

The Awakening

This is my personal story of the awakening of the Ruach/Spirit of YaHuWaH in my life which begins sometime in the late 50's.

I was born in rural Michigan; the son of Lynn and Loretta Cramer, in the Roman year of 1949. At the age of about 7 I became friends with the son of the pastor of the local Church of Christ. I started attending Sunday school and church there and this was my first encounter with "religion".

Although my parents kept Christmas and Easter, it was only on a secular level. As far as my memory goes back, I do not remember either of my parents attending church and the only times I remember them going to a church was either for a wedding or funeral, (which some will claim are the same). One of the things I can really remember impressing me as a child was the pins and ribbons worn by those who attended faithfully every week. I decided I wanted to be able to wear these "honors" as well so I made it a point to go to church each and every Sunday morn. I was baptized in 1959 to the best of my recollection, and over the span of six years received my first year pin; the second year wreath; and four yearly ribbons for a total of 6 years without missing a Sunday, although there were a few weeks where I attended church in another town when I stayed with friends and/or relatives.

By the age of 15 I was in Jr. high school and running with a different crowd. I lost focus on religion altogether and started living the life of a prodigal. By the time I finished high school I was a corrupt being, living after the lusts of the flesh, with no thought concerning my spiritual future. In fact, my life style was heading on a one way path towards destruction.

A year and a half after graduation I received my call from Uncle Sam, ordering my service in the U.S. Army, which would begin in the third month of 1969. Less than two years after the Detroit riots; and racial tensions were still running very strong for those in the major cities, especially among

the blacks. Because I lived a very isolated life in the country, this thing of racial strife was unfamiliar to me, but I learned quickly at the induction center, and especially on the bus trip from Detroit to Ft. Knox, Ky. as there were only 5 other white boys on the bus of approx. 30 going down. The only thing which prevented any outbreak of hostilities against us was the fact that we were escorted by a staff sergeant who kept everyone inline. BTW. He too was black.

In basic training I was assaulted by three blacks who were intent on doing me great bodily harm, and in fact; had me on the ground beating and kicking me, when I felt the one who was on my chest lifted up off me and giving me the break I needed to get to my feet again and start fighting back. It turned out that the fellow who had lifted the one off my chest was also a black man. I will not forget his generous deed as long as I live, and from that moment in time George and I became very close friends. Although he was in another platoon in our company, we often took meals together, and as fate would have it, we were both held over after basic training. We spent two weeks in the company waiting for our orders which; when they finally came, assigned us both to Ft. Polk, La. in the infantry. Again fate was for us, as we both ended up going instead to truck driving training. We eventually ended up assigned to an engineering company in Thailand. Ironically; we ended up at a base which was having great racial problems, but because we were friends, his friends of color accepted me, and my friends who were white accepted him. I will just mention also that by this time I was steep into smoking pot, as most of those of each race represented (blacks; white; Hispanic; Asiatic; etc.) also were somewhere in the drug scene. Because we were able to get along together on that level, the racial strife ended and that was so obvious to our battalion commander that he called a 'special' formation one day in the compound to acknowledge this and express his appreciation. It was perhaps for this reason that many "cases" were overlooked. At any rate; the whole camp enjoyed a more peaceable atmosphere.

It was during this time that I also began to question religion altogether. I purchased a set of books from the px which gave an overview of all the major religions of the world, and I read them every chance I could.

Eventually coming to the conclusion that truth lay somewhere between Christianity and Judaism. At this time I also considered the fact that even though I had spent all those years in church, I had never read the Scriptures except for the memory verses. So I purchased my first KJ bible, which I proceeded to read from cover to cover. I had many questions concerning what I had read, for what I had read was not what the churches taught. I read my KJ through the first time in approx. 5 months. Realizing I had many questions which I had not found answers to in the 'new' covenant; I re-read the Scriptures again from cover to cover, this time making notes of all those things which I had questions on.

At this point I think I should clarify something. We did have a chaplain in our battalion, but on the first (and last) service I attended, he advised all the young men to make sure they took condoms to town whenever we left base. Now my years in church had taught me one thing, that sex outside of marriage is a sin, so hearing someone who was supposed to represent The Almighty condone sin automatically threw up red flags. Thus I did not feel this person qualified to explain Scriptures to me.

My tour overseas was cut short, as I had applied for an extension of three months to my tour in order to arrive back in The States with less than five months before discharge. At that time, anyone coming back with less than five months was automatically discharged upon arrival back in The States. Because my tour was cut short I ended up stationed in N. Carolina for the remainder of my tour, where I completed my re-reading of The Scriptures.

I was able to go home to Mich. about once a month and was making plans to marry the girl whom I had met over a year before I was drafted. Also; by this time I was keeping the seventh day Sabbath; eating "clean" meats; and just beginning to understand The Feasts outlined in what is called The Torah. I got my discharge in the third month of 1971. **This is an important date, particularly the year, which will become evident later.** By the sixth month we were married by her pastor, who invited us to attend 'his' church. I told him I had some questions I would like to have answered and he invited me to meet him after services next Sunday. I attended his services that day, and after he had finished shaking hands with his entire

congregation, he took us into his office where I took out my two pages; written front and back with questions which I wanted explained. After my third question I was told to leave and never come back, which I had not intended to do at any rate. I have many times wished I had kept that list of questions, but over the many years, I lost track of those papers, but I do remember that the question which caused my ejection. I had asked why they kept the first day holy when The Scripture distinctly tells us to keep the seventh day as a day of rest. Of course he told me that this was changed by Jes-s' death. My next question was the one which upset him, and that was; 'where does it say that in The Scriptures?'

At this point I also need to explain another thing. You see; while I understood that there were no Scriptures justifying not keeping Sabbath; or any other of the Torah commands which I had seen, I had not yet had The Name above all names given to me. Not being a student of Hebrew, I did not realize that The Name is there, if we will read the Hebrew texts. So I continued to call The Almighty One, g-d. And didn't know any better!

Now to continue the story of my calling; I spent that first summer (1971) keeping Sabbath with my new wife. Still reading and studying Scriptures without the guidance of 'man'. But I had found a church which understood The Scriptures much the same as I understood them. I had even contacted them to see if they had any congregations in my area. After about 5 months of waiting for word from them a pastor finally came to visit one Sabbath afternoon. At that time I was at my dad's house helping him with his furnace, which had gone out and needed worked on as the weather was cold. So when I met the pastor, here was this 'new' believer with fuel oil soot on his hands, on the Sabbath. His first question was; "what day is this?" I told him it was the Sabbath, he then asked me why I was working on the Sabbath. I told him my dad's furnace had gone out and I was helping him with it, for it was "an ox in the ditch". I believe this took him back some and he proceeded to ask me many questions concerning what I believed. When I told him I understood The Scriptures to say that we are to keep all the commands outlined in Exodus, and many others listed in the first five Books, we discussed these for some time. By the end of our conversation he told me that the closest congregation was in Toledo, Oh.

And if I wanted I was welcomed to attend. Before leaving he gave me the time and address and I spent the following week in great anticipation. When Sabbath finally came, I left plenty early as I was not sure if I could find the place easily, but his directions were great and I got there with no problem.

Now it is imperative that I tell you that this was 'The Worldwide Church of G-d' and it is Dec. 1971. Anyone who is familiar with Worldwide at that time knows that very few were invited to attend after the first visit, and that it was church policy to have 'greeters' man the doors, to turn back those not invited. When I was asked if I had received an invitation from the pastor I answered in the affirmative. When they asked me how long I had been in counselling I told them I had only been visited once and they were all taken aback as this was apparently something which seldom happened. Let me just say, this was not my doing, but was totally from the Ruach/Spirit which had led me into so much understanding.

I attended Worldwide faithfully for over 20 years, and in 1994, when the pastor generalship passed to Joseph Tkach Jr.; who commenced to doing away with the Laws; the Sabbath; and the Feasts, there was at first a small group of us who continued to meet every Sabbath to discuss these changes. Eventually; this group fell apart and in 2002 I too stopped attending. Now it is important to realize that before all these changes came about, the Toledo church of Worldwide was meeting on the seventh day in a Sunday keeping church. Because so many had dropped out of Worldwide due to these changes, they could not afford to change their venue so they were tied into keeping the seventh day, which is the only reason I continued to meet with them; hoping all along that somehow they would find their way back to what was Right. But by 2002 there was only one other family who was as determined as I to keep the seventh day Sabbath. Because I was driving close to 100 miles roundtrip and because we were being pressured to 'conform', I decided to quit.

While still caught up in the "Christian" aspect of Worldwide I started interacting with other Christian organizations, and taking my sons to Christian concerts. At one of these my oldest son went forward to "accept

Christ". This was a very moving event for me as I wanted both of my sons to come to know their Savior. Because of the elation I felt at seeing my son "saved", and because I wanted to see other youth turn their lives around and away from the satanic pulls of this generation, I started working at setting up a Christian concert in Hillsdale County, Michigan. I had a young man who promised to work at getting sponsors while I worked at putting together the bands and venue. When it came time to start putting up the funds for this I found out that the young man had lied to me and had not gotten even one sponsor. I went forward with this in the hopes that the concert would at least break even, but to my dismay, not one local church encouraged it's youth to attend and so I ended up with a debt of over 18,000 dollars. Thankfully; the president of the bank where I did my business allowed me to put this on my home equity and thus prevent me from bankruptcy, but the burden of that debt still hangs over me to this day. And as if I had not learned my lesson the first time; a young woman who claimed to represent a youth organization of the Methodist church promised to get sponsors for me and I made the same mistake all over again, only this time I had scaled back the costs and after all was said and done, I was only out 8,000 dollars, which too went on my home equity.

It was at this time that I realized that I was not to be looking towards Christians and theirs beliefs for help and so I gave up all ties to Christianity. Thus ended 2002!

For the next four years I kept Sabbath, and the moedim/feast days by myself, with my two sons. At that time I had no internet, and no idea that there were now many "Messianic" congregations across America. I happened to catch a program on local TV put on by a Messianic Jewish congregation in Toledo and so I decided to start attending with them, but because they taught there was a Torah for the Jew and a separate Torah for the gentile, I knew better than this and so only attended on two or three occasions. It was about this time that I also came to know that The Almighty One has a Name and that HIS Name is very important to HIM and to those who wish to honor HIM. I started praying fervently for HIM to show me some other believers in my area with whom I could fellowship and I was led to a Messianic site in which people could contact others and I placed

my name therein. Within about 3 weeks I was contacted by a Brother who lived about 24 miles from me, and we decided to start meeting together on erev Shabbat/ Friday evening by Roman time. He then located another individual who lived about 40 miles from us and then there were three of us. Before long we had around 10 people meeting on a regular basis, taking turns meeting in one another's homes. Because I was the only one who had been keeping the moedim, I took it upon myself to set up our first moed together; Shavuot!

We continued to grow until by 2008 we had about 15 adults and 8 children. It was about this time that division began to creep in. Because I had taken it upon myself to host the moeds of Pesach/Chag Matzoh; Shavuot; and Yom Teruah (Yom Kippurim I kept alone and Sukkoth I generally found other larger groups to meet with) I had been assigned as zakan/elder by Brother Greg, who was far more educated than I but because of health problems, limited in what he could do. This did not set well with some of the others, who apparently had not read what the requirements of an elder are. To add to the divisive attitude; some decided to start following so-called Torah teachers who didn't even follow the Torah of the Third Commandment; which is; "Do not bring The Name of YHWH to naught".

Brother Greg is the only one who has continued to befriend me through all this, and is the only one left with whom I feel as close as a brother to. I have met with others who walk the same path as I, but we are few and very much scattered. Abba YaHuWaH has blessed me in the past six years in the friendship; fellowship; and brotherly love of Brother's Walter and John. Although they live just outside of Detroit, we try to get together as often as possible. Sadly; Brother John got caught up in other things and Br. Walter died this past spring (2020). For the past year and a half I have been meeting with Br. Dean who lives about 18 miles from me and I continue to hope and pray for others to come into the knowledge and understanding of Torah principles.

Another one of the things which has separated me from so many others is my view of keeping the Pesach. The Torah gives very explicit

instructions for the keeping of Pesach. In fact; there are two sets of instructions. In Shemoth/Exodus 12 we are given the first; which it must be understood, was given to Yashra-El while they were in exile in Egypt. The second set of instructions we find in Deut. 16 where we see instructions given according to the presence of the Tabernacle (and later the Temple). Since neither one of these exists here on earth any longer, we need to look to the instructions for the exiles, since that is where we find ourselves today.

My walk has been an awakening to Torah. It is not something which YaHuWaH has shown me all at once, for which I am thankful, for I may have been overwhelmed, but just as the schlichim/apostles decided to not over burden the new believers in diaspora, Abba YAH has called me to understanding a little at a time. But one thing I have learned from this awakening; when Abba YAH shows us something in Torah, we must walk in faith in obedience and if we do, HE can and will show us the next "layer".

My walk is still far from over, yet I am comfortable with that, as I now know that I will not fully understand Torah until The Messiah HIMself returns to teach us personally, a day I am looking forward to. May it come quickly!

Because of the failure of any Christian church or individual to come to my aid with substantial financial help in my time of desperation (I was then a single father raising two teen age sons); I no longer consider myself any part of their "religion". I abhor being associated with any christian organization because I have come to see that their 'christ' is not The Son of Elohim. They follow a person who is anti-Torah, and rebelled against Father YaH's Set-Apart Law. They have accepted the teachings of Marcion; Tertullian; and Ignatius, all of whom have preached anti-Semitism; and anti-Torah. Who have propagated hatred for Jews and anything Jewish, and mixed the pure Faith of The Natzerim with the pagan practices of Babylon. I no longer consider such as my friends, but if they are open to receiving truth, I will and do associate with such.

I have attended many different "Messianic" fellowships over the years. Some have been little more than "churches" who understand the

importance of using the True Names of our Elohim and keeping the seventh day Shabbat. Some have kept the Shabbat but still mix the pagan titles for the True Names; and some have two sets of “Laws”/Torah, one for the Jew and a different Law for the gentile. (Even to the point of allowing the ‘gentile’ to keep x-mass.)

I find myself in a very isolated circumstance as there are very few who follow the “sky signs” outlined in Gen./Bereshith 1:14 for establishing the set times for the moedim. And while I do not claim to have all understanding of Scriptures, I do recognize that it is only through the Ruach HaKodesh that real discernment and wisdom comes to us. And as such; I refuse to go against what the Ruach has led me to understand and believe, lest I grieve the Ruach and thus cause the departure of the Ruach from my life.

I praise YaHuaH for opening my eyes and writing upon my heart His Torah; for giving me an “Awakening”! I stand ready to serve in any capacity He leads me and in which I am able to serve, and I look forward to the day when He sends the “latter day EliYaHu” to lead us all into unity and a thorough understanding of His Torah, and all that makes up His halacha.

Baruch haba BeShem Mar YaH!