



NAHUM THE CARPENTER: SECOND EPISTLE

Posted on June 1, 2018 by John Thomas Percival



My sister Zilpah lives at the foot of Mount of Olives, it takes a full morning to travel there. Her husband is Joshua, his family owns an olive grove. It has been in the family for generations.

We travelled there last Friday. We took three donkeys, one for the boys, one for Ruth and one loaded with supplies and sandals for everybody. I love giving gifts, and since we are not rich, giving them something I have made seems more special!!

It is almost two months after that man Jesus was crucified. I have been bothered by that scene ever since. However there are all kinds of stories about him rising from the tomb and being seen walking to Emmaus. It seems a bit odd to me, I have never heard of anyone rising from the dead. We are looking forward to discussing it with Zilpah and Joshua.

We arrived just after noon, and were warmly greeted by Zilpah, Joshua and their two boys. Joshua was particularly delighted to see us, and he came over and gave me a hug, and said so nice to see you and I hope you brought your tools??? We have a lot of repair work for you!!!

I smiled and said yes, I have my tools. He asked if we could stay an extra day to do the sandal and harness repairs, as well as some baskets that were falling apart! I told him we would be delighted.

Regarding my tools, I have this really nice old bag that my father passed down to me when he died.

When I was old enough to run the shop, my father decided he would make himself two leather, waterproof bags, fill them with supplies and tools and go into the country and visit farms and villages doing repair work. I was so appreciative when he left me the two bags! I have rebuilt the smaller one and I can now use it to carry tools and basic supplies when I take trips.

We had a nice visit and lunch, and enjoyed some vintage wine. Since Joshua's family has this huge olive grove, they also have several small vineyards and make wine every year. It is top class!

Joshua and I took a tour of part of his property as the ladies chatted and the children played! Before we knew it the sun was going down. Joshua has an old stone grill at his house and he had some freshly killed meat he grilled for us while the wives made some fresh salads and of course some olives.

After enjoying a delicious feast, we put the children to bed and relaxed around a nice warm fire.

I quickly turned the conversation to ask what they knew about this man Jesus. We had not spoken to them about him before.

Immediately Zilpah's face lit up like a star in the sky and she seemed to be in a sort of trance! Even her voice was different. She replied oh I am so glad you asked!!

I told her my story, about giving him sandals, about seeing him perform a miracle on our cousin and

then being part of the gang who shouted Nail him, nail him.

Zilpah was very saddened by this news and scolded her brother for what he had done! She had been following Jesus when he preached around Jericho, and was completely taken by his presence!!!! She then shocked me when she told me her friend Mary Magdalene was a friend of Jesus and she witnessed his crucifixion and went to his tomb three days later.

Ruth and I were now so excited to hear more, so Zilpah said to Joshua, put some more wood on the fire and get another jar of wine and I will tell my story. I could not wait!!!!

Zilpah said she and Mary had seen many of Jesus' miracles and listened to his sermons. She said, we found them very difficult to understand at first, but usually we figured them out!!!

We were heart broken when he was crucified and our grief over whelmed us. We did not sleep for 3 days. Then Mary decided she would go the tomb where he had been placed. To her shock the huge boulder that was in front of the tomb was moved away! She went in with a friend and there was no body in there!!!

However, while in the tomb a strange thing happened! Somebody or something appeared to the women. They said after they thought it was angels, as it had a bright glow around them.

Whoever, or whatever it was said to them the body was not there he has risen from the dead. They were in awe and shocked, they went to tell Jesus' eleven disciples who also didn't believe what they heard so they went to the tomb and saw for themselves there was no body there.

Nahum and Ruth were sitting in amazement at the stories as told by Zilpah, however, they had heard similar stories from other friends and were delighted to hear them confirmed.

They tried to ask Zilpah some questions, but she politely asked them to let her finish as there was more!

She told them that friends of theirs were walking to Emmaus when a person appeared out of nowhere and started asking questions, later that night that person, who was Jesus, appeared to the disciples and told them he would be leaving soon to return to his father in heaven as the scriptures had predicted.

Sure enough, forty days after his resurrection, he left his disciples and disappeared like a wisp of smoke into the heavens.

Both Zilpah and Joshua said they had joined a group of friends and they were called Christ People. Later that would change to Christians! One of the disciples, Peter was telling them all about the stories Jesus had been preaching. The idea of loving your neighbour, asking God for forgiveness and

something very special, the idea that Jesus had left something for everyone who believed in him, they called it The Holy Spirit. Zilpah was still learning about it, but said it was something inside of those who believed and it was a way to communicate with the risen Jesus and with God.

It was very late now and we were tired but so excited to learn more. We made a promise to return to their place in the near future to hear more. We went to bed with a new feeling of excitement we had never experienced before.

Nahum, Ruth and the two boys left early morning after spending five productive days with Joshua and Zilpah, family and servants. Joshua treated all his employees like they were part of his family. It made for a very happy working environment as well as an opportunity for the servants to live a respectable life.

We really had a nice time with all of them, and I repaired all their broken items and did not charge them. At least none of the servants, I found out when we got home that Joshua had put some shekels in my tool bag, which I asked Ruth to put in a special hiding place where we save for the boys.

During the trek home both Ruth and Nahum thought about the story Zilpah had told them about Jesus. They did not share each other's thoughts until later that week when they had some quiet time together.

When they arrived home the two boys went with some friends to the waterfall and pool to cool off and wash the trip dust off! Ruth unpacked the donkeys and I went to my shop, where I found 12 pairs of sandals, several pieces of harness and a few baskets that customers had left for mending. I started work on them immediately.

The boys came to my shop late in the afternoon and I asked them to go home and ask momma for some bread and cheese and a pouch of wine for me as I wanted to finish the repairs. They returned soon after and I worked until after sunset and finished my work.

On Sunday morning we woke up and had a very nice breakfast, we did not eat a big breakfast during the week, but today we had some bread Ruth had baked the day before, some figs, olives, raisins, cheese and nuts. Most of this came from Joshua's farms.

After breakfast the boys went out to play and Ruth and I finally started talking about Jesus.

During the trek home they had spent hours in their own silence, with much time to think about what Zilpah had told them. They both claimed to have had some form of spiritual experience during their trip.

When they started chatting, they were both surprised to hear of the other's experience! They both felt they were being drawn towards this new Christ People movement that had started. They were unsure what to do or how to seek more information.

Their fears were short-lived!! Two days later a friend who owned a market nearby had travelled to Joshua's farm to buy fresh produce. On his way home he stopped by as Joshua had asked him to tell Nahum and Ruth to please return to their place and to plan on staying for a few weeks. He also asked Nahum to bring extra supplies with his tools as he had many items from neighbours to repair.

Ruth and Nahum were pleased but a bit confused at this request! They had not expected it!

Nahum came up with a great idea. There was a crippled man in the neighbourhood who often spent time around Nahum's shop, just for something to do. He lived with his sister's family.

He had been a teacher, one day he was walking home when a team of horses pulling a cart got spooked and he got in their path of destruction and was badly injured and crippled for life. He still did some private teaching but the schools would not hire him. His name was Isaac.

Nahum had made Isaac a fitted pair of boots to assist him with his walking. With the assistance of a cane and the boots, he was able to move about much more easily.

Nahum asked him if he would stay at his shop every day and explain to customers that Nahum was away for a few weeks but would be returning next month. Nahum had already started telling his regular customers too.

Isaac was delighted. They agreed on a salary, which Isaac thought was too much for what he was going to do, but Nahum thought this was his opportunity to show his love for his neighbour as taught by the Christ People. Both men were very happy. Oh, Isaac was also asked to keep an eye on their home too.

The following Monday, Nahum, Ruth, the boys and four donkeys left for Mount of Olives. The fourth donkey was laden with leather pieces, harness fittings and a small bale of special wicker for basket repairs.

Upon arrival at Joshua's they set up home in one of the empty servants homes and Nahum began his repairs in a farm tool shed.

Every night was spent talking about the Christ People. On Thursday, they went to their first meeting with Peter.

John Thomas Percival continues working with wood and pondering about the early history of Christianity.

The photo shows, "At the Genisaret Lake," by Vasily Polenov, painted in 1888.

