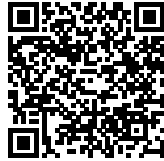




NAHUM THE CARPENTER: A TALE OF THE FIRST CENTURY

Posted on May 1, 2018 by John Thomas Percival



Nahum is my name, my two older sisters are Zilpah and Ilana, my younger brother is Amos. I am living in Jericho with my wife Ruth and two sons, Ezra and Ezekiel.

I am writing this on a Saturday and it is taking me a long time, you see I had to work in my father's leather shop when I was thirteen and I have not had much schooling! I am scribing this on a thin piece of leather and will seal it in a clay jar, I hope someone will find it someday and ask for forgiveness for me for my weakness and my betrayal.

You see, yesterday, Friday, they crucified Jesus and I was part of the crowd yelling NAIL HIM, NAIL HIM!!!

After he was crucified the curtain in the synagogue was torn down the centre, and then the earth went dark! When that darkness came over Jerusalem I too was hit by a cloud of darkness and I was actually struck dumb and unable to speak or even move for over an hour. It was a feeling of total regret and utter humiliation and I believe it was a message from God.

Let me give you some background. I am a shoemaker, I make and repair all types of leather and twine items, but I really like to make sandals. I once gave a pair to Jesus when he came near my little shop!

My father was also a shoemaker; and he went to the synagogue every Sabbath and took his two boys when we were old enough. When he died, I was 18, I must admit I have not attended synagogue on a regular basis, I am now 38.

About once a month the Rabbis and treasurers call on me, urging me to attend and to bring my sons. When I give them a few shekels they leave me alone.

One day I was working outside my shop, under a sycamore tree when in the distance I noticed some dust rising as a group was walking in my direction.

I had heard from customers that a man by the name of Jesus was marching around preaching and performing miracles, I was very curious so I dropped my awls and needles and went to see what was happening.

The procession had stopped and Jesus was off to the side talking to somebody. I very quietly ran behind some trees where I could see better, and not be seen, and was surprised to see my poor and blind cousin Bartimaeus and his buddy calling Jesus' name. I thought about going over to him and tell him to stop, and don't embarrass our family, Jesus does not want to see you, looking so poor and dirty, but something stopped me.

Later I was sure glad it did, because Jesus went over to him and his buddy and in no time they both had gained their sight!!! This man Jesus performed a miracle on my cousin and his friend right in front of me.

I listened to some of his sermons and saw some more miracles. After, when I returned to making sandals, I began to think about this man and his teachings. They made me feel different, I had a warm feeling inside of me, and his sermons were meaning more to me than the teachings of the Rabbis at Bet Midrash or Halachot. I really liked what he was saying!!!

I went about my work for the next few weeks, but whenever I could I would talk to someone who had also come to like this man Jesus. I got to hear lots of stories about his miracles and his teachings to love one another. My dad had always taught us to be kind to others, but this man was actually telling us to love them. We really didn't understand at first.

Then it all changed for me one day when two older men who had known my father and were big supporters of our synagogue came by and said they heard that I gave this man Jesus a pair of sandals and that people have heard that I have been saying nice things about Jesus.

I told them they were correct and I liked his teachings. They asked me to sit down and then they started to say negative things about Jesus, how he was attempting to make changes to our customs that were hundreds of years old and some said that he had been sent from God as his son.

They made fun of him and encouraged me to forget about Jesus and concentrate on the teachings that have been passed down from generation to generation. They really did not threaten me, but they did say that my business would be more successful if I would forget about this man Jesus.

I was very confused, and undecided as to what to do!!! Do I believe what my father taught me, do I forget about Jesus, do I follow the advice of the men who visited me??? What to do???

One day after I finished some baskets I was working on I decided to walk to a bar not far away. It was crowded and much of the talk was about this stranger in our town who is supposed to be performing miracles and preaching about love.

Many of my friends there had consumed a few too many cups of wine and were getting louder and louder! They started to make fun of Jesus and suggested we do something to get rid of him. I did not really participate, but after all many of these guys were my friends and some were my customers.

When they started asking who wanted to get rid of Jesus, the majority signed up! When they asked me I reluctantly said sure me too.

So, you can see now why so many people shouted NAIL HIM, NAIL HIM!!! Me too!

I know it is only Saturday and I do not know what will happen to this man Jesus, will he have a regular burial? Will there be a big funeral, I wonder what will happen???

What I do know is that I regret my decision to reject him, and now I want to find some way to be

forgiven.

When not whittling another miniature animal, John Percival can be found listening to bird song most evenings.

The photo shows, "Christ in the House of His Parents," by John Everett Millais, painted in 1849-1850.

