

Afflictions and Promises

I have lived a long life spanning two World Wars, other wars and skirmishes. There have been the unseen wars, primarily against women and children, done in darkness and in silence. I lived through the Sixties where strife, change, experimentation and even rioting in the streets took place. Yet nowhere did I see what is seen and felt today by everyone worldwide, especially witnessing what is being experienced in this country: A political system in total disarray, with hatred, division, corruption and the promotion of violence. People, primarily young, taking to the streets, destroying, robbing, looting and torching businesses and homes that don't belong to them. Ugliness, hatred, violence spewing from their mouths and from their actions.

Now we are affected by the pandemic that has the whole world turned upside down: People out of work, not knowing where the next piece of bread is coming from. People living in fear, afraid to leave their homes, afraid of visiting friends and especially afraid of visiting with their children and grandchildren. This situation is especially apparent in the senior community where I reside.

This study has begun with doom and gloom. Yet with Yah's help through His promises His Love will emerge most apparent as we take a journey through His Scriptures to bring together those promises of love, hope, and eternal life so essential in mitigating the daily struggles of living that often comprise suffering and pain.

We can recite many stories of the heroes in Scripture just as human, carnal as you and I: Many stories of the sorrow, pain, tribulation, fears and tears they experienced in the same way we have.

Abraham, a man of faith, a friend of Yah's – yet he also suffered. He had to send his first born, Ishmael away from him and then prepare to end the life of his remaining son, Isaac.

Gen. 21:10 Wherefore she said unto Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac. **11** And the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight because of his son. **12** And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called.

Gen. 22:1 And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am. **2** And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.

We know the sufferings of Job, not only mental and emotional but his physical agony that prompted his wife to think he ought to die. (curse God and die)

Job 2:9 Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die.

Joseph, though he was greatly loved by his father, suffered the loss of his mother at an early age. Being the object of jealousy and scorn by his brothers, he was thrown into the pit by them and ultimately sold. Prior to his being able to serve the Lord, he lived as a servant and was even jailed.

Gen. 37:23 And it came to pass, when Joseph was come unto his brethren, that they stript Joseph out of his coat, his coat of many colours that was on him; **24** And they took him, and cast him into a pit: and the pit was empty, there was no water in it.

Gen. 37:28 Then there passed by Midianites merchantmen; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmeelites for twenty pieces of silver: and they brought Joseph into Egypt.

Gen. 39:1 And Joseph was brought down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him of the hands of the Ishmeelites, which had brought him down thither.

Gen. 39:20 And Joseph's master took him, and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were bound: and he was there in the prison.

The stories go on: Moses being rescued by the pharaoh's daughter, killed an Egyptian soldier, only to run away and spend forty years in hiding.

Ex. 2:5 And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash herself at the river; and her maidens walked along by the river's side; and when she saw the ark among the flags, she sent her maid to fetch it. **6** And when she had opened it, she saw the child: and, behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him, and said, This is one of the Hebrews' children.

Ex. 2:11 And it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens: and he spied an Egyptian smiting an Hebrew, one of his brethren. **12** And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand.

Ex. 2:15 Now when Pharaoh heard this thing, he sought to slay Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh, and dwelt in the land of Midian: and he sat down by a well.

David, being a young man with good intentions, had to spend years fleeing from Saul, a paranoid sick man, filled with jealousy and an evil spirit.

1 Sam. 16:14 ¶ But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him.

Scripture is unclear as to the number of years Saul was King of Israel. David was a young boy between the ages of ten and fifteen when he was anointed King of Israel. He was thirty when he actually began his reign as King. It would be reasonable to conclude that Saul ruled Israel for approximately twenty years. David spent a minimum of fifteen years fleeing from Saul.

2 Sam. 5:4 David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years.

Yahshua our Lord and Master endured pain, suffering and humiliation on our behalf. Our sins, iniquities and transgressions poured over Him, a Man who had never sinned. A Man who prayed for hours on end with His Father, only to now be forsaken by Him.

Matt. 27:46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

The pain, misery and suffering by many as documented in Yah's Word are too numerous to record. When heartache, suffering, trials and tragedy strike many question God. "Why? Why me? IF there is a God," they reason, "He would never allow this," and finally conclude, "There is no God."

Pain and suffering takes on many forms: physical, emotional, mental and spiritual. We have all been there and are presently encountering one or more of these happenings.

We need to search His Word and hear what He has to say to us and yes, prove to ourselves that there is a God, a God who is in complete and total control. When sin entered this world with Adam and Eve, sin flourished. Thus we need to prove ourselves worthy, obedient and faithful to the God who created all of us. We need to be faithful to the Father who watched His only Begotten Son brutalized and yet said:

Heb. 2:9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. **10** For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, **to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.**

We will see how each of these people, our examples continuing down the path of hardship and strife, became victorious in overcoming their sorrows through their faith in the promises that Yah had given them and now graciously has given to us.

Hebrews 11 offers numerous people who by FAITH believed and trusted the promises of Yah. There are those who saw and directly spoke with God: Abraham, Sarah, Moses, Noah, Jacob, including some of the prophets.

Heb. 11:17 By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son,

Abraham's greatest suffering involved carrying out the preparations for sacrificing the life of Isaac. This moment also proved the strongest in the faith and trust Abraham held for our God and his God.

Gen. 15:4 And, behold, the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. **5** And he brought

him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. **6** And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

Abraham had to believe the future Yah promised could never lead to Isaac's death.

Job stripped of children, wealth, possessions and his health, still refused to condemn the Lord. Quite the contrary, he praised him! There were no promises by the Lord assuring that Job would regain more than he had lost; yet he was blessed with more.

Job 1:21 And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.

Joseph also did not receive any special promise from our God. Allied with a firm faith in the Lord, Joseph kept strong in spite of all the adversities he experienced. After his reconciliation with his brothers, his faith shows through with the realization of why he had to suffer.

Gen. 4:5 Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life. **6** For these two years hath the famine been in the land: and yet there are five years, in the which there shall neither be earing nor harvest. **7** And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

Moses is the only prophet in Scripture who had been so blessed in the amount of time spent speaking with our Lord. He is also one who had been given such great leadership responsibility in overseeing the exodus of a great number of people from Egypt. The one promise Yah gave him is reflected in Exodus 7:1.

Ex. 7:1 And the LORD said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet.

David who had many weaknesses and committed many sins was deeply loved by the Lord. David's love and faith is evidenced in the number of Psalms he wrote requesting help from our Lord, pouring out his fears and giving praise to the God he loved.

Acts 13:22 And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will.

Yahshua told each of us that the greatest commandment is to love your God with all your heart, soul and mind.

Matt. 22:37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

Yahshua not only loved the Father, He trusted Him as He came to this earth with the sole purpose to die for the sins of mankind in order to save us and give us the promise of eternal life. He trusted His Father would raise Him to life and restore the glory He shared with Him.

John 17:5 And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

Selected from over one hundred Scriptures are promises made by Yahshua for aiding our life. These promises are not only relevant to those struggling before us, but also designed for us to grab hold of and cling to in our times of tears and fears.

Matt. 11:28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.
29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. **30** For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

John 5:24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

John 14:21 He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

John 15:16 Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

John 16:20 Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.

Rev. 2:7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

I have been thinking about our small ecclesia. "Tiny" is a more appropriate description of our size, yet pain and suffering are magnified, overflowing within us.

Could it be, just a thought, that maybe we are doing something right? Satan, unhappy with us, is using all his wiles, his trickery and guile to lead us away and against our God. Satan's main purpose is maintaining his destructive path by removing from Yah those who have been faithfully following and believing in our Lord. Satan's futile successes keep him laughing rhetorically while he vainly seeks to slap the face of our Almighty God.

A Poem we are familiar with will be a substitute for one of the Proverbs normally used. Even though this poem is not in Scripture, the message and the promise is unmistakably the same as Yah promises throughout His Word.

Last night I had a dream. I dreamed I was walking along the beach with the Lord. Across the sky flashed scenes from my life. For each scene, I noticed two sets of footprints in the sand; one belonged to me, the other to the Lord.

After the last scene of my life flashed before me, I looked back at the footprints in the sand. I noticed that at many times along the path of my life, especially at the very lowest and saddest times, there was only one set of footprints.

This really troubled me, so I asked the Lord about it. "Lord, you said once I decided to follow you, You'd walk with me all the way. But I noticed that during the saddest and most troublesome times of my life, there was only one set of footprints. I don't understand why, when I needed you the most, You would leave me."

The Lord replied, "My son, My precious child, I love you and I would never leave you. During your times of suffering, when you could see only one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you."

Heb. 13:5 Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, **I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.**

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