Oasis

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What to Expect in 2011

By Eitan Shishkoff

What can we expect in the realm of our spiritual lives during 2011? The following list is by no means comprehensive, but reflects my own impressions. I invite you to read it, pray and perhaps receive from Heaven's heart your own effective list to guide you through this calendar year.

I believe the Spirit of the Lord is taking us to a place that supersedes Ego, Division, Ministry Pride, Money Motive and Personal Kingdom Building. He is pursuing us to choose Humility, Covenant Brotherhood, God's Glory and Authenticity. In short, we will need to depend upon the Living God as never before.

Greater Dependence on God

Major events of 2010 have forced the bottom line reality that we all need help. We remember the earthquake in Haiti that swallowed untold thousands of lives in January. We salute the 33 Chilean miners who gamely waited 70 days to be rescued, half a mile inside the earth. We weigh Israel's tragic Carmel Forest fire that claimed 44 lives and required international aid to put out. The catastrophes of 2010 magnified our human vulnerability and the raw need for help and intervention.

Who knows what crises, natural or international, await the world in 2011? We cannot know. Here, Yeshua's instruction is particularly relevant. He told us that during the tumultuous end times we should **"Look up, your redemption draws nigh."** (Luke 21:28) The call to look up is not only designed to increase our hope the in expectation of His return. It is a practical

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key to carry us through seriously trying situations. **"Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you and you will glorify me."** (Psalm 50:15)

Don't you feel the growing need for intense, effective prayer? I do, daily. May this be the year that our prayer/intercessory relationship with our Father moves into a higher gear, providing real-time answers and an ever-deepening, unbreakable connection with our King.

Greater Dependence on One Another

(Covenant Relationships will be tested)

John Donne said, "No man is an island." This year will underscore that profound statement. In the tale of Jonathan and David we have a shining example of what can happen when two people forge a relationship of genuine mutual trust and honor.

Jonathan, the heir to the kingdom, removed his armor (sword, bow and belt) representing power and personal position. He chose to relinquish his rightful place of authority and privilege, preferring David, because **"he loved him as his own soul."** The trust these two men demonstrated was so great that the kingdom of Messiah was established through their covenant friendship. The greater made way for the chosen; the chosen honored the heir.

The longer I seek to be a servant leader the more I see how fragile relationships can be. Misunderstanding, mistrust, offense, insecurity and fear regularly attack relationships. The default position is to pull back into ourselves. **"In the end, men will be lovers of self."** (2 Timothy 3:2) On the other hand, walking with one another in selfless love, patient forgiveness and healing affirmation bring the kingdom of God into view on earth. Our King is challenging us; He is requiring of us a new level of investment in our friendships and fellowships. If we want the manifestation of the Spirit of the Lord, this area must be clean and fresh. **"By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."** (John 13:35)

Greater Boldness in Witness

"And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end shall come." (Matthew 24:14) Though we don't know the day or the hour, who can doubt that the end of the world is approaching? The compelling priority of personal witness issues from God's heart. He aches for His human children who are wandering, utterly lost in this world's darkness. Of course, the final act of history's drama features a renewed witness to Israel, in the Hebrew tongue, expressed through a biblical Jewish identity. Yeshua linked His return with Israel calling on Him in the latter days. **"You shall see me no more till you say 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.'"**(Matthew 23:39)

All of this convicts me. I am spending too little time with not-yet-believers. But the Spirit of Yeshua in me is longing to befriend them. This is the year.

Conclusion: The Future is Ours

"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope." (Jeremiah 29:13) In 586 BCE, the prophet declared these words to a Jerusalem that had been destroyed before his very eyes, with tens of thousands of his fellow Jews brutally slain at the hands of the Babylonians. This same Jeremiah authored the Book of Lamentations, an emotionally exhausting description of Zion's fall and captivity. Against the backdrop of such tragedy, he wrote **"Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed. Because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning. Great is your faithfulness. 'The Lord is my portion,' says my soul, 'Therefore I hope in Him.'"** (Lamentations 3:22-24) If the weeping prophet could focus on these despair shattering truths while enduring the devastation of Jerusalem, surely there is hope for us.

You may have gone through some pretty hard times in 2010. I experienced a few myself. Early last year, a very close team relationship of 16 years was broken. Toward the end of the year one of my dearest friends made his exit from this life after a grinding battle with cancer. You can add your heavy trials, I'm sure. May the compassion of the Lord bring comfort and renewal in their aftermath - and in those situations you are still walking through. Yet the measure of our walk with Yeshua is how we respond to adversity and loss. **"Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies."** (Psalm 23:4,5)

What awaits us next? Whatever it is, the Lord is serious about washing us from past disappointments and pain, then strengthening us. He wants us, His sons and daughters, servants and messengers, to be ready to manifest the Kingdom of God on this earth at this time. We MUST make Yeshua known - not only in words but in deeds and in character.

I want to make a bold statement, by unction of the Ruach. The future is ours. The future does not belong to evil. It does not belong to darkness and war and murder and corruption. All of these are happening and will continue. But the word of the Lord to us is **"Do not be afraid. Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will accomplish for you today."** (Exodus 14:13) Moses made this bold prediction to the Israelites as the war chariots of Pharaoh loomed closer and closer to the refugee families who had fled Egypt's bonds. We may not experience a literal parting of the Red Sea in 2011 (then again…?) but standing in the full light of our God, we can bring Him glory and assist those around us to see His salvation. ✡

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Tents of Mercy אוהלי רחמים

Our Vision:

Tents of Mercy - to participate in today's historic exodus by assisting Israel's returning exiles.

No spectators in the Kingdom - to be a worshiping, sharing community based in homes, equipping each one for service.

Come back Yeshua - to welcome Yeshua home to Israel, by restoring the Jewish roots of New Covenant faith.

"YOU WILL NEVER

The doctor pronounced the words with solemn finality. It seemed that Igor's life had ended. How could this happen to such a bright and active young man? How would he cope? Could not the God of the whole earth have stopped this tragedy?

It was February 2008; Igor was traveling with three other soldiers in a military car. They had been driving all night and the commander pulled over on the shoulder to give the wheel to a new driver. Igor was in the driver's side rear passenger seat.He took out his phone to send an SMS and before he could hit send, a city bus plowed into the vehicle – Igor was in the direct line of impact. The car was thrown off the shoulder up against a barricade fence.

Everyone was banged up but OK, everyone but Igor - Igor couldn't move, Igor couldn't talk. He was pinned up against the crumpled rear quarter panel waiting for the emergency crew to cut him out of the wreckage. At Rambam Hospital in Haifa, the emergency doctor assessed Igor's response reflexes. Igor still could not talk and when the doctor pinched his arm he did not react. The prognosis was dim. What followed was a family mobilized in prayer – after rushing to the hospital, Igor's parents sent out the word and believers around the country and around the world began to pray.

Igor, shortly after the accident

In a few days Igor regained enough mobility to sit up in a wheel chair. He could move his upper body, but his legs remained immobilized. Igor's spirit was crushed. "I was angry at God, I couldn't see a reason to live, I could not imagine spending the rest of my life in a wheelchair." It had been a month now, and the doctors were still not sure what was wrong. Despite his gloomy predicament Igor's spirits began to revive. Igor recalled, "One day I was alone in my room and I told myself, 'OK, I have to make a decision – will I let this beat me or will I move forward?' When I met with my doctor I told her, 'I want to walk again.' She explained that

WALK AGAIN!"

By Marty Shoub

they still were not sure what exactly was wrong but she wasn't too optimistic about my chances."

Eventually, Igor received the MRI that would give him the definitive answer. Following the test his doctor met with Igor and broke the sad news, "Igor, you have a serious spinal cord injury. If you stand on your legs you will irreparably damage your spinal cord; you will never walk again." Perhaps some would call it denial, but Igor refused to accept this diagnosis. He continued to plead with the doctor, "Let me try, give me a chance to take the therapy that will help me walk again." The doctor smiled back as if to say, "Igor, I have the test results, I have been a specialist for many years, you just don't understand yet." Perhaps it was just to humor him, but the doctor checked with a colleague in charge of physical therapy and to her surprise they agreed to give Igor a chance.

Three to four hours a day, every day for 3 months Igor worked with a therapeutic team, in the gym and in the pool. Despite the excruciating pain, Igor was determined to literally, get back on his feet. Several months after his accident, Igor took his first steps on his own. He still needed to hold on to a rail but he was walking by himself. When Igor looks back at his struggle to walk he knows God gave him the strength to keep going. "I know it wasn't me, I am sure it was God. I thought, ' If God takes care of my life; He can let me walk again. Why not? Anything is possible with God."

Slowly, Igor began to regain strength in his legs and despite the pain and the frustratingly slow pace, he began to recover. The pain in his legs was acute but that was not the only pain Igor suffered. Even before he entered the army he had a pain in his left arm. The pain intensified over the next year but army doctors told him it was nothing. In October, Igor underwent a CT scan so his doctor could review his neurological progress. As Igor lay inside the machine the doctor running the scan noticed something unusual. Over the PA system the doctor asked Igor, "Do you have a pain in your left arm?"

Igor felt relieved, finally someone believed him. His relief was short lived. After further tests, doctors determined that the pain was caused by bone marrow cancer. Because the cancer had invaded his body prior to his army service, Igor was caught in the cracks of army bureaucracy. He couldn't receive treatment as a civilian, but his illness was not technically related to his army service. Igor began a new battle, just as intense as his physio to walk again. Space does not afford us the opportunity to go into detail but suffice it to say, Igor pushed and pushed his way through the red tape (sometimes very creatively) until he finally got a surgery date. Bone cancer is a serious disease. The operation was successful, but in the same way that Igor recovered from his back injury, his success was more than just good medicine – a divine providence was at work. Not all miracles happen instantaneously.

By January 2009, though Igor could walk completely unassisted, he was lame and some 27 kilos overweight. He had faced too many battles to accept that this was as good as it could be. Igor explained, "I was very political with God. I knew He could do anything, but also that my faith had to result in action. So I told God, 'OK, you do this and I will do that.' When we reached that level I would say, 'OK, now you do this and I will do that.' Step by step I moved forward – it was an ongoing conversation." Igor's faith meant if he could walk, then why couldn't he run? Slowly Igor pushed himself to run. First, one kilometer, then two, Igor pressed on until he lost all the weight he had gained. Today, he runs fifteen kilometers a day.

Igor's story is a remarkable testimony to his perseverance. He not only fought a battle against a spinal cord injury, he overcame bone marrow cancer, army bureaucracy and obesity, all in one year! There is no doubt that Igor is a remarkable young man, but his remarkable success pays tribute to the One who gave him the strength to keep going.

"Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might He increases strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall, but those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint." (Isaiah 40:28–31) ✡