

Oasis

En Español!

Our nearest neighbor was a widower named Remaldo. We had to pass through his farmyard every time we entered or left our New Mexico hippie commune in the foothills of Sandia Mountain. Since Remaldo spoke no English, we used all the Spanish we knew and began acquiring more. He graciously gave me a tanned cow hide, which I used to make a drum, stretching it over a wooden barrel. That drum had great tone!

And so began my love affair with the Spanish language. A subsequent New Mexico mountain experience found us at a higher elevation, touching the northern edge of the Jemez Mountains. On the mesa where we lived all of the rest of our neighbors were elderly Hispanic couples. It was an unforgettable era, learning to communicate in Spanish, eating fresh tortillas and pinto beans drenched in hot chili, helping and being helped by weather-aged high altitude farmers who accepted us—strange as we were.

Then our hearts were captured by Jesus—we didn't yet know Him as *Yeshua*. Our first steady involvement with a believing congregation took place in *Templo Cristiano*, a Spanish Assemblies of God church in the remote village of Gallina, New Mexico. The first praise songs we sang, the first sermons we heard were in Spanish. *With warm hearts the people embraced us as we were, caring not that we were gringos who spoke their language haltingly. They simply showed us God's love.*

Esta aqui, en Español — It's here, in Spanish!

I've related the above history that you might appreciate how special it was for me to see the publication of my book "*What About Us?*" in Spanish. This December in Mexico City, Moises, leader of the Beth Shalom Messianic Congregation, hosted a pastors' breakfast to launch the Spanish translation of the book. What a thrill to cobble together a few sentences in broken Spanish, to greet the pastors and their wives, who came to receive a signed copy of the first printing, hot off the press. I related the story of two kings, Solomon and Hiram, pointing to their covenant cooperation in building the original temple in Jerusalem. This, the backbone of the book's message regarding the end-time calling of Gentiles in Israel's revival, struck a responsive chord in their hearts.

At the conclusion of the Mexico City breakfast, the pastors gathered around me, together with the publisher, dedicating the book to the Lord. My prayer is that this edition will be distributed throughout Latin America and Spain. May God use it to further His kingdom purposes for Israel and the Church.

If you want to know more about the Spanish version of the book, please contact Moises at moy@dolorfin.com. ☆



EITAN SHISHKOFF



Dedicating new book in Mexico 2015



WHERE DOES GOD LIVE?

“Thus says the LORD, ‘Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. Where then is a house you could build for me? And where is the place that I may rest? For my hand made all these things, thus all these things came into being,’ declares the LORD. ‘But to this one I will look, to him who is humble and contrite of spirit, and who trembles at my word’” (Isaiah 66:1, 2 NAS).

These words were the opening sentences of the portion of the prophets that I chanted at my Bar Mitzvah. This passage made no impression on me at that time. Now, its significance for me would be hard to overstate, because I want to experience the manifested presence of the living God.

The cry of our hearts is, **“Where can we encounter the living God?”** If He sits in the heavens with His feet on the earth and there is no structure that can contain Him, how and where do we connect with His presence? Are

there holy places tangibly invested with the presence of God?

Many passages in the Scriptures speak of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem in such terms. It would seem that we could go there, and there He would be, **“For the LORD has chosen Zion; he has desired it for his habitation. ‘This is my resting place forever; here will I dwell, for I have desired it’”** (Psalms 132:13, 14).

But there is a problem. That space is currently occupied by a spirit that is antagonistic to the God of Israel.

Yes, we can be comforted that in the future Yeshua will return. **“And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, ‘Behold the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them’”** (Revelation 21:2,3).

That’s worth waiting for, *but I still want His presence now.*

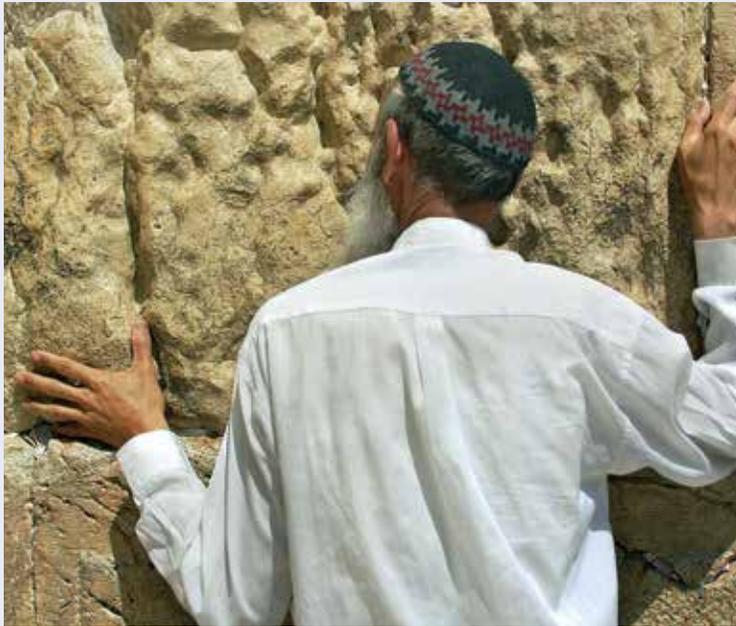
There are many “holy places” around. Christians, Jews, Muslims, Buddhists and Hindus all have them. And indeed, there is no corner of the world so dark that God can’t enter it. Nevertheless, we would challenge the idea of the God of Israel sharing His glory by dwelling in a temple dedicated to any of the 3 million Hindu deities.

If we go to some specific physical location, how much of what we experience is a product of our cultural-religious programming, emotional make-up and predetermined expectations? Or if God genuinely shows up, how much is it a consequence of a *faith expectation* rather than having a connection with the *place itself*? Does a historical, biblical event having occurred in a place permanently tie the Holy Spirit to that place? What if the place is not even the exact location of what is purported to have happened there?

For example, the “upper room” in Jerusalem is said to be the place where 120 disciples received the Holy Spirit nearly 2,000

years ago. Well, the current location where numerous groups visit and have such wonderful spiritual experiences is in a building that was built centuries later(!).

Years ago on my first trip to Israel in 1988, I visited the Church of the Nativity in the city of Bethlehem. A basement room there is traditionally claimed to be the place of the stable where Yeshua was born. A silver star



Prayer at the Western Wall

was embedded in the marble floor, permanently marking the spot where the manger sat. The ceiling was low. Hanging lamps, candleholders, icons and incense burners gave me the creeps. *To my perception, the Holy Spirit was not lingering there, even if this might possibly have been the genuine location.*

On the other hand, the most moving experience I have ever had in connection with a place in Israel, was at the Tomb of the Patriarchs in Hebron. On the exterior wall of the building are the remains of stairs. In the centuries that the building was held by Muslims, Jews were only allowed to ascend to the 7th step. Right next to the 7th step is a hollowed out section of the wall, blackened by years of Jews burning candles there. I was in close proximity to the resting place of my ancestors, the root of my faith as a Jew and as a follower of Yeshua. And I had an overwhelming experience. I could have sat there for hours. There was something so precious about the place, and I felt the presence of the Holy Spirit. But for some it is just another historical/religious edifice. Nothing supernatural is felt in that spot. Certainly they would not say that God was in that place waiting for them.

What about *nature*? Will time in the wilderness make it happen? Certainly removing distractions or getting away from everyday life might help, but is God obligated to wait for you in the forest?

The truth is that the presence of God can be encountered in any place, at the discretion of the Lord. There are numerous testimonies of God showing up and meeting people driving in a car, working in a garden, painting a room, etc. Suddenly He's there. Like Moses at the burning bush, these sorts of encounters come as a total surprise to the recipient who is just going about his life, not suspecting or expecting to meet God

that day. But while I think most of us would welcome this, *we want to know, are there are vital ingredients for that encounter?*

Yes.

"...But to this one I will look, to him who is humble and contrite of spirit, and who trembles at my word" (Isaiah 66:1, 2 NAS).

"For thus says the high and exalted One who lives forever, whose name is Holy, 'I dwell on a high and holy place and also with the contrite and lowly of spirit in order to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite'" (Isaiah 57:15).

The LORD is so exalted, that our efforts to control Him are futile. Our greatest achievements, our most intense religious activity will inevitably fall short. But humility, a contrite spirit, honestly recognizing that we cannot commend ourselves to Him by our own righteousness – *will actually draw Him to us.*

Yeshua said **"...everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, but he who humbles himself shall be exalted"** (Luke 18:10-13). We can't pretend to be humble. There must be an honest appraisal of who God is and what we are without His grace.

Religious structures and systems will never replace how we live. **"Amend your ways and your deeds, and I will let you dwell in this place. Do not trust in deceptive words, saying, 'This is the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD'"** (Jeremiah 7:3, 4). What is beautiful in the sight of the Lord is *not how much we build for Him, but a walk that exemplifies that broken and contrite spirit.*

Don't get hung up on the place, on the system. But don't disparage them either. Don't throw it out because you are trying to be spiritual. In other words, if you are in Jerusalem, enjoy Jerusalem. God is there. If you are on the mountain, enjoy it. God is there too.

"Yeshua said... 'Woman, believe me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem shall you worship the Father. God is spirit and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth'" (John 4:21, 24).

When you make that supernatural connection, don't erect a shrine or build some kind of monument to the experience. In Matthew 17, on the mountain where Yeshua was transfigured, Peter wanted to build tabernacles. God said, **"Don't worry about building tabernacles. Listen to my Son."**

No matter what your situation is, whatever condition you are in – heaven or hell, joy or sorrow, light or darkness, there is no place where His presence is inaccessible. **"Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend to heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, behold You are there. If I take the wings of the dawn, if I dwell in the remotest part of the sea, even there Your hand will lead me and Your right hand will take hold of me"** (Psalm 139:7-10).

All that remains is for us to approach Him and we can do that freely because **"...we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Yeshua"** (Hebrews 10:19). Our confidence in encountering Him is due to the "admission ticket" the Messiah purchased on our behalf with His own blood which fills in what we lack. Our unworthiness replaced by His worthiness, our weakness by His strength, our unclean-ness by His holiness. ✨



MOSHE MORRISON



Japanese Relatives

**Behold,
how good and pleasant
for brethren to dwell together
in unity!**

**Like the precious ointment upon the head,
running down the beard,
even Aaron's beard:
down to the skirts of his garments;
As the dew of Hermon,
descending on the mountains of Zion:
for there the Lord commanded the blessing,
even life for evermore.**

(Psalm 133)

A few weeks ago we had the privilege of hosting a Japanese culture event in our congregation. It was fantastic, and we thoroughly enjoyed the fellowship with our dear friends, who came all the way from Kyoto, Japan.

Despite our cultural differences and the language barrier, we felt strong unity – a sense of belonging to one big family. We were reminded that in God, there are no barriers and, through Yeshua the Messiah, we are all connected to our Heavenly Father and each other.

During these three days of fellowship, our friends introduced us to the Japanese tea ceremony, they organized origami workshops

and a traditional Japanese clothes photo shoot session. *Holocaust survivors and Russian-speaking immigrants took part in the event* and we, together with believers from different congregations in the Haifa area were happy to serve them. Our brothers and sisters from Japan also joined us for a Shabbat meal and worshiped with us during our Shabbat service.

We are now considering similar events in the future – encounters that will continue building us up as a family of believers in Yeshua the Messiah – such as a Jewish culture program in Japan to serve the local congregations there in the coming year. ✡



LEON
MAZIN

