

THE TRANSFORMATION OF AVRAM YEHOSHUA

SeedofAbraham.net

It all began for me in the summer of 1983 when God led me to establish The Seed of Abraham in Tulsa, OK USA. I had been living as a follower of the Lord Jesus for eight years. I had been raised Jewish and at 13 I had an Orthodox *bar mitzva*, even though it didn't mean much to me. At 24 years old I gave my life to Yeshua (the Hebrew Name for Jesus), and at 32 years old I found myself loving all peoples, but having nothing 'special' for my own people.

The Lord Yeshua began to move on my heart and in time spent with Him in prayer I sensed that I was to begin using my Hebrew first name. On the eighth day of life all Jewish boys are circumcised into the Covenant of Father Abraham and given a Hebrew name, and so, André, my birth (certificate) name, gave way to Avram (Hebrew for Abram), the name I had been given at my circumcision (Gen. 17:1-14).

Also, the call to minister to my own people became so strong that I thought the Lord was sending my wife and me to live in Israel. I thought we were to be there by the end of the summer of 1984 so my first born son, Zavdi, could be born in Israel. (*Zavdi* means 'My gift to you.' He would be born in October 1984 in Tulsa, Oklahoma.)

What I thought was supposed to work out never did, and so one day in prayer in Jan. 1985 I said to the Lord, 'I guess I must have missed you on this Israel thing.' The Lord audibly spoke to me and said, 'The Israel I have called you to are the Jewish people of Tulsa.' This began my attachment to a specific Jewish community. The Lord planted me in Tulsa, Oklahoma for a season that would span 14 years.

For the next three years (1984-1987) Yeshua brought another name across my path. It was Yehoshua (Hebrew for Joshua). I felt over and over again that the passage in Joshua 1:5-9 pertained to me in some significant way. God was encouraging Joshua that he would be the one to cause Israel to inherit the Land:

'No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life! As I was with Moses I will be with you. I will not fail you and I will not forsake you. Be strong and courageous for you shall cause this people to inherit the Land, which I swore to their Fathers to give to them. Only be strong and very courageous to keep and to do all the Torah which Moses, My servant, commanded you, not turning from it to the right nor to the left, in order that you may have success everywhere you walk.'

'This Book of the Torah must not depart from your mouth and you must meditate on it by day and by night so that you may keep and do according to all that is written in it, for then your way shall prosper and then you will be successful. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Be not terrified nor discouraged, for Yahveh your God is with you wherever you walk!'

As months turned into years, a deep love for my Jewish people began to spring up inside me. The Lord was causing me to identify with my own people. Time and time again people would come across my path and tell me that God was speaking 'Joshua' to them about me. During a time of prayer for a number of people, I asked for prayer, and after they were done praying for me a woman, whom I had never met before, told me that she sensed from the Lord that I was Joshua.

Another time, after our Shabat service, a woman, whom I respected as a godly woman, shared with the congregation that the Spirit of the Lord allowed her to see me in a different light. She said that I had become what, or rather whom I was teaching about at that service. The message that day was on Joshua and the Sons of Israel entering the Promised Land.

There were also other external witnesses to me, but the most profound internal witness came on June 3rd, 1987 (6 Sivan 5747 in the Jewish calendar). I felt impressed by Ruach haKodesh (the Spirit of the Holy One) to read Deuteronomy, chapters 5 and 6 in Hebrew and English. In the four verses of Deut. 5:31-6:1 the Hebrew word ‘to possess’ occurs three times (in Hebrew). It relates to the Land of Canaan (Israel) that God was giving the Sons of Israel and the one who would lead them in was Joshua; even though the passage has God speaking to Moses:

‘You stand by Me here and I will speak to you all the commandments and the statutes and the judgments which you will teach them, that they may do them in the Land which I am giving to them *to possess*. And you shall observe to do all which Yahveh your God has commanded you; not turning to the right nor to the left. In all the Ways which Yahveh your God has commanded, you must walk, for your sake, that you may have a good life and that your days may be prolonged in the Land, which you will *possess*. Now this is the commandment, the statutes and the judgments, which Yahveh your God commanded to teach you; to do them in the Land, which you are crossing over *to possess*.’

That day as I read it the words seemed to leap out into me. It was as though Yeshua was saying he would cause me to be like Joshua and that He wanted me to take on the name of Yehoshua as my last name. I soon had it legally changed.

Avram Yehoshua symbolizes the culmination of the Lord’s dealings with me in terms of both *identifying* with my Jewish people and being used of the Lord in their lives. He has taken me from being Jewish ‘in name only’ to a total identification with the Jewish people and the belief that Yeshua will use me to lead many of my Jewish people to Himself. Truly, it is the transformation of André Michel Sestac into Avram Yehoshua. He has given me a heart for my own Jewish people—His.

Four days later, on the 10 Sivan 5747 (7 June 1987), on the holy day of *Shavu’ot* (Pentecost), I stood up and publicly declared to my congregation that I was taking on a new name—a name that God had given to me.

Interestingly enough, this happens several times in Scripture. Abram had his name changed to Abraham (Avram to Avraham); Jacob to Israel (Yakov to Israel); Hosea to Joshua (Hoshea to Yehoshua); and Simon to Peter (Shimon to Kayfa). The Scriptures are clear that a name change involves a transformation of character (Jacob to Israel; where Jacob means a ‘thief’ and Israel means ‘one who struggles with God, perseveres and finds favor with God and man’) and that God desires to bless greater (Abram to Abraham, where Abram means ‘exalted father of a people’ and Abraham means ‘exalted father of a multitude of peoples’).

Avram Yehoshua means that I will be the ‘exalted father of a people’ (Avram) who are ‘saved by Yahveh’ (Yehoshua). I am looking forward to the day when the Lord will cause this to come to pass, that I might lead my Jewish people into the Promised One, Yeshua the Messiah, as my namesake, Yehoshua (Joshua), led the Sons of Israel into the Promised Land.

I am a Jew who loves his Messiah and His Jewish people. This is all the Lord’s doing and isn’t it a most Wonder-Full thing?! To Yeshua be Glory forever and ever!¹

אברם יהושוע

(Avram Yehoshua)²

¹ Revised on 2 April 2016.

² To read more about Avram’s life and his times of witnessing in Israel see **SAM the Rock Thrower** at <http://seed-ofabraham.net/Sam-the-Rock-Thrower.pdf>