

## The **Shoes** given to Wear

Throughout the Bible are examples of people who lived their whole life, mirroring the greater story—the spiritual story. No fault of their own, they suffered, so that God’s work is revealed in them.

“His disciples asked him, ‘Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?’ ‘Neither this man nor his parents sinned,’ said Jesus, ‘but this happened so that **the work of God might be displayed [revealed] in his life**’” (John 9:2-3).

This blind man was given by God **dilapidated shoes** to wear, through no fault of his own, to reveal that God has woven in the lives of ordinary people the greater story—the spiritual story.



The work that God is revealing is the greater story through a selected people given shoes to wear and walk the path, so that 21<sup>st</sup> century Judo-Christians come to know and understand it. Nothing has been lost in history; the whole story is preserved for today and into the Millennium when the nations of 21<sup>st</sup> century Israel—the wayward churches of Revelation “all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and **become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ... no longer infants**, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming” (Ephesians 4:13-14a).

The patriarchs and their wives were all given shoes to wear and a path to walk.

**Jacob was deceitfully tricked into marrying Leah.** No fault of his own. Laban, his father-in-law, tricked him. “It is not our custom here to give the younger daughter in marriage before the older one” (Genesis 29:26).

Jacob’s life has many chapters. In this particular scene, he mirrors the reaction of God Almighty who entered into a marriage covenant with ancient Israel. God believed that He would get the

church that He loved, instead ancient Israel turned out to be Leah, the weak-eyed church who had difficulty seeing and staying on the righteous path to God, despite all of the help that they received directly from God.

Jacob was devastated; God Almighty was devastated. Jacob felt God's pain; 21<sup>st</sup> century believers who understand the mirroring, feel God's pain. Jacob was given **prickly shoes** to wear to the day he died. He described his life to Pharaoh of Egypt as "The years of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty. My years have been few and **difficult**" (Genesis 47:9).

God knew that Jacob was spiritually strong enough to wear the shoes that He gave to him, so that 21<sup>st</sup> century Judo-Christians would come to learn the greater story. This was only one small scene in one of the many chapters of the greater story.

**Leah was born with "weak eyes."** No fault of her own. God foreknew the path His people would take, which did not ease His pain when the very events took place. Leah was given **ugly shoes**. Her story has been retold countless times; she is not the hero. Her life was a struggle to look pretty and feel loved, just as the wayward twelve tribes of Israel tried to please God, but they were careless in how they kept God's commandments and they were perpetually looking to the nations on the outside. Producing children was the God-given role to women mirroring the churches role to produce a God-fearing, God-serving congregation fit for the kingdom. Leah wanted children to impress Jacob.

"When the LORD saw that Leah was not loved, he opened her womb, but Rachel was barren" (Genesis 29:31). God had mercy on the wayward church and gave her a congregation, but that congregation would need to overcome their misunderstandings, misconceptions, misinterpretations and falsehoods of God's word—a time still in the future.

God knew that Leah was spiritually strong enough to wear the shoes that He gave to her. The churches of Revelation will be forever grateful for her suffering, because they will recognize the life she lived as a mirror of the life they live and they will overcome.

**Rachel was born beautiful but barren.** No fault of her own. Rachel was selected by God to wear **beautiful but delicate shoes**. Her shoes wore out quickly; she died young. In addition, the beautiful shoes did not make her happy; she was ashamed that she could not conceive and troubled, unable to understand why. Her life mirrored the loved prophets who came to an end a long time ago. Jesus was the last prophet who would also die in Jerusalem.

**"Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you,** how often I have longed to **gather your children together,** as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing" (Luke 13:34).

They were all killed trying to bring people back to God—back into righteousness. Matthew understood what Jeremiah wrote in 31:15, "A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, **Rachel weeping for her children** and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more" (Matthew 2:18).

Rachel mirrored the prophets; her name is used by Jeremiah and understood by Matthew as the one crying for the righteous congregation who are not living safely in the Holy Land under God's rule, but among wolves and serpents in this evil world.

The righteous congregation that would come from the prophets throughout the ages, would be a small remnant who keep the commandments of God, His holy days and Sabbath. God knew it would take a miracle, that is, the receiving of God's Holy Spirit—the opening of the womb by God—for the righteous church to birth a righteous congregation. The prophets died before the fruits of their labor was visible.

God intentionally did not open Rachel's womb until after Leah and the two handmaids had given Jacob children to inform the 21<sup>st</sup> century Judo-Christians about the birth of the righteous congregation that will take place in the last days after God's Holy Spirit is given to everyone. "So, the last will be first, and the first will be last" (Matthew 20:6).

Rachel's two children: Joseph mirrors the life of Christ in many, many ways and Benjamin mirrors the life of the saints, Christ's bride. Rachel's life was shortened by no fault of her own. She was given shoes to wear from God that mirror the life of the loved church: short and bitter-sweet.

**The woman at the well was shunned and discarded.** No fault of her own. Nowhere in John 4 is the description of the woman at the well a prostitute, rather a woman who married five times and was divorced those five times, leaving her to live with a man who was willing to take her in. Women were rarely in a position to take care of themselves in those days. This woman was given by God **body-harming stilettos** to wear because she mirrored the 10-tribed church of Israel who for hundreds of years walked self-elevated and alluring the religion of the gods. This church (imaged as a woman) with the nation of Israel (imaged as a man) was divorced by God because they craved to be like the nations around them. To get what they craved, they were willing to worship the gods.

The church of the 10-tribed house of Israel married into the theology of one god after the other. Each relationship ended in divorce because the church of the 10-tribes could not produce a congregation that would follow the theology of the gods; they were all so rebellious and independent. The church was finally left at the mercy of anyone who would shelter it. This woman was vulnerable and used, never understanding how such tragedy ensued her.

Then, one day Jesus arrived at the well. He offered her God's Holy Spirit, but before she could accept it, Jesus addressed her many relationships. She immediately acknowledged him as a

prophet, someone who had direct communication with God. She did not hide her unfortunate relationships, instead these fallen relationships had brought her to seek a savior. Jesus said that he was that savior and she immediately believed him.

The years of thinking that this time she had found a wonderful husband was nothing more than one nightmare after the other. The woman at the well was a bitterly disappointed and broken woman. Having searched for love, she found only cruelty and shame. God knew that she could endure the shoes that He gave her to wear because deep underneath she was very strong, just like the 10-tribed church of Israel who on the surface was lost and wandering, its roots were alive and well.

“She will chase after her lovers but not catch them; she will look for them but not find them. Then she will say, **'I will go back to my husband as at first,** for then I was better off than now” (Hosea 2:7).

“The time is coming when **Jacob's descendants will take root.** Israel will bud and blossom and fill the whole earth with fruit!” (Isaiah 27:6)

**Naaman was a Syrian general who suffered from leprosy.** No fault of his own. The story is recorded in II Kings 5 and mentioned by Jesus in Luke 4:27, “And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, but the **only one healed was Naaman, a Syrian.**” Every story that Jesus referred to is an important one.

Naaman was a Gentile general. He was given by God **systemically-crippling** shoes. He heard about the God of Israel and Elisha through a little Israelite girl; she imaged a young and tender Hebrew church in captivity. So, he went to Elisha for healing. Naaman mirrors the Gentile, divorced from the covenant family, 10-tribed **national leaders** of Israel who returned to God for spiritual healing. Separate from the church, the national leaders desired to change their behaviour of warring against the nations and return to the way of God: living in peace, fearing and serving God. They brought with them a changed heart—imaged as ten sets of clothes, one set for each of the ten tribes, and an offering of gold and silver. Elisha declined payment and told Naaman to wash in the Jordan River.

Like the 10 tribes, he initially reacted adversely with Elisha’s instructions, but returned and followed those instructions and he was healed. This story is preserved for yet a future time, when the nations of 21<sup>st</sup> century Israel are healed of their amnesia and relearn their history. They will be humbly grateful that God preserved the many important events along their religious walk, while they were lost and wandering. These events are often a shadow of the greater one to come.

God chose Naaman, the Syrian general to wear the shoes of his rebel ten tribes, knowing that he would have the same faith of the returning ten tribes, despite the walk.

**The woman bent over for 18 years.** No fault of her own. “One Sabbath Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues, and a woman there had been disabled by a spirit for eighteen years. She was hunched over and could not stand up straight. When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said, ‘Woman, you are set free from your infirmity’” (Luke 13:10-12).

Eighteen long years God gave this woman **heavy construction shoes** that pulled her closer and closer to the ground. Her story provides a vivid illustration for 21<sup>st</sup> century Judo-Christians of the crumpled state of the Jewish church that won’t be healed by Christ until the Millennium—on the Sabbath. Her condition mirrors the greater story of the Jewish church that within a 24-hour period being a full day, three-quarters of that time, they have been crippled from the heavy burdens placed on them by their religious leaders.

“They tie up **heavy, cumbersome loads** and **put them on other people's shoulders**, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them” (Matthew 23:4).

Jesus saw the woman and had sympathy for her. He called to her and healed her on the Sabbath. God knew that this woman, bent over for eighteen long years was worthy to wear the heavy construction shoes because she was humble; desiring always to serve God. She had a great persevering strength just like the righteous in the house of Judah who do bare the burdens of the traditions of the elders and have a long history of carrying heavy burdens: they rebuilt the second temple despite so many obstacles; they honored and preserved the oracles of God during times of peace and adversity—alone, while their brothers who are many—the 10 tribes—flirted with the gods; they acknowledge Moses, the commandments, God’s Sabbath and holy days.

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are **heavy laden**, and **I will give you rest**” (Matthew 11:28).

**The woman with the issue of blood for twelve years.** No fault of her own. This woman was given by God **irreparable worn shoes**. Always bleeding, she would have been perpetually treated as unclean by everyone. She would have been treated as an outcast and she would have been very lonely. She mirrored the 10-tribed church who was divorced from the covenant family and married into the false religion of the gods.

“And a woman was there who had been **subject to bleeding for twelve years. She had borne much agony** under the care of many physicians and had spent all she had, but to no avail. Instead, her condition had only grown worse. **When the woman heard about Jesus**, she came up through the crowd behind Him and **touched His cloak**. For she kept saying, “**If only I touch His clothes, I will be healed.**” Immediately her bleeding stopped, and she sensed in her body that she was healed of her affliction. At once Jesus was aware that power had gone out from Him. Turning to the crowd, He asked, “Who touched My clothes?”... But He kept looking around to see who had done this. Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell

down before Him trembling in fear, and she told Him the whole truth. **“Daughter,”** said Jesus, **“your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be free of your affliction”** (Mark 5:25-34).

This woman preserved the story of the repentant 10-tribed church of Israel. For half of their time on earth, that is, twelve of the twenty-four hours in a full day, she was dying spiritually. She was truly unclean embracing false religion and their practices. A time came after searching and exhausting all of her resources for healing, she turned to Jesus. She remembered her ancient teachings and touched the corner of his tallit.

**“But for you who fear My name, the sun of righteousness [Christ] will rise with healing in its wings [kanaph—the corners of the tallit]”** (Malachi 4:2).

Jesus knew this woman had Hebrew roots because he felt power leave him from the very place of healing. He did not seek her; she sought him. She relied on the ancient teachings for healing and it worked. The Christians churches have accepted Christ as their Messiah and their spiritual healing has begun. Jesus is able to heal the spiritually dying and he is able to heal the spiritually dead, as he raised from the dead the little daughter of Jairus.

**Jairus’ little daughter died.** No fault of her own. The story following the healing of the woman with the issue of blood for twelve years, is the story of the twelve-year-old little girl who died while Jesus was talking to the woman healed from the issue of blood. This little girl was given **tight black shoes** to wear as she mirrored the dead congregation of a spiritually dying church. Fortunately, Jesus can heal the dead.

**All of the crippled, the lame, the deaf, the blind and dumb in the gospels were healed.** Not necessarily the fault of their own. All of these people, whether they are sinners or not, mirror the countless spiritual deformities within all of the twelve tribes of Israel. They cannot understand the word of God; they don’t keep God’s commandments; they fail to value God’s holy days and Sabbath; they wander so easily away from God; they love self-glory, self-direction and self-reliance. Yet, Jesus healed them. He is able to heal any condition. It will take the Millennium when Christ is ruling, before all of God’s people are healed.

The stories preserved in the Bible all mirror the greater story—the spiritual story, which is the only story that matters. **The shoes God has given us all to wear** during this evil age, will be instantly replaced with a perfect fitting, radiant eternal pair after the resurrection.

In the meantime, as the Apostle Peter said, **“But rejoice that you share in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed at the revelation of His glory”** (I Peter 4:13).

**“For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in His footsteps”** (I Peter 2:21).

The Apostle Paul reminded us that suffering during this evil age is inevitable. “For it has been granted to you **on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him**” (Philippians 1:29).

“...they strengthened the believers. They encouraged them to continue in the faith, reminding them that **we must suffer many hardships to enter the Kingdom of God**” (Acts 14:22).

**In conclusion**, the Bible is full of stories of people given shoes to wear by God. In fact, both genders: male and female wear different shoes from each other, so that the 21<sup>st</sup> century nations of Israel will understand their spiritual journey. Soon, everything will be made clear. Until then, continue to walk humbly with God on the path of righteousness, having accepted the shoes given to you, exercising the faith that God knows your walk and that you are part of the greater story.

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