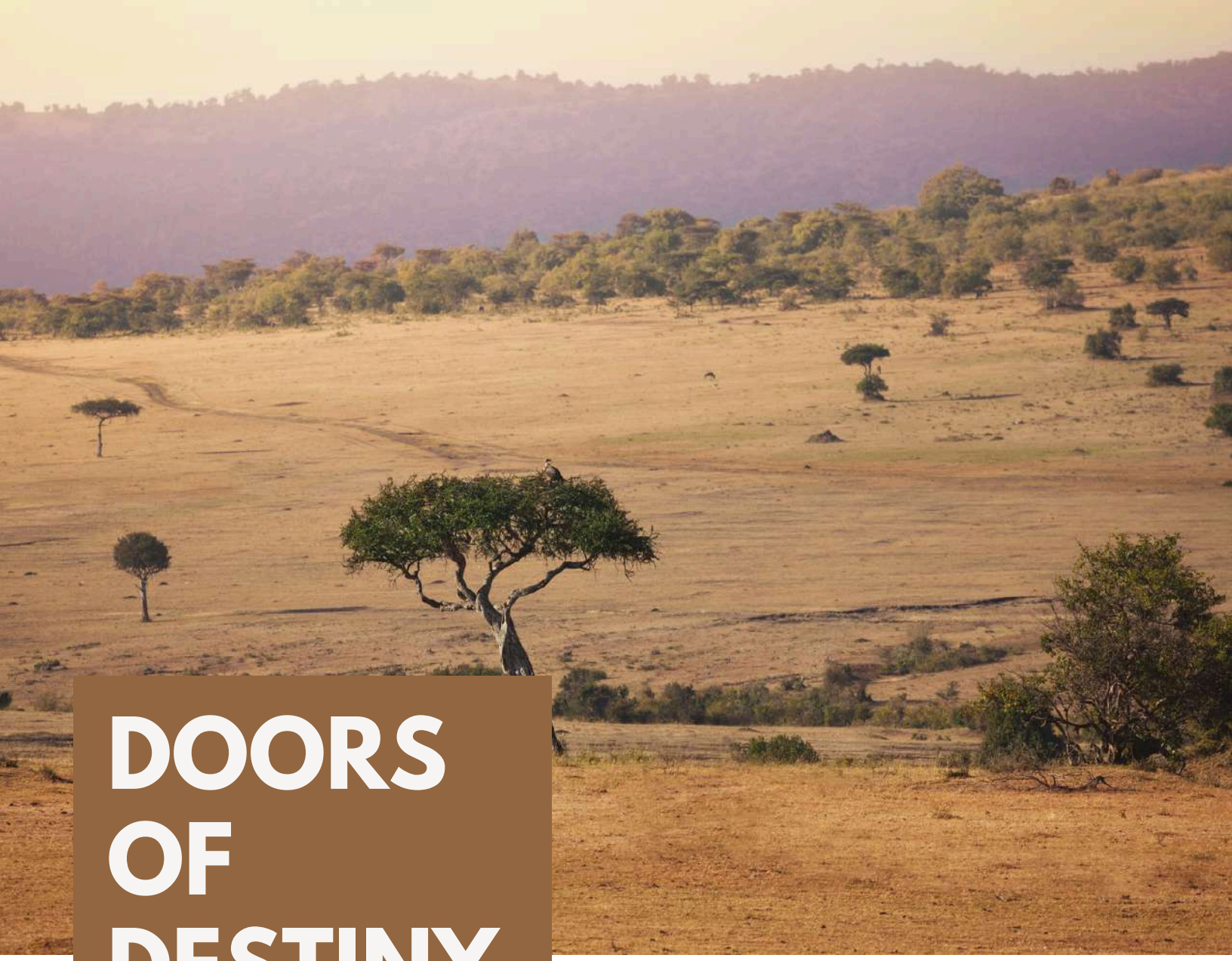

DOORS OF DESTINY

ISRAEL NELSON

Twenty-five years ago I had a dream. I was on a mountainside in East Africa, teaching the people there. I can still see the image in my mind: green hillsides dotted with huts, and people seated on the ground as I walked along a path. It was vivid, and it stuck with me.

I shared the dream with my wife, Cindy, and over the years we've talked about it and wondered if it would ever happen.

This past August, I was invited to go to Kenya and Rwanda with my friend Pastor Mike, a pastor I've partnered with for many years. I found myself walking through Doors of Destiny.



In Kenya, we ministered to and taught missions leaders at a conference where I was asked to speak on the Sabbath. That felt like a soft pitch :-)

In Rwanda we ministered at a large church conference called Chayah (Life). The passion and joy in that place were incredible. So much dancing!

I was also invited to teach at their Seminary on the New Testament's use of the Tanakh. Standing in front of the students, I felt almost as though I were outside myself, watching as I taught in East Africa, in the land of a thousand hills, in a lecture hall on top of a hill. I could see my dream. I told the students, "This moment is literally a dream come true." It felt surreal.

I'd like to share some of the things I found myself meditating on while in Africa, because I believe many of us have dreams we have carried for years.

One. I didn't make it happen.

I imagine I could have pursued connections to find a way to teach in East Africa. We have a friend in Israel who has worked in that region for years in ministry and humanitarian projects. But I never felt a stirring to do so. It was just in my spirit as a "wondering." I wonder when that will happen, and sometimes, I wondered if it would ever happen at all.

I fully recognize that God gives us assignments we must pursue, like Paul's call to the Gentiles. But I also noticed that it was years after the Lord told Paul about his calling that the Spirit released him and Barnabas. Some callings we pursue; some we simply carry until they ripen.

What's striking about that moment in Acts 13 is that they were ministering to the Lord. They weren't pursuing vision boards or mission statements. They were just ministering to the Lord and fasting. And something ripened.

It was suddenly time to go ...

Two. Doors look like people.

The reason I was invited to Africa was my long-time ministry partnership with Pastor Mike. Our relationship never involved an idea of going to Africa together. We have been mostly involved in Mexico and Costa Rica in our missions efforts, not Africa.

What happened was this: we had opened one of our church facilities here in Arizona for a small Rwandan church to meet on Sunday afternoons, without much thought about it. They had a need, and we were able to help. From that simple act, their pastor invited Pastor Mike to come to Rwanda to visit and minister.

We had no idea that this Rwandan pastor founded and leads a massive ministry, including multiple churches, schools, ministry centers, a Seminary, and even their own Hospital. They touch literally tens of thousands of people all over the country. It's truly one of the most remarkable ministries I've ever seen, and one with real national impact.





I found myself walking through a wide-open door of ministry that was shaped like my friend. I have seen this repeatedly in my life. The opportunities God has brought came through people I have served and friends I have loved.

I don't know where the Lord will take me in life, but I know the road is paved with relationships.

Three. What is in you will come out.

Pastor Mike and I have very little in common, besides Yeshua and a real desire to please Him. He is very germ-conscious; I only wash my hands when there are people around. He is a walking bio-hack; I barely take Airborne when I'm sick. He is a very anointed evangelist, and I am much more gifted in teaching. That's why he was invited to speak at the Revival Meeting, and I was invited to teach at the Seminary.

I don't put "anointed teacher" on my business card (I don't have one). I have simply seen that the Lord knows what contribution He has put in me for the body, and He organizes my life so that it is used.

I have never gone to College or Seminary, but the Lord doesn't seem to mind. He gave me a voracious appetite to understand the Bible and Second Temple Judaism, and, to quote an old commercial, I "obeyed my thirst."

But the things He put in me are not for me. They are for the body of Messiah and the world He has put around me. I have spent much of my life wishing I were more like someone else,

but it's funny that I was never any good at being them. I've never been good at impressions.

What I've discovered is that I can't help but teach people. It's not even the gifting I value most. It's just the One that spills out of me.

What I noticed in Rwanda is that the gifts in Pastor Mike and me were not just spilling out; they were being drawn out. We could both feel them flowing from us, like the virtue that flowed from Yeshua when the woman with the issue of blood touched Him. The hunger of the people, and their honor for us, was pulling the gifts in us into their lives.

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled."

As I reflect on my recent trip, I know I'll be back. The Door is still open, and the Dream is still alive! Somewhere in my mind, those green hillsides are still there, with people seated on the ground and a path running through them. But I'm more convinced than ever that this is not because of me. The Lord is working to orchestrate all of our lives together to bring the knowledge of His Glory throughout the earth.

That's His Dream, and it's one He had before any of us were here!




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