Inspired to Faith by Tribulation!

Summary

Can personal failure and hardship actually become the very things that build unshakable faith? In this first-person confession, the author traces his own path from skepticism and regret to committed, independent study of Scripture.

- A personal testimony opening with Paul's self-description as "chief" among sinners (1 Timothy 1:15), used as a mirror for the author's own past conduct.
- Honest acknowledgment of past regrets, framed not as an excuse but as the starting point for genuine change.
- Tribulation and hardship presented as catalysts that pushed the author toward independent Bible study rather than despair.
- An encouragement to readers facing their own trials that hardship, rightly met, can deepen rather than destroy faith.

The full article begins on the next page.

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An author's confession,

"This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Yah'shua the Messiah came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief" *(1 Tim. 1:15)*.

These words were first penned by the Apostle Paul, when he was giving instructional advice to young Timothy, his "spiritual son in the faith".

Paul's claim to being "chief" among the world's sinners, was undoubtedly a heartfelt expression, although it was obviously not true in any literal sense. Nor is it true that I myself, am chief among the world's sinners.

It is patently true however, that I also suffer heartfelt feelings of abhorrence for my own past conduct, not entirely unlike that of Paul's. Few, if any of my life experiences prior to coming to the knowledge of the Bible, are worthy of any report, save for the fact that they were stepping stones of progress toward my Father and His Messiah.

Through my own empathy for Paul's feelings, I have gained such confidence in Yah'shua the Messiah, so as to become determined to "wage the good warfare" *(1 Tim. 1:18)* as best as I am given opportunity. And "for this reason, I *[hope]* to obtain mercy, that in me first Yah'shua the Messiah might show all longsuffering, as a pattern for those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life" *(1 Tim. 1:16).*

And so, as Yah'shua's humble bondservant, it seemed fitting to me to help in the preparation of an orderly account of the practical application of Yahweh's Word for the modern day reader. Thus, I freely contribute to this Web-site and hope that its content may be found as useful tools for the better understanding of Yahweh's word.

This contributors to this site have also collaborated in an epic work to assemble the world's first and only non-copyrighted edition of Yahweh's Word, with both Old & New Covenants properly divided into the original 7 divisions and published in a 7 volume set with all 49 original books arranged in their original order and numbered sequence – the Natural Faithful Remnant Version *(NFRV)*!

This **non-copyrighted** material is freely available to all of Yahweh's children; the Congregation of the

Family of Yahweh, where "membership is registered in heaven", and is focused in part, on helping the reader to overcome the apparent barriers of time and language that had crept into modern traditional copyrighted versions, since the original writings of the Bible.

I do not profess to hold any superior qualifications - in fact, I am simply a farmer. I do profess a profound ability to seek for, and find the simple answers to life's questions. Ironically, I spent nearly forty years searching the world over, only to find them all right before my eyes in the pages of the Holy Bible. I pray that you read the content of this site, and then more importantly, read the entire NFRV version of the Holy Bible yourself. You will find answers to all of life's concerns. And in your search for wisdom, remember, it is "the peace of Yahweh, which surpasses all understanding" *(Phil. 4:7).*

I was raised with a Sunday school background until my early teens and I had no church or religious involvement until I was about 38 years old. I grew up on a modest family farming operation in south western Ontario, with parents who had a fundamental belief in Yahweh, but did not teach, or live by any particular "religious" tradition.

By the time I had reached my late teens, I had lost all interest in religion, in fact I felt quite adamant about the Bible being only a "collection of fairy tales" made up by a bunch of old "con-artists" with ulterior motives. I have no idea how I came to such a conclusion, except to say that, the little bit of organized religion I had been exposed to, was so very ludicrous that it left me with this equally ludicrous opinion.

More recently, however, there was a considerable twist. I had, due to a very personal challenge, and as a direct result of my new-found understanding of basic Bible Truths, changed my entire outlook as to the purpose of my life. In the spring of 1986, a very good friend of mine, a Christian, became quite upset with me when I expressed my personal opinion of the Bible. My friend responded with what was an obvious challenge - how could I express such a strong opinion on a Book that by nature of the opinion itself, proved I had never even read the Book? He was absolutely right!

I set about to read the Bible in the same manner my experience with all other books had shown me was the most "efficient" for me. While in school, I had developed the habit of reading the last chapter of a

book first. Obviously, if you know how the book is going to end, then everything leading up to this ending will make a lot more sense and be easier to understand - right? Well in most cases, perhaps yes. But certainly not with the Bible! I don't know if you have ever read the last chapter in the Bible or not, but it definitely on its own, does not make understanding of the rest of the Book any easier - especially on the first reading!

I had to admit, that the book of Revelation was one of the few things that I had ever read without at least, some basic level of understanding. This very fact was the impetus for continuing my "challenge" to fully understand the entire Book - the Bible. So I thought, well I certainly don't want to go to "Church" to learn this, I must be able to learn it on my own - I was obviously very independent in my way of thinking. But I did break down, and began watching several different "religious" shows on television, to help give me a better perspective on what the Bible really said.

Ironically, for the most part, this did not help at all! I found that almost every one of these programs had its own, unique interpretation and/or understanding of various Bible topics. By this time I had diligently read the Bible from cover to cover more than a dozen

times, and had found certain things in it, that I concluded I was either misunderstanding, or in fact, all of these religious programs and churches, were also either misunderstanding, or more probably, were interpreting in a way that conformed to their "traditional market needs"!

This was a major concern for me. Was I correct and all of them wrong? Surely not! After all, I was certainly not an expert, and many of these organizations were connected with, controlled, or influenced by highly respected, very reputable "theologians", who were indeed alleged "experts in the field".

Of all these "traditional" Christian television programs, there was one produced by a local Vancouver Pastor, who was a dentist prior to putting together his church and television ministry. I only saw about three of his programs from that time era, but he seemed to me to be a very "normal" type, who had come from "regular" society and background into his new "religious" experience, somewhat along the lines of where I felt I was coming from. Then his program went off the air.

For the most part, the remaining Christian programs, whether local or international, I found very shallow and boring as well as very IN-consistent with what I

had been learning through my own Bible study. I did watch a number of televised episodes of a program, produced by a Ministry that preached the keeping of the Sabbath, and found them to be MORE consistent with what I was learning from the Bible.

They were certainly NOT consistent with the fundamental teachings being expressed by the majority of the "traditional" Christian programs at the time. But as I said, they were also, not totally consistent with my understandings either!

It was all very frustrating. I decided to dedicate myself to at least two hours a day for the next five years to study this matter, on my own, in depth from the Bible itself. By this time I had reached the point where I understood the value of faith in Yah'shua the Messiah, His crucifixion and resurrection. I accepted Him into my life through private prayer and began to experience fellowship with Yahweh the Father - as reconciled by the Messiah, and a new-found, wonderful prayer life, which proved its effectiveness in my daily living continually. *(I had by this time, obviously renounced my former opinion of the Bible!)*

During those next five years, my life gradually changed. The way I thought, how I felt about myself, about others, my priorities, my goals and lifelong

objectives; everything about me and my outlook on life, changed dramatically. I had come to enjoy a new wealth of richness in my personal relationship with Yahweh and in the dedication of my life and efforts, to Yahweh. Although, I was still what you might call, a "closet" Christian!

I thought at this point *(through 1990 and 1991),* that I had now developed, and was experiencing the totality of Christianity from the Biblical perspective. Then I was confronted with the meaning behind one statement made by the Messiah, that I was reading during a nightly study session: "I will build My Church" *(Matt. 16:18).*

This is the first place in the common Bible versions I had been using where this word "church" is used. Then I wanted to know "where" is this church, and more importantly "what" is this church that the Messiah said He would build? I became curious again. What is a church? What did the Messiah build? Why did He build a Church? Where did He build it? Did He build one church, or many? Is the church that the Messiah built represented by the many denominations of "Christian" churches? Or is there one true church?

Then I learned that the English word "church" is translated from the original Greek word "ekklesia", meaning "congregation", or "an assembly" of "called out ones". Most appropriately, I learned that for most applications in the Bible, the erroneously translated word "church" should have properly been transliterated as, "congregation".

Symbolically this Congregation in Bible usage is referred to as the household, or family of Yahweh *(Eph. 2:19-21)*.

So at that time, I chose at least temporarily, to interpret these verses about the congregation - the called out ones, in the way that was most convenient for my lifestyle. Through more studying, it seemed easy to determine that in the Bible, the word congregation did not refer to church buildings, but rather to the people - the people "called out" to understand the truth of the Gospel.

Well, I figured that I did indeed know at least some of the truth about the Gospel - therefore I was "called out" and therefore I was part of the congregation, right? Well, maybe! I then learned that the Bible teaches that Israelites must "gather together of one accord" to have "fellowship" with one another as well as with Yahweh, in order to receive the full benefits of

their relationship with Yahweh, and to help each other to grow in grace and character of Yahweh through the power of His Holy Spirit.

So then, in 1992, I found myself searching for a "church congregation" to become involved with, somewhere that I might have fellowship with other Israelites. For some reason, the dentist-come-Pastor that I had watched on television some years previously, kept coming to mind. By this time I had even forgotten his name. With a little effort, it was not very difficult to ask around and find out who this Pastor in Vancouver was, that had been a dentist prior to being on television. A few days of querying and someone told me this man's name, the name of his church and how I might contact him.

I was still having difficulty with this whole idea about going to church, so when I contacted him, I suggested that I would like to talk to him, ostensibly about a retirement housing project that could have some spin-off benefits for his church. He agreed to meet and I was excited and quite full of anticipation at the prospect of being invited to attend his church services.

Well we met, we had a very interesting meeting with respect to the "business" proposal, and he then greatly

disappointed me by not inviting me to church! Instead, he invited me to a downtown businessmen's Bible study class that he was hosting each Tuesday morning at 6:30 a.m. I went to the Bible study and found it enjoyable, and then he invited me to attend his church service for the following Sunday.

For close to one year, I attended the Bible study sessions, faithfully every Tuesday at 6:30 am and attended his church services every Sunday - sometimes twice on Sundays. I wanted to get everything I could out of this "fellowship" aspect of things.

But somehow, something just wasn't quite right. I did not know what or why, but I did "know" something was wrong. I had been enjoying the Bible study and the church services - in fact I eagerly looked forward to both each week. As well, I had developed a good friendship with the Pastor and with several of the congregation - it almost seemed to be "working" the way it was supposed to be.

I had been praying earnestly and fervently since 1986 for a full and complete "understanding" of the Bible, especially the book of Revelation, and not until late 1993 did Yahweh fill in some of the more important pieces for me.

I had studied the Revelation and all the related Bible prophecies for literally thousands of hours, reading, praying, taking notes, making comparisons, until it finally started to come together. Many times, for several nights in a row, I would awake at 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning with an uncontrollable passion to study these prophecies and with a "certain knowledge" that if I did, Yahweh would bless me with the understanding I had prayed for.

I can only explain the final stages of this revealed understanding as miraculous - not because the book of Revelation is so "mysterious" as some would think - or not because I'm so "smart", but quite literally, the opposite! I had been told, and I had originally led myself to believe, that the Revelation was extremely complex and difficult to understand; that it was a "mystery", that only a few people have ever understood it. Well, maybe only a few people have ever understood it, but the rest of these "myths" about it, are just that - myths! Once Yahweh helped me to remove my prejudice toward understanding the Revelation, it became as easy to understand it as simply reading it! Just exactly like Yahweh said it would be! After all, Yahweh, through the Messiah does say in the Revelation, that a blessing would be

bestowed on all who read it, provided they are obedient to keep the things that are written in it.

Well the one thing I had by then learned about Yahweh that was absolute, is that Yahweh does not lie - He does not play games! He tells it how it is! If Yahweh says He expects us to read, understand and keep what was written in the Revelation, then He also wrote it in such a way as this must be possible - right? Well, again, maybe! IT IS VERY EASY TO UNDERSTAND - by the few who have not been deceived by their own ego as influenced by Satan. But just as Yahweh says that these "few" would not be deceived, and would therefore understand, He also says that "the many" would be deceived, and would therefore NOT understand!

Since the Revelation is KEY to understanding almost all yet to be fulfilled Bible prophecy, it is of vital importance. It is also important to note that there is no blessing, no benefit, not the slightest advantage in simply "understanding" the Revelation. Rather the advantage, the promise of benefits, or the blessing, comes as a result of OBEDIENCE to what the Revelation says; obedience to Yahweh's Word, the Bible, which almost anyone could understand *(if they*

would simply read it), but which very few will actually OBEY!

I've since come to understand that the "church" is not a physical place I need to search out in order to fellowship. Rather, the "remnant" of the faithful; those who share "like precious faith" consummate the congregation of Yahweh. These "called out ones", are the "body" and Yah'shua the Messiah is the "head" of His Father's Congregation, where membership is "registered in heaven".

When we gather together for fellowship with those "of one accord", we place obedience to the Gospel of the kingdom of Yahweh that the Messiah preached, above all else.

Unfortunately, my friend and former Pastor, like most traditional Christians, teaches that we should "worship Yahweh according to the dictates of our own conscience", which is contrary to Bible instructions, which are simply that we must: "worship Yahweh in spirit and in truth", and that, "Thy Word is truth".

My HOPE is that this work being done by all of the volunteers at *The Faithful Remnant* will help motivate he and his congregation, together with

countless others, to read the Bible with a NEW MIND, and to be drawn away from their false traditions, customs, and beliefs, to a new-found faith - "the substance of things HOPED for".

← Return to the Articles Index