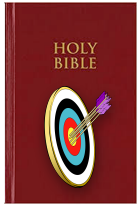


Spot On

Restoring the Hebraic foundational emphasis on the processes of how you live your life:



- the responsive actions our Lord commands all of His followers,*
- and their responsibility to deferentially obey by grace the One they love*

Are You Spending Your Few Years Of Earthly Life As A Sojourner?

Your entire perspective of your life on this side of eternity changes when you really come to grips with this: ***your eternal citizenship is in heaven*** (Philippians 3:20). That's a lot to take in, because it sure isn't a view you were born with nor was it something you even gave a thought to prior to being born again — being *born from above*. That perspective of being a *sojourner* here, a traveler on the way to somewhere else, lays in stark contrast to that of people who are enemies of the cross of Christ, as Paul calls them in Philippians 3:18.

Those who have set their mind and goal on things of this earth have chosen to serve themselves. They've made themselves their own god, living as if this life is all that there is. In spite of the loving means through Christ to put to death that self-rule and respond with obedient trust in Him, the people who walk day by day in the lusts of their own choosing will face destruction at the judgment. (Philippians 3:19). Here in this place, and at this time, they have made clear where their citizenship is.

How different is your life when you internalize that your life here really is a journey, a **pilgrimage to your salvation** which awaits Jesus' own in heaven! That whole Hebraic concept of journeying — *sojourning*, if you will — permeates Scripture. (The NIV often substitutes the word "strangers" for sojourning, and thereby misses the intent of moving onward until the goal is reached.) The whole concept of a "sojourner" is someone who doesn't have a settled place of habitation — in other words, someone who knows that he's living "on the move", available to go wherever the Spirit directs him.

Our forefathers in the faith are described in this key verse about the sojourning aspect of our lives, being fixed on the sure promises we have in Christ and knowing that because He is Truth, they will come to pass: "*These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and sojourners on the earth*" (Hebrews 11:13).

History of the Hebrews as sojourners is recorded as a collective memory of the Jewish people that's recounted every Passover: "*But God spoke in this way: that [Abraham's] seed would be sojourners in a land belonging to others, and that they would enslave them and oppress them four hundred years*" (Acts 7:6). Their slavery didn't last forever, because God fulfilled His promise to bring them forth *out of Egypt and into the place where they would worship Him* (v. 7). So too, we who love and serve Jesus as our Lord have a set time of life as sojourners on earth. And at our journey's end here, we will be brought forth into eternity to worship Him in person.

This theme of our life being spent as sojourners is important enough for Peter in his first epistle to refer to sojourning three times. For example, those whom God the Father had chosen were scattered throughout much of Asia Minor as sojourners (1:1). (They were known as the Diaspora, a term by which modern day Jews refer to any Jewish person living outside Israel.) In verse 1:14, Peter goes on to direct the eyes of their hope onto Jesus and His coming. He also warns them to make a clear distinction between the lust-driven lives they lived prior to responding to God's grace, and the life of holiness to which they were called. That kind of separation of the old and the new means rising up out of the muck of pagan existence and spend your time and effort on being a sojourner living in reverent fear of God.

Peter recognizes that there's an ongoing war between the old fleshly desires of your soul pulling you to focus on things here on earth, and the ongoing call of the Spirit to your spirit to live in holiness and bring glory to God (1Peter 2:11,12). So the apostle firmly exhorts his brothers and sisters as beloved fellow sojourners to turn away from all those wicked temptations, reminding them that they are on a journey as God's own "royal priesthood" — priests of the King they are traveling to see.

What To Take Away From This Discussion:

You *are* currently residing here on earth even while you're journeying to your heavenly destination. In taking personal action to uphold the righteous call for justice don't allow yourself to lose sight of the One you're representing and His goal of a full banquet table of the redeemed. Make each day on your journey count for your beloved Lord, purposing to be well-pleasing to our Father because of the joy it brings you *both*. Make sure that love undergirds your every word and every attitude and every deed — that kind of love can penetrate the anger of even your enemies and prompt them to ask you how and why you can live like that.