



MJM'S TEAM VOICE NEWSLETTER

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## **WE ARE WORKS IN PROGRESS**

I am so untroubled when I give thought to the fact that my journey in my Christian growth is not over. It would be sad indeed, and give a great feeling of incompleteness, if this was the highest level of faith and understanding I could achieve. All of us are "works in progress". We all started somewhere on this journey being born again and growing both in knowledge and faith in and of our Lord and God.

As Paul says in Ephesians 2:19-22 (NASB)

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner *stone*, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

But, do not become complacent and think you have arrived and are among the wise, for as it is said in 1 Corinthians 3:18-20; (NASB)

Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you thinks that he is wise in this age, he must become foolish, so that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness before God. For it is written, "*He is the one who catches the wise in their craftiness*"; and again, "*The Lord knows the reasonings of the wise, that they are useless.*"

Our Lord does not think highly of those who think highly of themselves, but that could be another talk in itself.

Peter's letter in 2 Peter 1 (CJB)

From: Shim'on Kefa (Peter's Hebrew name.), a slave and emissary of Yeshua (Jesus) the Messiah

To: Those who, through the righteousness of our God and of our Deliverer Yeshua the Messiah, have been given the same kind of trust as ours:

May grace and *shalom* be yours in full measure, as you come to a full knowledge of God and Yeshua our Lord. God's power has given us everything we need for life and godliness, through our knowing the One who called us to his own glory and goodness. By these he has given us valuable and superlatively great promises, so that through them you might come to share in God's nature and escape the corruption which evil desires have brought into the world.

For this very reason, try your hardest to furnish your faith with goodness, goodness with knowledge, knowledge with self-control, self-control with perseverance, perseverance with godliness, godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if you have these qualities in abundance, they keep you from being barren and unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah. Indeed, whoever lacks them is blind, so shortsighted that he forgets that his past sins have been washed away. Therefore, brothers, try even harder to make your being called and chosen a certainty. For if you keep doing this, you will never stumble. Thus you will be generously supplied with everything you need to enter the eternal Kingdom of our Lord and Deliverer, Yeshua the Messiah.

We have more reason than the unbelievers to not become discouraged by this life's worries and troubles for as is written in 2 Corinthians 4:16-18 (CJB),

This is why we do not lose courage. Though our outer self is heading for decay, our inner self is being renewed daily. For our light and transient troubles are achieving for us an everlasting glory whose weight is beyond description. We concentrate not on what is seen but on what is not seen, since things seen are temporary, but things not seen are eternal.

Heavenly Father, thank you for the awakening so I can heartily say, thank you for the growth. Hallelujah to that name above all names, Jesus the Christ.

Always looking up,  
gt

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### THE PASTOR AND THE GOSSIP

*There was a pastor whom a well-known gossip came to for help. The gossip confessed he had spread some tale that inadvertently resulted in people being hurt and was sorry it turned out that way. He wanted to know what he could do to take it back and make it right.*

*The pastor told the man, "Take a fowl and walk to the top of the hill. On your way down pluck the feathers and throw them to the wind. When you get to the bottom, go up again and pick up every feather and put it back. That is about as much chance as you have of fixing a rumor once it has been started. "*

### **What in the world is the Jewish Holiday of Lag Ba'Omer?**

That was my question many years ago! This holiday falls on May 26<sup>th</sup> this year. First you have to start with the counting of the Omer. **The Omer are forty-nine days between the holiday of Passover and the holiday of Shavuot.**

Also known as *Sefirat HaOmer* (Counting the Omer), these forty-nine days are counted aloud during evening services. First the service leader recites a special blessing that goes: "Blessed are You, Lord our God, Ruler of the Universe, who has commanded us to count the Omer." Then the congregation responds by saying: "Today is the third day [or fifth or thirtieth] day in the Omer."

**Lag Ba'Omer (the 33<sup>rd</sup> day in the counting)** is a happy holiday but no one is sure what it celebrates. The Talmud mentions a plague that is thought to have killed 24,000 of Rabbi Akiva's students during one Omer, and some think that Lag Ba'Omer is a celebration because the plague abated on the 33<sup>rd</sup> day. Another idea is that Lag Ba'Omer is connected to Rabbi Akiva's support of Simon Bar Kokhba, a Jewish rebel leader against Rome. The Romans responded to Bar Kokhba's revolt with incredible brutality, but it is possible that Lag Ba'Omer was a day when either the Jews won a victory or there was a brief respite from the violence. (Ultimately, Bar Kokhba's rebellion failed.) The military connection is supported by the tradition of taking children to open fields to play with toy bows and arrows on Lag Ba'Omer.

The Omer as a whole is a time of mourning, except on Lag Ba'Omer marriages can be performed, children are taken to parks to play, and people often gather for large bonfires. The fires represent the light of the Torah.



*From the desk of one completed Jew,  
Robin Tamburino (wife of GT) 05/23/2016*

## GOD, WHERE ARE YOU?

Barri Seif

It seems as though we cannot even go one month without a major tragedy striking our country or our world. This week, it was the tragedy of the loss of the Egyptian airliner; last month, it was the anniversary of the bombing at the Boston Marathon. A few years ago, it was terrorist activity in a luxury hotel Mumbai, India. Last month, it was terrorist activity in Israel.

If we were honest, we would admit that we are overwhelmed and distraught with the amount of destruction, terror and evil that seems to permeate our society. Even for the staunchest optimist, questions arise about evil and suffering.

If one is afraid of earthquakes, one can relocate from California, only to find that the weather elements in the new environment can provide more destruction than an earthquake. One wonders if one can even attend a movie without wearing a flak jacket. I must admit that I took it for granted for all of the public venues that I have gone to in the past year, I did even think about facing a terrorist situation. This even included the time spent in Israel this past year and in past years.

People often ask after these horrendous situations occur, “where was God in all of this?” “God, where are You?” “Why did You allow this to happen?” For many of us, we will have to get the answers to these provocative questions in heaven. However, the Bible does give us some answers. God has given man the choice to either follow and obey, or disobey and pay the consequences. We as humans, with our finite minds, will never be able to understand our infinite God. How can we stand in the place of judgment? Often times, what we think is hopeless, is just another opportunity for God to show His miracle working power and bring forth wonderful results.

**When the wicked rise, men hide themselves; But when they perish, the righteous increase. – Proverbs 28:28**

When I hear about the destruction that man brings upon another man or child, I want to hide. At times, I want to take the ostrich position and just put my head in the sand and forget about all of the pain in the world. However, I know that this is not the heart of God.

One of the most encouraging passages in the Bible is about Elijah in 1 Kings Chapter 19. Elijah was despondent and depressed. He had just faced the mighty victory when God showed up for him during the confrontation with the prophets of Baal. Read about this mighty victory and miracle that God gave to Elijah in [1 Kings chapter 18](#).

We know that the mountaintop feeling of victory does not last. How quickly the depression come upon Elijah. He finds himself depressed, fearful, alone and running away. Do you ever feel like Elijah? I do, probably more often than I would like to admit. He stated to God “It is enough; now, O LORD, take my life, for I am not better than my fathers.” (1 Kings 19:4). He slept and an angel appeared to him and encouraged him to eat, which he did. He slept again and the angel came to him a second time and told him to eat. He then traveled forty days and forty nights in the power of that food and rest.



Elijah came to a cave and the word of the LORD came to him saying “what are you doing here, Elijah?” (1 Kings 19:9) Elijah replied, “I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the sons of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars and killed Your prophets with the sword. And I alone am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.” (Verse 10)

Elijah’s cry is our cry. LORD, we have been zealous for You, O God of hosts! Man has forsaken Your covenant, man has trampled Your name. Only we are left and the enemy seeks our lives to destroy us!

The LORD then had Elijah go stand on the mountain and a great and strong wind came. I cannot even imagine how Elijah was able to stand during those times of strong wind. It must have been like a tornado wind. The wind actually broke the rocks. Yet we are told that the LORD was not in the wind. Then, an earthquake occurred. We are told that the LORD was not in the earthquake either. Fire came and it must have been worse than any of the California or forest fires that we have seen as of late. Yet the LORD was not in the fire either. Finally, all that was heard was the sound of a gentle blowing (verse 12).

We must be encouraged to note that the LORD is not in the tornadoes or the hurricanes or the fires or the terrorist activities. We live in a fallen world and God has given us the choice to either follow Him or do our own thing. However, even today, the gentle blowing, the still small voice is there, louder than ever. The still small voice is the peace that the first responders give. The still small voice is the prayers of the saints, interceding for those who have faced dire tragedy and suffering. The still small voice is the care that the doctors and the nurses and the triage specialists give to the suffering. The still small voice is God’s booming voice, calling out to His children to pray, to care, to intercede, to love.

**Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus the Messiah, Yeshua HaMashiach, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For just as the sufferings of Messiah Christ are ours in abundance, so also our comfort is abundant through Messiah Yeshua Jesus. – 2 Corin. 1:3-5**

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