

From Egypt to the Promised Land
(Deut. 10)

For Israel, this was a reality many years ago. But for the believer in YAHSHUA, this is a spiritual journey. To leave Egypt is to leave the world and its life style behind to follow the new life in Christ, to be immersed in the waters of the "Red Sea", a symbol of water baptism, which means dying to self and be resurrected with Christ, as we emerge from the water. This experience will lead us to the desert of the spiritual life where we will be sanctified by the Holy Spirit, as we travel through the desert learning to leave everything pertaining to the world, to embrace the faith and hope in our Savior. Our journey will seem longer at times, when circumstances will be against our plans and dreams; when sickness will engulf the life of our loved ones; it will be as if we were lost and alone in the vast desert of life. The lesser of self we carry, the easier the journey will be. Our paths need to be firm and our focus on our guide, YAHSHUA. When Israel left Egypt, the first challenges they faced were the Red Sea and at the same time, the Egyptian army. But Moses encouraged the people by saying, don't be afraid. Stand firm and see the Lord's salvation. He will provide for you today; for the Egyptians you see today, you will never see again; the Lord will fight for you; you must be quiet (Exodus 14:13-14). This encouragement is so much needed today! As Moses encouraged the people of Israel, so the Holy Spirit also encourages us; we need to be still to hear His words of comfort and hope, to be able to press on, just like Israel who didn't give up at the first challenges. In our persistence we too will experience and witness the miracles.

After YAHSHUA'S baptism, (not that He needed for the reason we do, but as a testimony to the world that He was the Messiah), He was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the Devil (Matt. 4:1). After finished with His fast of forty days and forty nights He felt hungry; that's when the Devil showed up to tempt Him at the point of His need of food. How convenient it was for the Devil to tempt Him with the transformation of stones into bread, also presenting a condition, "if You are the Son of God"! The second temptation was also presented with the same condition, "If You are the Son of God throw Yourself down. For it is written: He will give His angels orders concerning you, and they will support you with their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone (Matt. 4:5-6). All these temptations are plainly absurdity and stupidity; the third, was what brought him down from heaven- wanting to be like God. Here he invites YAHSHUA, to fall down and worship him. YAHSHUA resisted the entire Devil's temptations with the written word of YAHWEH found in Deuteronomy. The desert place is the most convenient place for the Devil to tempt everyone. But for us born again we do have the instructions how to overcome Him: (1) submit to God (2) resist him with the word of YAHWEH and he will flee from us (James 4:7). He will come to us as an angel of light with Bible verses to convince us, but he is the darkness, the spirit of lie, he is a deceiver; in him there is no truth. If we are not equipped with the word of God as the sword of the Spirit to fight Him, we will fall prey to him. The armor of YAHWEH must be applied all the time we are traveling to our heavenly home. Remember what Peter said, Be sober! Be alert! Your adversary the Devil is prowling around like a roaring lion, looking for anyone he can devour; resist him, firm in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are being experienced by your brothers in the world (1 Peter 5: 8). Keep the doors closed to him and his demons.

Like the Israelites, who were called to inherit the earthly Promised Land, a land cared by our Lord, Whose eyes are always upon it from the beginning of the year to the end of the year (v.12), we too are chosen to inherit the heavenly Promised Land, where there is no sin, no pain and no sorrow; complete with the presence of YAHSHUA radiating peace, everlasting peace and joy. With no comparison to any land in this world, although Jerusalem, where the beginning of time started, where the most important prophecies will be fulfilled and have been fulfilled in YAHSHUA, a city called the City of our Great King, will be elevated above all cities when YAHSHUA comes to reign in righteousness and justice from there. It will be called the New Jerusalem then. It will come down from heaven from God, all arrayed like a bride beautified and adorned for her husband (Rev. 21:2). The place YAHSHUA is preparing for those who believe in Him- Jews, and Gentiles. This a good reason to consider His words, Let not your hearts be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me; in My Father's house there are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I am going away to prepare a place for you; and when I go and make ready a place for you, I will come back again and will take you to Myself, that where I am you may be also (John 14:1-3).

We know that this desert we are traveling through is not our permanent home, as it was not for Israel. Even though many of us tend to make this place our permanent place by getting attached to the transitory things of this life, which cause the losing focus of the eternal goal. We fail to consider the fact that nothing is worth giving our life for. The only sacrifice we ought to make that will count to eternity is the one we make for YAHSHUA. We must gird our loins not to be entangled with frivolous and empty acts that lead us to nowhere; we must redeem the time, using it for the kingdom of God. The Jordan River lies ahead of us before we have to cross it, if we are to enter the Promised Land. It will be the time to dispose of all that pertains to the world, to be completely sanctified- made whole and pure to meet our Lord. The Holy Spirit is ever willing to work in us preparing us as He travels with us leading us to our heavenly destination. He transforms us from glory to glory as we let Him take control of our life day by day. The spiritual growth is a slow and painful process for many of us who will not deny self and the life of Egypt to live a holy life. Since the gate to heaven is a narrow one, those who desire to enter it with all the bags of the world, after a long journey through the desert, will not be able to go through the narrow gate. The Lord God desires for His church as He desired for Israel, that we fear Him, that we walk in His ways to love Him and to serve Him with all our mind and heart and with our entire being (Deut. 10:12). There are no short cuts to enter heaven; YAHSHUA'S sacrifice was not cut short; He suffered every detail there was for Him to suffer in order to save us. What are we to do, if not to live for Him? For our sake, God made Christ to be sin, Who knew no sin, so that in and through Him we might become the righteousness of God (II Cor. 5:21). To Him was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with a rich man in His death, although He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth; yet, it was the will of the Lord to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief and made Him sick (Isaiah 53:9,10a); the Lord has made to light upon Him the guilt and iniquity of us all (Isaiah 53: 6b). For sin to be conquered, YAHSHUA had to become sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God, and be acceptable in right relationship with Him.

“The way to the cross will lead us home” when we can say, I am crucified with Christ, live not I, but Christ lives in Me; when we no longer carry the superfluous and unnecessary things in our bags to the Promised Land. The Lord promised His presence to go with Israel through the hard desert; He also promised not to leave us forsaken in our travel through the desert of life. I am with you, He said, always to the end of time; when we finally meet Him on the other side of the Jordan River, we will say, It was worth at all! The troubles behind us, the glory revealed to us, home at last!