what will come off the keyboard until it is finished. I start out in prayer and ask and seek God’s guidance on what He would have us share. I put the You tube channel on TV to a live nature video in 4K UHD, which is impressive on this Sony TV (thanks to Andrea). Occasionally scripture will appear on the screen. I am wearing earphones listening to hymns on a piano and I just finished reading this week’s essay. I looked up at the TV and I just happened to look up and Hosea 10 was on. Now you know, the rest just flowed.

As a fellowship, this is our eighth year of celebrating the Passover and following Feasts of God. As we know, the number eight in the Bible signifies a new beginning.

Genesis 8:15-16- “And God spoke to Noah, saying, “Go out of the ark, you and your wife and your sons and your sons’ wives with you.” (8 people He saved from the flood)

Genesis 9:1- “And God blessed Noah and his sons, and He said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth.”

Revelation 21:3-7- “And I heard a great voice from heaven say, “Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men; and He shall dwell with them, and they shall be His people; and God Himself shall be with them *and be* their God. And God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and *there* shall not be any more death, or sorrow, or crying; neither shall *there* be any more pain, because the former things have passed away.” And He Who sits on the throne said, “Behold, I make all things new.” Then He said to me, “Write, for these words are true and faithful.” And He said to me, “It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the one who thirsts, I will give freely of the fountain of the water of life. The one who overcomes shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son.”

And the Last Great Day, the eighth day after the Feast of Tabernacles, is a new beginning as well. As we celebrate Passover and renew our covenant, it is my prayer that this coming year will be a new beginning.

Psalm 63:1-4- “O God, You are my God, earnestly I will seek You! My soul thirsts for You. My flesh longs for You, as in a dry and thirsty land where no water is, To see Your power and Your glory— as I have seen You in the sanctuary. Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise You. Thus I will bless You as long as I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name.”

As we keep God’s Holy Days, may our love and devotion grow toward God and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Their continuous grace, mercy, and love bestowed upon those They have called gives us hope for a brighter future regardless of any trials or storms we may face. Amen.

