**RUN THAT YOU MAY WIN!**



 **Revelation 10** tells us that there is an end to time, an end to delayed judgment, and an end to mercy, yet for us there is an end to warfare and an end to the race. But, where does the Word talk about a delay during our race to the finish line? - It doesn’t…

 **I Corinthians 9:24-27**: “Do you not know that those who run in a race indeed all run, but one receives the prize? **Run in such a way as to obtain the prize!** And everyone who competes controls himself in every way. Now they do it for to receive a corruptible crown, but we for an incorruptible crown. Therefore I run accordingly, not with uncertainly. Thus I fight, not as one beats the air. But, I treat my body severity and make it my slave, lest after having preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.”

 There is a finish line, and unless a person makes it before the flag falls, ending the race, there is nothing Yahuwah can do. Once it’s over, it’s over.

 **Revelation 19:7**: The wife of Messiah has made herself ready.

 **Matthew 25:1-12**: The wise virgins are ready.

 **II Timothy 4:7-8**: Sha’ul was ready and expectant.

 **Proverbs 23:17-18**: “Let not your heart envy sinners, but be in the fear of Yahuwah all the day long. For surely there is an end and your expectation will not be cut off.”

 **Proverbs 24:13-14**: “My son, eat honey because it is good, and the honey comb, which is sweet to the taste. So shall the knowledge of wisdom be unto your soul. When you have found it there shall be a reward, and your expectation shall not be cut off.”

 Our commissioned lifestyle is to run the most difficult of all races -- a spiritual race! The prize is eternal! We’ve been set free of enslavement by the enemy! We’ve been unshackled, so that we can “run the race with endurance, looking unto Yahushua, the Author and Finisher of our faith.”

 As we run the race on the narrow path laid out for us by Yahuwah, we learn wisdom, knowledge, and understanding. But, aided by the Spirit’s transforming power, we also increase in the fruit of the nature of Yahuwah within us: **Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control**.

 By walking in His nature, thinking and acting as He does, reflecting Him, mirroring Him on this earth, our whole DNA--our whole being--is transformed, and we walk with Him in the secret place of His dwelling. After listing the nature of carnal flesh, then the fruit of the re-born Spirit, in **Galatians 5:19-23**, Sha’ul says this in verse 24: “And those who are of Messiah have nailed the flesh with its passions and desires to the stake.

 Messiah backs that! He said in **Luke 14:27**: “He who does not bear his (*execution*) stake and come after Me is unable to be My disciple.”

 The true birth begins when we repent of all sin, come out of the kingdom of darkness by our profession of faith in our new Master, Yahushua, who died for us and rose again from the dead for us. This sets in motion 40 things that the Spirit does to transform us into a new creation, taking us out of the kingdom of darkness and placing us firmly in the Kingdom of light. [Refer to: The True New Birth” under the Mikvah of Eternal Salvation]

 I am not talking about Buddhist-related goals, where people control their emotions and thoughts through self-inflicted disciplines of men, in order to obtain “perfection.” We cannot of ourselves become “good.” In physical things, yes, we can discipline our body, but when it comes to the spirit-man within, comprised of a soul (mind/brain, emotions, feelings, reasoning, will) and a spirit (which is what is born again, in our mid-body).The only way to unify the carnal, sin-prone soul, with the re-born spirit, is by totally submitting to Yahuwah’s Spirit to transform us from within, while we cooperate! We can’t do it, but He can!

 Thus, this transformation has nothing to do with a head-belief, church-going, being moral and nice, doing good deeds, or even obeying the simple commands of the Kingdom, “Torah,” – the instructions and teachings. People read self-help books by the millions, and try to discipline their soul, but end up discouraged because the carnal soul is attached to the drive of fleshly lusts. The ONLY WAY THE TRANSFORMATON CAN TAKE PLACE is by the Sovereign action of the Spirit of Yahuwah, as we die to “self,” and submitting our lives in child-like purity to a new Master, walking with Him in obedience in love. Our new birth begins in a relationship with Elohim and develops as we allow Him to control us. Yes, we’re talking about our Creators taking control over our 1) spirit, 2) soul, and 3) body, so that we live a supernatural life. This is why only those who “turn and become as little children” ever make it into the Kingdom of Heaven, the Kingdom of Yahuwah and Yahushua, because it takes a total letting go of our will so that we only submit to His will!

 The mind’s will is involved of course, and hopefully emotionally weeping in humility, too, as the Spirit does this greatest of all miracles. In the true new birth, we receive a new nature – the nature of Yahuwah. If one wills that his life continues with the old carnal nature, great grief and sorrow lie ahead. We must allow Him to develop the “fruit” of the Spirit within us – His nature. That means submitting the carnal soul to the Master.

 The more we absorb the Word into our mind, and take our own thoughts captive to Messiah, the more the transforming can take place in the soul, so that it aligns to the re-born spirit. Thus, the “spirit man” becomes a whole, reflecting the Creator into the earth.

 So bottom line, a true child of Elohim does not run his own life! He submits his life to the Master, and allows Him to take 100% control!

 As we commune with Abba and Yahushua regularly during the day, the sweetness of Elohim gives us joy in our spirit to overcome what would try to delay us, oppress us, weaken us, and cause us to give up the race.

 Joy is a chief fruit of the re-born spirit which acts as “the power of His might.” Joy is not anything we can conjure up by self-will. It is His anointing/Presence within us that causes us to rise above all the earthly hurts and pains, into His Presence. It is this energizing of His joy that gives us strength to continue the race to the finish line. Yahuwah spoke to me recently: “Joy is the Champaign of the Spirit.” It is the “bubbly” inside of us that sustains us in times of spiritual attacks, so that we overcome and maintain peace. Those who are controlled by the Spirit are consistent in nature--not like a yoyo!

 **Ephesians 5:18-20**: “Do not be drunk with wine, in which is loose behavior, but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to each other in Psalms and songs of praise and spiritual songs, singing and striking the strings in your heart to the Master, giving thanks always for all to Elohim the Father, in the Name of our Master Yahushua Messiah.”

 After we are born again, as the pattern holds throughout from **Acts 2** on, we receive Yahuwah’s Spirit within us to empower us and give us His gifts, to teach us, convict us, guide and direct us, and keep the fruit (nature of Yahuwah) alive and active in us.

 Those living before **Acts 2** understood this, but few tapped into it. Messiah opened the door for all of His born-again children to live their lives empowered by Abba’s Spirit! (**John 14-17; Acts 1:8**) The book of *Acts* is your manual for normal life in the Spirit today. One of the most important gifts of the Spirit is “discernment of spirits,” so that we are not deceived by man or demons. He empowers us as we obey Him!

 Joy is our sustaining fruit. Refer to these articles for encouragement: “The Transforming Liberating Power of Joy,” “In His Presence There is Peace, Joy, and Power!,” “Peace in the Midst of Battle,” “No Longer A Slave to Fear”, “Demolition Derby – Demolishing Boxes, Walls, Cages and Bars,” “Satan’s Dirty Little Secret” Exposed”

 I remember teaching in a Women’s Aglow meeting in Granbury, Texas, around 1990, and telling the ladies it was time to put on spiritual wind-shorts, a light top, and racing shoes, for we have entered “sprinting season.”

 This is no time to be carrying boulders around in the back pockets of your mind and emotions. The author of the book of *Hebrews* put it like this: **Hebrews 12:1-2**: “We too, then, have so great a cloud of witnesses all around us, **let us lay aside every weight and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race set before us**, looking to the Princely Leader and Perfecter of our faith, Yahushua, …”

 If there is a delay in a race, it begins at the starting point, not during the race! Once the preverbal gun is fired for the race to begin, there is no stopping until the finish line is crossed and the winners declared. After Yahushua’s resurrection and ascension, at His command (**Acts 1**), the disciples gathered in Jerusalem for the out-pouring of the Spirit of Yahuwah on all those truly born again--the 120. As the Spirit came down upon them on Shavu’ot, as described in **Acts 2**, the “gun” was fired and the race began. **Acts 3** shows Kepha and Yochanan taking the initial lead in evangelizing, which began with the healing of a crippled man. These gifts are for us to use – not set on a shelf!

 Ever since that lovely spring day in Jerusalem, every born again believer who asks for the empowerment of the Spirit of Yahuwah is transformed by His working within our spirit. The only delay in the race is our doing if we sit down, become apathetic and lethargic, whine, have a “pity party,” rebel, or engage in sin. Then the choice is to either repent and get back into the race with dedicated fervor, or be disqualified from the race altogether by The Judge. It’s our choice!

 Those that keep their eyes fixed on the finish line, have locked their will into place, and are destined to endure, overcome, and cross the line to receive their righteous reward. Remember the old Phys-Ed quote: “No pain, no gain?” Yes, our race is during a spiritual war – thus our race involves pain in spirit, soul, and body.

 Today, most western-culture believers are slowing down, and many more are stopping all together at a time when they should be increasing their sprinting. A good runner conserves energy at the beginning, but when the finish line is in view, they begin their final sprinting with maximum speed to cross the line and win the medal. We are now in “sprinting season!”

 The Winter Olympics is coming up in early February in Seoul, Korea. Each contestant has prepared for a long time. They’ve worked very hard and been very disciplined, bringing their body and mind into focus on the goal of winning and receiving a gold, silver, or bronze medal. They accomplish their goals by the will of their mind to win. As Sha’ul said, they work to win a temporary earthly reward. But, we as the children of Light have an eternal goal. Yes, our enemy of the dark kingdom works to stop us from finishing our course. So, while we run, we also battle. It’s like Nehemiah/Nehemia and friends rebuilding the wall of East Jerusalem with mortar-trowel in one hand and a weapon in the other hand after the Babylonian captivity.

 What did Abba ask Jeremiah? “If you have run with the footmen and they have wearied you, how do you contend with horses? And, if in the land of peace you feel safe, how do you manage in the Yarden jungle?” The Jordan Valley “jungle” was a thicket, full of lions, snakes, and other deadly predators.

 My youngest daughter is a fitness instructor, nutrition instructor, and body-builder. She gets up daily with her husband at about 5:00 AM, and they go to the gym to work out. They are dedicated to staying fit and strong. It takes diligence and focus to stay fit and strong in faith, too. Faith is like a muscle that must be exercised and strengthened!

 Abba Yahuwah is “slow to anger and of great mercy,” but when His mercy is used as a license for people to go their own way with their own thinking, He has to step in.

 I ask some relevant questions:

 1) Is it right for a school teacher to hold back students who have worked hard, studied, passed tests with good grades, in order for the lazy ones to catch up? No! But that’s the philosophy of America’s public school system today. It is discouraging to be a hard worker and have to sit through kindergarten teaching to help lazy ones “catch up.”

 The Psalmist said he went beyond all his teachers, because he was in the Presence of the Teacher of all Teachers and learned from Him. **Psalm 119:99**: “I have more understanding than all my teachers for Your testimonies are my meditation.”

 2) Was it wrong of the wise virgins of **Matthew 25:1-2** to refuse to give oil to the foolish virgins when they had been lazy and wouldn’t keep their lamps filled with oil? Were they being selfish? In our world today, they’d be called “selfish.” Messiah came, and the wise entered in, for they were ready. To the foolish who went to buy oil all too late, He said: “Truly I say to you `I do not know you.’ ”

 3) Should runners in a race hold back in order to let slower runners catch up? **I Corinthians 9:24-27**: “run to win.” Should riders in a horse race slow down in order for the slower riders to catch up?

 In my last article and podcast on “The Cloud of Witnesses is Waiting for Us” I wrote about a vision I had around 2004 as I looked out my kitchen window in Aqaba, Jordan, at the four countries around the head of the Red Sea. He showed me the vision of mounting my horse and beginning to ride. But, at one point, I kept thinking of all my friends back where I started from. I knew most of them had not even gotten on their horses. But, where were those that began to ride? They were somewhere behind me. I asked myself, “should I slow down for them, or should I get off my horse and wait for them to catch up?” But, Abba let me know that I was not to break speed for any reason. Go to that article or podcast to learn the details of this vision that included the “cloud of witnesses” cheering me on. They cheer us on, because without us, the “cloud” is not completed! (**Hebrews 11:39-40**)

 4) Should those who have worked hard to earn their rewards share them with the lazy? Look at **Matthew 25:13-30**. Should the one with 5 talents (a talent was a measure of money in those days) share with the one who buried his talent? What was Messiah’s reaction to the excuse of the man given one talent? We will all stand alone before the judgment seat of Messiah. (**Romans 14:10; II Corinthians 5:10**)

 As in the **Matthew 25:13-30** parable, at our new birth we are all given gifts to use to serve Him. If we do not develop those gifts and use them, they will be taken away from us, and given to others who are increasing in their service for the Master.

 **Read carefully Matthew 25:1-30; Mark 4:25, Luke 8:18, Luke 12:31-48, and Hebrews 12!**

 **I Corinthians 3:11-15**: We build on the foundation He has laid. Our eternal rewards are based on how we build, how we run, and how we win! The race can be long or short, but it takes discipline and perseverance to finish it. He will shorten the race for the sake of the chosen ones, as Messiah tells us in **Matthew 24:21-22**.

 The winning mind-set is pictured in the movie *Iron Will*. It’s a good movie for older children, youth, and adults to watch. The young man, Will, was a novice at sled racing, yet he joined the race with seasoned sled-racers to win the prize for his widowed mother. He had to fight lots of obstacles, including hateful competitors who wanted to stop him, but because he kept his mind focused on the prize, he overcame all and won the race, and so received the prize to save his mother’s house. As shown in the movie, Will falls down just short of the finish line. But, his friend, an old American Indian man, uses quiet native American “spiritualism” to encourage him to get up, which he did, and he won. Of course, we don’t use mystical anything as believers, but we do uphold each other in prayer to Yahuwah, so that as we run, we also encourage others to win.

 **II Timothy 4:7-8**, Sha’ul speaking: “**I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race; I have guarded the faith. For the rest, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Master, the righteous Judge, shall give me on that Day, and not to me only, but also to all who love His appearing**.”

 In **Revelation 7:9-17**, we read of the martyrs who crossed the finish line victorious. In **Revelation 14:12-13** we read: “Here is the endurance of the set-apart ones. Here are those guarding the commandments of Elohim and the faith of Yahushua. And I heard a voice out of heaven saying to me, `Write,’ “Blessed are the dead who die in the Master from now on. Yea, says the Spirit, in order that they rest from their labors and their words follow them.” ’ ” In **Revelation 15**, we see some of their reward.

 **Revelation 12:11**: “And they overcame him (Satan) by the blood of the Lamb, the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives even to death.”

 Around 1990, I had a dream and a word from Yahuwah upon awakening. I saw a locomotive moving at top speed, crashing through all barriers, bypassing all the passenger stations. When I woke up, Abba said: “I am moving at full throttle and nothing will stop Me!” If He’s moving at full throttle, shouldn’t we be keeping up with Him?

 Back to my questions: Should we feel guilty if we outstrip apathetic and complacent people? Should we allow man, devils, or both, to intimidate us for our fierce determined focus on the finish line? Absolutely not!

 **Philippians 3:10-14**: “…to know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if somehow I might attain to the resurrection from the dead…Brothers, I do not count myself to have laid hold of it yet, but only this: **Forgetting what is behind and reaching out for what lies ahead, I press on towards the goal for the prize of the high calling of Elohim in Messiah Yahushua**.”

 Sha’ul understood what Kepha said in **I Peter 1:6b-9** as he wrote to Ephraimite believers scattered into the nations AMONG the gentiles – people like us: “…you have been grieved by manifold trials, in order that the proving of your faith--much more precious than gold that perishes, and proven by fire--might be found to the result in praise and respect and esteem at the revelation of Yahushua Messiah, whom having not seen you love, in whom you exult with unspeakable and esteemed joy, yet not seeing, but believing, **obtaining the goal of your faith**--the deliverance of your life.” We receive the prize at our resurrection, at the coming of Messiah!

 Compare Sha’ul’s statements in **Philippians 3:10-14** with his declaration in **II Timothy 4:6-8**. It was not long after he wrote this declaration to Timothy, that the Roman Emperor Nero demanded his death by decapitation. History tells us that Sha’ul ran to his executioners. Yes - He was ready!

 In the race to the finish line – the coming of Messiah – we run with patience, with expectancy. We run with His nature, and with understanding. We understand that IF we do not finish our course, our race, we will be disqualified. So, we run to win! We run with joy, peace, and love, in the Spirit of our Abba! Let’s strive to reach the finish line and hear Yahushua say: “Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful in little, I will make you faithful in much; enter into the joy of your Master.”

Love, shalom, blessings,

Yedidah

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