

A Hebrew Witness

By Peggy Barnell

Woman enters, walking slowly, limping just a little. She is looking for a place to sit, sighs and then sits heavily on a rock.

Woman:

(stretching, massaging her feet)

Oh, ooh.... Who knew these old feet would ever need to walk so far?

(She hears something/someone unseen, stage left, and responds.)

Woman:

No, no, I'm alright. Yes, I'll be there in a few minutes.

(turning back, talking to herself)

Day after day, night after night, together every moment... I don't think it's natural to spend quite so much time together, with your family. How is a woman to find a few minutes of peace and quiet?

(She looks about, looks upward, contemplative)

Woman:

Hiram, dear husband, how I miss you. You left me way too soon, you know. Ahhh, you would be proud of our children. They are strong. They take care of me.

I wonder, Hiram, if you see, if you have any knowledge of what we've been through... Since you crossed over, do you have awareness of any of our lives here?

I don't know if it would displease the God of our Fathers that sometimes I talk to you... I know that I hold you here, always. ***(gestures to her heart)*** I miss having you to lean on, husband. I miss your strength. These eyes of mine, they have witnessed so much since you left us.

The life we knew together was hard, cruel - but the plagues... Hiram - one right after another they came. Each one somehow a little worse than the one before. The river turned to blood, that was the first - The Nile River was not water but blood! Oh, the stench - we couldn't drink! Then came the frogs, the gnats - and

the flies and then the locusts! They didn't affect us, Hiram - not our Hebrew brothers and sisters - only the Egyptians!

And Pharaoh was so angry. We witnessed his anger, right? But this, this was different. He withheld straw, but still we were to make bricks! How were we to make bricks without straw?

But the final plague... Hiram, even now, when I lay down to sleep, I hear the wailing again. Moses told us what was to come - that the Lord our God would strike down the first born of all those not covered by the blood of the lamb on our doorposts.

We did as he told us. We all waited - all of us together, silent, fully dressed in the middle of the night, afraid to breathe and ready to flee when the command was given. But when the first scream came, it was Rashida. It was our Egyptian friend Rashida, grieving her son. But that was only the first - wailing and weeping throughout the Egyptian households.

Together we fled, with Moses and Aaron leading us.

And the pillar of fire that directed our path, the cloud in the daylight... But then Hiram - they pursued us! Pharaoh sent his soldiers after us. Did you know? Did you see it, too? They came charging after us, and I thought for certain we were dead. I thought I was coming to you, Hiram. I thought it was the end, and I prayed for mercy to the God of our Fathers.

But God... God came for us. He rescued us. He saw us. Over and over again, Hiram, *God came for us.*

Do you remember our long talks at the end of the day? Do you remember, Hiram? We often talked of our suffering - of the cruel life for us and our children. You would often say, "We must trust, Rebecca. God has not forgotten us. He knows." But, you know me. I wanted so much to have understanding of what was happening - to know why we had suffered so much, what was happening, and what was ahead for us.

And now, I do know. It is true. All of our suffering, all of our years of hardship, God knew. He knows. God sees us. The God of our Fathers saw our suffering and came for us. He is rescuing us. Even now, I don't know what tomorrow will bring, but I am learning, learning to trust.

I won't let them forget, Hiram. Our grandchildren and their grandchildren will know and remember. I will tell them all about you and your faith. I will tell them of the God of our Fathers who rescues us.

(looks stage left, she is bring called again)

I know, I know. I must get back to them. They worry about me. **(To family)** Yes, yes, I'm coming now. **(to herself)** Come along, old feet - a little more. You can do it. God is with you.

(exit/the end)
