

Rowing Backward into the Future Joseph Herrin (12-31-2011)

I have concluded that my vision is much better in hindsight than it is at gazing into the future. There is an interesting fact relating to how the ancient Hebrews understood the concept of time. To the Hebrews the future was depicted as behind a person's back, while the past was in front of the person. This is because the past is known. The past is something we can see clearly, being open before our eyes. The future is unknown, as if hidden behind one's back.

I believe the Hebrews had the right idea about time. Someone has likened the Hebrew concept of time to a man rowing a boat.



As one rows a boat they are facing backward while moving forward. This is the experience of mankind. If you had asked me a year ago what experiences 2011 would bring, I could not have told you. I did not know that I would spend 74 days of the year in jail. Neither did I foresee that on September 6th I would post an article titled "*Why Does God Require Christians to Suffer?*" or that a few hours after posting it I would be lying alongside the road with multiple fractures, having been struck by a car.

As I think of this, I am glad that I did not know what the year would bring. God has designed things this way. Christ told His disciples, "Take no thought for tomorrow. Sufficient for each day is the trouble thereof." We are given just enough grace to walk in the moment. I can testify that as each event entered my life in 2011, whether facing a judge in a courtroom, being led in handcuffs off to jail, or experiencing multiple surgeries to repair fractured limbs, Yahweh's grace was always sufficient. There was not a single event in the past year that was too much for me to walk through, and to do so in peace. I am reminded of the promise of God contained in Paul's letter to the saints in Corinth.

I Corinthians 10:13

For no temptation (no trial regarded as enticing to sin), [no matter how it comes or where it leads] has overtaken you and laid hold on you that is not common to man [that is, no temptation or trial has come to you that is beyond human resistance and that is not adjusted and adapted and belonging to human experience, and such as man can bear]. But God is faithful [to His Word and to His compassionate nature], and He [can be trusted] not to let you be tempted and tried and assayed beyond your ability and strength of resistance and power to endure, but with the temptation He will [always] also provide the way out (the

means of escape to a landing place), that you may be capable and strong and powerful to bear up under it patiently.
[Amplified Bible]

This I can attest to be true. I have received all necessary aid from the Father to bear up under the trials of this past year patiently. I fully anticipate that the coming year will be no different. Yahweh has promised that He will not subject me to anything greater than my ability to bear. This includes temptations to sin, as well as trials. I need not be overmastered by anything. Yahweh's grace is proffered to His saints. We need only to avail ourselves of it.

Although I do not know what the year 2012 will bring, there is much indication that it will be a year of difficulty for the nations. Financial systems continue to sink lower, teetering on collapse. Political turmoil has been rampant in 2011, particularly in the Middle East, and it looks to continue, and perhaps escalate. Each year recently has been filled with natural disasters; earthquakes, tsunamis, hurricanes, tornadoes, wildfires, floods, droughts, and the like. No doubt this will continue for we are approaching the end of the age. The Lord is soon to appear (in His saints) and the earth must experience birth pangs.

I believe this year will see more Christians being led into experiences where they will be cast upon God for all their needs. Although some will turn to the arm of the flesh (government welfare programs, credit cards and other forms of debt, etc.) to deliver them, a remnant will know that Yahweh is calling them to look to Him alone for every necessary thing. Though their faith will be greatly tested, it will also be greatly rewarded.

II Chronicles 16:9

For the eyes of Yahweh move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His.

Psalms 34:15

The eyes of Yahweh are toward the righteous and His ears are open to their cry.

As I look back over the past year I see clearly Yahweh's faithfulness. I have not worked a single day this year at secular employment. I have continued to minister through writing as Yahweh has directed me. I began the year with no more money on hand than would supply my immediate need, yet like the widow's cruse of oil and jar of meal, this supply has never run out. Yahweh continues to renew it.

On the first day of this year I moved into my converted bus (*The Dreamer*). Yahweh graciously supplied all material to outfit it, through the functioning of the body of Christ. I drove the bus to an RV park, and every month of this past year Yahweh has sent what was needed to pay the park fees, to supply me with groceries, and to meet every personal and ministry need. In an hour when millions are out of work, and have exhausted their unemployment benefits, I have found that there is no exhausting God's supply.

Matthew 6:31-34

"Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we

wear for clothing?' For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."

If we are seeking first the will of God (His kingdom), we need not worry about our daily supply. Yahweh has not promised to give us all the things our hearts might covet. If we are seeking those things, then we are not truly seeking first His kingdom. However, He has promised to meet all of our necessities, to provide us with food, and covering.

I Timothy 6:8

If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content.

I am more than content. I am joyful for the Father's provision and care in my life. He truly has cared for my needs this past year. I am confident that 2012 will prove His faithfulness even more.

Brothers and sisters, undoubtedly many will find themselves without jobs, or employment income this year. There will be increases in food prices, and scarcity of supply for many. The news reveals that these things are of great concern to the world. Christ said that the Gentiles, that is to say "the nations," "eagerly seek after these things." They are greatly focused upon them. Their attention is arrested by the need to acquire daily provision. Many schemes, and much thought and effort, is evident among the people of the nations regarding the procuring of food and covering.

The attitude of Christ's disciples should greatly contrast with that of the world. We should be without worry. Our attitude should be one of faith and rest. It is enough to let the Father know our needs, and then look expectantly to Him to meet them.

Matthew 6:11

Give us this day our daily bread.

Philippians 4:6-7

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Yahshua.

For some years the Father has had me dependent upon Him for all of my needs. I know that He has not called all His sons and daughters to the same experience. He has not told all to quit their jobs and trust Him for daily provision. Yahweh has provided jobs and good employment to many. But experiences change.

Yahweh has told me that He has had me walk through many experiences as a pioneer and explorer, and He would use me as a guide to others He will lead down similar paths in coming days. I have heard from a number of saints who testify that God has told them they will soon be looking to Him for every necessary thing. As I look at my past experiences I can assure these ones that as they follow where Christ leads, they can rest in Him. He will

provide for their needs.

Some have foolishly asked me on occasion, “Joseph, if we all quit our jobs like you did, then who would there be to send support?” Have you not read that God cared for 600,000 men, plus women and children and a mixed multitude, for forty years in the wilderness. They were in a closed system. They had only God to supply their needs. He sent them bread from heaven, and caused water to flow from the rocks. He sent a wind and caused quail to fall all around the camp.

Do you have faith that this is your God? He is the one who caused the widow’s cruse of oil and jar of grain to never run dry in a time of great famine. Elijah was fed by the Brook Cherith as ravens were instructed by God to bring him his daily bread. Christ fed 5,000 with five loaves and two fish. Another time He fed 4,000 with seven loaves of bread and some fish. We serve a God who can put a coin in a fish’s mouth to pay the Temple tax, and who turns pitchers of water into fine wine.

There was once a widow of a prophet who was in desperate need. She and her children were about to be sold into slavery to pay off a debt. Elisha instructed her to gather as many empty vessels as she could find, and to take the little oil she had in a container and pour it into the empty vessels. She was told to gather many jars. This she did. When she began pouring oil into the jars it continued to flow. When there were no more vessels left, the flow of oil stopped. She returned to Elisha and he told her to sell the oil to pay her debt and to live off of the remainder. This is the God I serve. His arm is not shortened where it cannot save.

When people ask me “What would happen if we all quit our jobs like you did?” they need to consider how I quit my job. I did not leave work of my own initiative. Yahweh instructed me to do so. When we are following Him in obedience, God will be the guarantor of every need.

In the days ahead, others will be directed to leave jobs and look to God for their provision. Some will have the experience thrust upon them as businesses fail and new jobs are not to be found. No matter how God leads His saints into such experiences, He will prove Himself faithful to those who trust in Him. Don’t be presumptuous and foolishly put God to the test, but neither should you hesitate to follow where He leads. Above all things, Yahweh is faithful. He has promised to never abandon nor forsake His sons and daughters.

On a personal level, I have much anticipation for the year ahead. I have often shared that vehicles represent ministries. The bus Yahweh provided for me has an identification plate that says “Body by Carpenter.” The bus was manufactured in 1972. It will be forty years old in 2012. Forty is a very significant number. It is closely related to wilderness experiences, and to the life of Moses.

Moses’ life is divided into three forty year periods. The first forty years Moses lived as the privileged son of Pharaoh’s daughter. He had the best education, and all that the greatest nation on earth could provide. At the age of forty his heart turned to his kinsman, and he longed to deliver them. He slew a single Egyptian and then fled for his life.

For the next forty years Moses dwelt in the wilderness. His life was as humble as it had once been grand. He tended the sheep of his father-in-law. Instead of the bounty of the Nile River delta, he experienced the barrenness of the wilderness.

When Moses was eighty years old, Yahweh appeared to him in the burning bush. He revealed to Moses that he was God's chosen instrument to deliver His people from bondage in Egypt, and to guide them to the land of their inheritance. For the last forty years of Moses' life, he led the people of God through the wilderness. Moses had spent forty years being humbled of God in the wilderness, and now he would serve as a guide as Yahweh led a much larger group through similar experiences.

Deuteronomy 8:2-5

"You shall remember all the way which Yahweh your God has led you in the wilderness these forty years, that He might humble you, testing you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of Yahweh. Your clothing did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years. Thus you are to know in your heart that Yahweh your God was disciplining you just as a man disciplines his son."

I believe these words reveal a pattern for the days ahead. Many are about to be led through wilderness places. Yahweh will humble them, and test them, revealing what is in the heart. He will care for them, and keep them in these wilderness experiences. There will be occasions when He lets them know hunger and thirst, or some form of lack to prove whether obedience to Yahweh is more important than their natural appetites and human fears. Those who continue in faith will be made ready to enter into their inheritance in Christ.

With my bus turning forty this year, is the Father indicating that the ministry of guiding and encouraging His people in the wilderness is at hand? Is it time to take the "Body by Carpenter" and fashion it into a fit habitation?

II Corinthians 6:16

For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people."

I cannot say with certainty what 2012 will bring. The future is behind me. (Yes, you read that right.) At the end of 2012 I will be able to tell you with much greater assurance what the year holds. The past will then be before my eyes.

End Note: Thank you for all those who have written words of encouragement and have assured me of their prayers regarding the revision of the book *Sarah's Children*. The outpouring of encouragement has been abundant. I broke through the impasse yesterday, and I am now making good progress in writing. I was led to begin again anew. Rather than being a revision, it will be a completely new book. I believe that which comes forth will be to the glory of God and the edification of His saints.