

The Season of the Seventh Month - Who am I, my struggles and how it's affected my faith.

1. Struggles
2. Faith
3. And the blessed hope realized in renewed vision

Accounting for our lives and the days of this past year!

Who are we? How shall we live? What chapter will we write in the Book of Life?

Gen 32; Jacob fled the Land of Israel to escape from Esau - sometimes we have to 'go down' in order to 'go up!' Jacob returned only when he was sufficiently stronger to conquer the land from Esau.

Gen 33:9 and Esau said, I have a lot, my brother; keep that thou hast unto thyself.

Gen 33:11 Take, I pray thee, my blessing that is brought to thee; because God hath dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough. And he urged him, and he took it.

What's remarkable here is the difference between Esau's, "*I have a lot*" and Jacob's, "*I have enough*." The tension here in the language epitomizes the root of human friction.

Jacob had '*enough*,' whatever he needed, but Esau spoke arrogantly, '*I have a lot*' - much more than I need.

Esau thinks in quantitive terms of acquisition, competition and materialism - he's not satisfied in his measure, he's always looking for more to step into - someone else's measure - to acquire more.

Jacob's encounter with Esau and the angel of יהוה in which he was tested and overcame were a prerequisite before Jacob was able to travel onto Sukkoth!

Gen 33:16 So Esau returned that day on his way unto Seir. 17 And Jacob journeyed to Succoth, and built him an house, and made booths for his cattle: therefore the name of the place is called Succoth.

"Remember us for life, King who delights in life, and write us in the Book of Life for Your sake, יהוה of life".

“Teach us to number our days”, says the Psalm, **“that we may get a heart of wisdom”**. So any day on which you have done some good to someone has not been wasted.

‘mashber’, ‘crisis’: the Hebrew word for ‘crisis’ is ‘mashber’, which also means a ‘birthing-stool’. Because in the bible crises are not just opportunities; they are birth-pangs. Something new is being born. Even the Chinese ideogram for ‘crisis’ means ‘opportunity’.

The bible shows us that sometimes one will *râtsats* with another to get the blessing. רצץ Resh, Ayin, Zadee. Gen. 25.22.

râtsats means to crack, break, bruise, crush, to discourage, even oppress another.

How to deal with crisis. Wrestle with it, refuse to let it go until it blesses you, until you emerge stronger, better or wiser than you were before.

To be an on-fire believer is not to accept defeat - be a Jacob; be an Israelite.

“Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak”.

We are Israel, **“One who struggles with Elohim and with man and prevails”**.

“I will not let you go until you bless me”.

Within every crisis *lies the possibility of blessing!*

It's not what happens to us on which our happiness depends. It depends on how we *respond* to what happens to us that matters.

Exo 31:16 the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant.

35:2 Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day there shall be to you an holy day, a sabbath of rest to יהוה : whosoever doeth work therein shall be put to death.

The blessing that Sabbath keeping brings. Moshe gave the people a command, the command of Shabbat before and immediately after the Golden Calf. *Why that command, then?*

Because Shabbat is the *antidote* to the Golden Calf because it's the day when we stop thinking about the *price of things* and focus instead on *the value of things*.

Shift to the things that are important but not urgent.....

Shabbat and the Feasts for me are a time where I get to manifest "***You shall love יהוה your Elohim with all your heart, all your soul and all your might***".

Failure: *Don't be afraid of it!*

We learn to Forgive. *This is the emotional equivalent of losing excess weight!*

I've found my faith must strive to place love at the heart of my spiritual life: ***Love the יהוה your Elohim with all your heart, all your soul and all your might. Love your neighbor. Love the stranger.***

Paul was drawing from this when he said, ***If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a ringing gong or a clanging cymbal.***

Exo 19:16 And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick clouds upon the mount.

When Israel built the Golden Calf the enveloping clouds departed from them!

When did they reappear?

Only after they'd been forgiven at Yom Kippur. So the Sukkah, which is what the clouds were, a sukkah symbolize the repentance of the children of Israel and YHWH's covering forgiveness!

This year let Sukkoth be a place of YHWH's covering forgiveness for you and for me because this is truly the purpose of sukkoth after Yom Kippur!