



NAHUM THE CARPENTER, THE SIXTH EPISTLE

Posted on September 1, 2018 by John Thomas Percival



It is now over two years since Ezekiel left for Corinth. Ruth and Nahum have had several reports that he is healthy and doing very well in Greece. Ruth is hoping he would be home soon.

Ezra and Elizabeth have become a very popular couple in their community. They are invited to many social events and are often seen either walking hand in hand or riding on their horses. They make a very interesting couple as Ezra is quiet, and a little bit shy, however when he does speak people listen.

Elizabeth is outgoing and a confident conversationalist, they truly compliment each other.

Elizabeth has completed her medical training and even though she is very young she has quickly created a reputation of a caring, tender, compassionate and clever medical person. More than just a nurse!

People say that she has a special ability to diagnose your problem before she even examines you. People are coming from around the country to the hospital where she works and actually asking for her. Fortunately, the medical men in the clinic respect her abilities and often ask for her opinion as well. Ezra likes to tell her she has God-given abilities!!! She laughs him off.

Later that summer Ezra confided to his mother that he wanted to ask Elizabeth to marry him and how should he go about it??

This made Ruth smile, almost giggle! Ezra asked what is it? Oh Ezra she replied it brings back such fond memories of your dear sweet father and me!

He said, please tell me.

She began by saying that when they were children they went to the same school, although boys were in one room and girls in another. Your dad had to leave school when he was thirteen as his father needed him in his shop, after he quit school Nahum was almost never seen, he worked all day in the shop and then went home helped his mother and went to bed. His father was not a well man.

One day I asked a friend of Nahum's to come to his shop with me. We were now about 15 or 16, Ezra was shocked to see us, but so proud to show us his father's shop and the work they did. We were impressed. We invited Ezra to join a group of friends who met on Friday nights, we usually had a fire, some food and maybe, if we could get it a wee bit of wine. We always had a good time. He agreed to come.

One cold, rainy Friday night some months later he showed up with a parcel in his hands. He chatted with his friends and then when he saw me alone he came over and in his shy manner he said, I made you a gift, if you don't like it, it is ok. He surely lacked confidence!

He gave me the package and when I opened it he had made me a leather broach, four different coloured leaves with a black dot in the middle! It was beautiful and I still have it!!! With tears in my eyes, I said Nahum this is beautiful I would never ever give it back; I leaned over and gave him a kiss on his cheek. It was the beginning.

After this we started seeing each other whenever we could and we had become good friends. About two years later I said to him did you ever think about getting married. He jumped up and said for sure! When would you like to do it?? I said hold on, I did not say I wanted to get married, I was just asking.

We talked some more and I explained what I knew about getting married. In the new Christian Church you had to have a priest, minister or disciples marry you, it was law. Also it was proper for the man to ask the girl's parents for permission to marry their daughter.

This information set him back a bit, but I could sense from his manner and actions that there was a determination behind that shyness.

One evening when he knew I was out, he came over to my house. I had told my parents he might be coming over one of these days so please welcome him, so they were prepared.

The poor guy came in and my parents greeted him warmly, suspecting what he wanted. They gave him a mug of wine. When they realized he was struggling they tried to help him and asked if there was something he wanted to say? He stuttered and stammered and said no, no, I better be going.

My mother went over to him and said, come sit down beside me and have another mug of wine. She comforted him and after a while he blurted out that he loved their daughter, he thought she was the loveliest, smartest and most special girl in the whole world and he wanted her to be his wife. My mother and father hugged him and amid tears they said they would love to welcome Nahum into our family.

We were married a few months later and we have been so happy for over 23 years.

My mom said, oh Ezra, I am so sorry, I got carried away there! I said mom, that is a beautiful story and it makes so much sense, dad is still the same person today, Thank you for sharing.

My mom then told me to go see Mr. Goldman, the jeweler, and ask him to make a gold ring. She suggested that I try and put my little finger near Elizabeth's ring finger (without her noticing) so I could tell Mr. Goldman the approximate size. She said I should speak with Elizabeth's parents and ask them if I could marry their daughter. Then propose to Elizabeth.

Although shy like his father, he had no problem speaking to Elizabeth's parents seeking their permission. They, like Ruth's parents over 23 years ago said they would love to have Ezra as a son in

law.

A few days later Elizabeth accepted his proposal but said she would like to wait until their wedding to wear his ring, but she did love it. Ezra understood.

They decided to wait to get married until Ezekiel returned. Fortunately the wait was not long, as a few months later he returned with six fellow disciples so the marriage took place with Ezekiel assisting and Isaac performing the wedding ceremony.

Hananiah and Juthine agreed to have the ceremony and reception at their farm. It was a beautiful day and the charming young couple was pleased that so many of their friends and relatives attended. After a short trip to a country home for a few days the young couple returned home and set up their new apartment in a friend's large home about two miles outside of town.

It was a very pleasant cozy home, but the distance meant they usually rode their horses to work and into the city. They were both establishing their positions in life. Ezra was gradually taking over Nahum's shop and making favourable changes and improvements resulting in more business and more income.

Elizabeth was continuing to grow her reputation as a healer of the sick. She now had started using new methods, new herbs and new remedies to treat the ill. People appreciated her compassionate manner too.

Nahum the Carpenter should now be called Nahum and Son, but they never got around to changing the name. Ezra was continuing to grow the business. One day he was working outside when two boys, Samuel and Ethan, who he had seen at some of the Christian services were walking by bare foot. He called to them and asked where are your sandals? They smiled and said we don't have any! He asked where are you going. They replied they were just out for a walk, nothing else to do.

Ezra called them over to his shop and asked if they would like to help him. They jumped at the opportunity. He told them to sweep the shop, smooth the sand at the entrance way and put the garbage in the cart and to sort the pile of leather, stacking it by size. It took them a few hours and when they finished he gave them each a pair of sandals.

They were so excited to receive such a gift for so little work. He asked them where they lived and they explained they lived with their mom in a small apartment nearby. Their mom worked as a servant for a wealthy family. They had no money, but mom was able to bring home food every day so they were well fed. They were both still going to school. His father had died when they were young.

Ezra asked them if they would like to come by every other day and help him, they happily agreed. This was the beginning of a lasting relationship.

As Ezra and Elizabeth were beginning their lives, another couple was at the other end of the spectrum. They were elderly, lived on a small farm on the outskirts of town. They were now unable to work their farm and had hired a young neighbour boy to look after their small herd of sheep and flock of chickens.

Their names were Yohanan and Mariamme. The farm had been in Mariamme's family for generations and it was expected it would be handed down to her heirs too. Unfortunately Mariamme had two miscarriages, the second one resulting in her being unable to bear children.

The couple was very bitter about this situation and was angry with God for his lack of love shown to them.

Several months ago they reluctantly came to a Christian service where they met Isaac and listened to his teachings of this man Jesus and became members of his church.

Having seen them a few times at the services, Isaac and Nahum asked if they could visit them. The old couple welcomed them warmly into their home a few days later.

Nahum and Isaac told them they understood their anger. They also explained that this man Jesus told them to believe in him and to put their trust in him and they would find peace and love. They also told them that they believed God had a plan for everyone and maybe someday they would understand why they were childless.

Following a very enjoyable evening both Nahum and Isaac complimented the couple on the size and majesty of their home and expressed their admiration for it. Mariamme told them her grandfather had built it for his own family and also added a small apartment on the rear of the home so his eldest son and his wife could remain at home and help run the farm.

Since they had no children, Yohanan and Miriamme lived only in the main part of the house, the apartment was used for storage.

When they left, Isaac and Nahum were pleased that their visit was able to add some comfort and hope for this very nice couple.

Time would prove them correct.

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

The photo shows, "Jesus Ministered to by Angels," by James Tissot, painted 1866-1894.

