

ISRAEL'S RESTORATION

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Netanyahu's “Blessing and Curse” Challenge



By Asher Intrater



In Prime Minister Netanyahu's recent speeches, at the UN and elsewhere, there are several worthwhile points:

1. Peace – Israel's desire is for peace. Portraying Israel as the warmonger is the opposite of the truth.

2. Truth – Seeking and speaking truth is essential. There are so many lies being spread about Israel - complete reversals of facts and a reconstruction of history to fit the anti-Israel narrative.

3. Blessing and Curse – Netanyahu quoted *Deuteronomy 30* in describing a positive prospect for the Middle East and a negative one: blessing or curse. The passage also demands that we choose one or the other! There is a basic moral choice facing the nations of the world today because of this conflict.

4. Normalization or Jihad – The basic choice is either compromising with Jihadist extremists or continuing normalization with the moderate Arab nations.

5. Hostage Return – After one year, following the monstrous murder, rape, and destruction of the October 7th invasion of Israel by Hamas; the hostages held underground in hellish conditions in Gaza are still there.

6. Seven-front War – This war is an unprovoked invasion and attack from the Ayatollah-backed terrorists in Gaza, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Gaza, West Bank, and Iran - planned for two decades with weapons buildup, military infrastructure, tunnels, rockets stockpiled in homes, hospitals, schools, and humanitarian centers, and radical anti-Semitic propaganda.

7. Victory – Despite these impossible odds, Israel is not only surviving but winning. Israel cannot afford a victim/passive mentality. We are being forced into a victim-to-victor transition. The “Lion of Judah” is awakening from slumber.

8. Prosperity – If Jihadism can be defeated, then normalization will come. If normalization comes, there will be not only peace but unprecedented financial wealth in the region.

9. Iranian Nuclear Power – While there are jihadist extremists in many nations, only in Iran did a jihadist party succeed in taking control of the government (in the 1979 revolution). Should the Ayatollah government obtain a nuclear weapon, it would become an existential danger to the whole region. Iran must be stopped.

10. Defeating Hamas – Hamas built a terrorist machine of 40,000 commandos, 600 kilometers of tunnels, and 15,000 rockets. Almost all those forces have been destroyed. If Hamas surrenders and returns the hostages, the war would be over immediately.

11. Defeating Hezbollah – They were the leading terrorist group in the world, killing not just Americans, French and Israelis, but their own fellow Arab Syrians and Lebanese. This year alone they have shot over 8,000 rockets into Israel. They ruined the once beautiful Christian nation of Lebanon. They must be totally destroyed for peace to come to Israel and Lebanon.

12. Resolution 1701 – Trying to negotiate a compromise with Hezbollah would only prolong war for another generation.

13. Demilitarization\Deradicalization – Israel is not looking to resettle Gaza (after removing all 8,600 Jewish residents in the Disengagement of 2005). We are open to a cooperative civilian government in Gaza, on the double condition of removing weapons and stopping jihadist radical education. Otherwise, another war will be just a matter of time.

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Rockets With Your Coffee?



By Hannah Tekle

Israel's Legacy

Israel is no stranger to miracles. We have a long legacy of divine protection. We also have a legacy of sin, disaster, tragedy and persecution.

This present cycle is no different, but it is happening in our lifetime! Over the past year Israel has seen horrible devastation along with surprising and miraculous events - because He that keeps Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps.

The battle has already been won. We know the end of the story and the devil does too (Revelation 12). But in the meantime, it doesn't look good. The odds are not promising – one tiny country surrounded by aggressive bullying neighbors who won't give up till they've pushed us off the Middle Eastern "playground."

It's hard to imagine that amidst the daily sirens and falling rockets regular life really does go on. In fact, the external threat is *surprisingly good* for Israeli morale.

Here's a snapshot:

Rockets with Your Coffee?

After a day and a half of relative quiet, in desperate need of some refreshing, a friend and I headed to the local beach which is closed to bathers, but has an open coffee shop. Sitting with the waves in sight and in earshot, we absorbed every moment and felt our souls begin to revive. *Just as we headed towards the car*, rocket sirens went off! Looking around, we saw a primitive bomb shelter next to the cafe, but it was full. So we hunkered down beside another concrete structure. Above us the rockets screamed towards their "date" in the clouds with the IDF Iron Dome missiles that we could see shooting out from both edges of the Haifa Bay. With each interception came a deafening explosion and a white puff in the sky. Horrible and wonderful all at once.

NOT Your Regular School Pickup Route!

Our boys' schools are now in attendance by rotation, due to limited space in their bomb shelters. The day our sons were at school, just before the last bell rang, sirens sounded. Some of the kids laughed and joked on the way to the shelter. Others were nervous as the booms began overhead. Parents waiting in the parking lot lay on the ground for minimal protection. A few minutes later, my son came out to meet me. As we started toward home, the sirens went off again! We stopped the car and lay in the bushes waiting out the second round while a large piece of rocket shrapnel fell just a few streets away.

Living in Israel amidst ongoing conflict is a complex experience that intertwines daily life with the historical and spiritual arc of history. The tension, punctuated by moments of uncertainty and fear, deeply affects the psyche and fabric of Israeli society.

This war between Israel and the Islamic Iranian axis, is actually a war between the God of Israel and forces of evil in the heavenly realm. That same devil that knows he is already defeated, is pulling out every hellish trick to steal, kill, destroy, deceive and terrorize.

However, God is faithful and He chose to show His faithfulness, love, and covenant to the world through Israel; demonstrating that the *God of Jacob is a refuge*. **The fact that God stands by Israel means that if you trust in Him He will stand by you too.**

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Eagle Project Wartime Update



By Leon Mazin

Shalom Friends,

The Eagle Project was established in 2014 to minister to young Israelis who have completed their years of compulsory service in the IDF. It was inspired by the following verses:

“But they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.” (Isaiah 40:31)

“I write to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.” (1 John 2:14)

The goals of the project are renewal, rest, discipleship, ministry and unity. We seek to achieve these goals through close relationships with Christian friends and partners from Norway and now the USA as well.

Every year we see great fruit from this life-changing experience. God uses this month-long program as a catalyst, drawing the participants back to Him and strengthening the Kingdom through them.

This year the project was extra special. All of you know that Israel faced a cruel reality on October 7th. Many of our finest young people were on active duty at the time, and many more were called up to reserve service on all fronts of the war – from the North to the South.

As the months passed, we started to see signs of PTSD among young Messianic soldiers and knew that the Eagle Program was needed more than ever. We began to look for the best way to help our soldiers rest and heal.



As we prayed for direction, Stonewater Church (SWC) in Granbury, Texas reached out in an offering of support and a beautiful connection developed. SWC put together a great team, including staff trained to assist those suffering from PTSD (gathered from extensive experience working with Christian veterans that served in Iraq and Afghanistan).

This amazing and unexpected relationship began only a few months before the project was scheduled to take place. Miraculously, everything came together in spite of the ongoing war. God gathered the right people, gave us a good plan, and performed many wonders every step of the way.

When everything was ready, we travelled to Texas with 30 IDF veterans to experience the Eagle Project together. Throughout the month, our participants were able to enter into a time of true rest. Local believers spoiled them with hikes, water activities, fishing, great Shabbat meals, shooting horse riding and more. Each day we had discipleship sessions, teachings, prayer and worship and time alone with God. There was a special focus on working through trauma/PTSD, renewal and spiritual freedom. After only a week, we began to see changes as God worked in the hearts of these young people – bringing His supernatural transformation and healing.

We have all now returned to our lives here in Israel. As long as the war continues, these precious soldiers will be called to serve again and again – in Gaza, Lebanon and other areas. But they say that they are ready. God changed and healed them. God renewed and taught them. I am confident they will fight the good fight, both in the spiritual and in the physical realm.

Please pray for all of our believing soldiers. They need your spiritual covering, not only to survive, but to grow and prosper, to shine Yeshua's light into our military and our society, to build God's Kingdom in Israel and throughout the world!

Return to Zion Congregation

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Iron Dome and the Full Armor of God



By Guy Cohen

One evening in October, as family and friends were in the midst of celebrating our daughter's wedding, we suddenly looked up and saw the IDF neutralizing Iranian ballistic missiles in the upper atmosphere. The Islamic Republic of Iran launched the warheads here to kill us, yet no Israelis were killed!

Israel now has a multi-layered defense array. Our current system is surprisingly effective against almost all attacks from missiles, rockets and UAVs. The IDF armor consists of: the Iron Dome, David's Sling and the Arrow defense system – each covering various distances, from close-range missiles all the way up to threats at the edge of the atmosphere. Currently yet another level is being developed – laser technology.

Throughout the country there are sirens that go off, warning us of hostile incoming rockets. The system works with amazing precision. It “predicts” the locations targeted by the enemy. We are instructed to take shelter in bomb-proof rooms immediately upon hearing the sirens. Following soon after, the air and earth are shaken as the Iron Dome and other devices take out the rockets, subsequently creating loud explosions.

Most Israelis, at various times over the last year, have endured these scary “booms” several times a day from bombs launched at them (!). But the explosions are nearly always the result of our active defense systems exploding the enemy bombs high in the air before they reach us in our towns and cities. The IDF's “Dome, Sling, and Arrow” armor go a long way toward protecting Israeli citizens, giving us confidence, and preventing phobia and panic.

This multi-layered defense system can be compared to the **spiritual “defense system”** described in Ephesians 6:10-19. God's armor shields believers from harm. The parallel we can draw between these physical and spiritual defense systems is that they are designed **to protect us from attacks coming in every direction and on all levels.**

An example of how it works in the physical became obvious when Israel was attacked on October 7, 2023. During the time preceding this attack, the nation of Israel was severely divided by infighting and destabilized due to inner conflict. In the same way, believers can become vulnerable to Satan's attack when they allow inner fear and doubt to corrode their faith. When we are in a weakened condition, either in the natural or spiritual, attacks of the enemy can become unexpectedly effective.

Let us carefully follow Paul's instructions in Ephesians, learning how to “put on” God's whole armor and not allowing doubt, fear and worry to enter. Our victory is in the Spirit and so we must walk always according to its leading, monitoring our inner health and outer defenses.

In the days following October 7th, after Israel was attacked, the nation began to reunite and come together. The process has been gradual, but it turns out we are stronger than our enemies anticipated. May Israel remain unified – standing in strength against all who seek to attack her. May we as believers in Yeshua, covered with the full armor of God, be united and strong in the time of battle for this war is being fought both in the physical and spiritual realm!

*“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. **Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.** For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.” (Ephesians 6:10-12)*



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14. Resettling Evacuees – Some 130,000 Israelis have been evacuated from their homes because of the unprovoked rocket attacks from Hamas and Hezbollah. No other nation in the world would permit such a situation.

15. UN Moral Bankruptcy – An automatic majority of anti-Zionist votes in the UN means that any proposal, no matter how absurd, will be passed. In the past year, 174 hypocritical condemnations against Israel were passed, with only 73 condemnations of ALL the other nations in the world together. Israel is the only functioning liberal democratic nation in the entire Middle East.

16. Moral Confusion – Referencing *Isaiah chapter 5*, Netanyahu said that good is being called evil and evil good. Israel is accused of genocide when it is protecting itself against those who want to commit genocide against us. Israel is standing for good, the jihadists for evil.

17. Food Supplies – One example is the accusation that Israel wants to starve the Gazans. Israel has let in over 700,000 TONS of food supplies this year to Gaza while they were attacking us. Hamas hijacked the supply trucks and extorted their own people with the supplies.

18. Killing Civilians – It is fair to say that in this war Israel has taken more effort to protect uninvolved citizens than any army in history. Hamas and Hezbollah target civilians and use their own citizens as human shields.

19. Ancient Occupation – Israel conquered Canaan over 3,000 years ago. Solomon and David built an empire with its capital in Jerusalem. This is proven by archaeological findings and Biblical texts. The New Testament, 2,000 years ago, records Jews living all over the land but no Palestinians.

20. Modern Resettlement – The land lay almost entirely barren until the end of the 19th century when both Jews and Arabs began to repopulate the area. There are 22 Arab nations surrounding Israel and a total of 49 Muslim nations. Even the Quran recognizes ancient Israelite possession (Sura 5).

In September, the IDF crossed into southern Lebanon to clear out the Hezbollah military infrastructure along our border. The quantity of weapons both in homes and in underground tunnels is enormous. Maps and instructions were found for a total invasion and conquest of northern Israel and the Galilee area.

As I was writing this article, we had to run to our safe room because Iran shot 181 missiles into Israel. Not one Israeli was killed. It is only by the grace of God that we are miraculously turning back all these forces aimed at Israel's annihilation. **Please keep praying.**

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*God is our refuge and strength,
A very present help in trouble.
Therefore, we will not fear...*

*There is a river whose streams
Make glad the city of God,
The holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High.
God is in her midst, she shall not be moved;
God shall help her, just at the break of dawn.
The nations raged, the kingdoms were moved;
He uttered His voice, the earth melted..*

*He makes wars cease to the end of the earth;
He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in two;
He burns the chariot in the fire.*

*Be still, and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth!
The Lord of hosts is with us;
The God of Jacob is our refuge.
Selah
(Psalm 46)*

Successful Rosh Hashanah Food Distribution!



In all the uncertainty and stress of this year, it was an even bigger blessing than normal to be able to give out the 900 beautiful food bags that members of Tents of Mercy lovingly prepared for needy residents of the Haifa Bay area. There were even volunteers who had themselves been recipients in recent years, as well as one man who had worked at our building during the recent renovations and asked if he could come help. After packing we ate pizza together in our newly renovated fellowship hall, amid numerous conversations about who we are and what we believe!

Dear Resident,

This is not just a nice little bag of food for the holiday. No? No! This is an expression of love from us and from good people all over the world who love Israel and want to express their support and stand with us in this hard season. Trust us, there are still many like them in the world...

Text translated from the holiday card we included with each gift bag of food.

Kingdom Math



By Jonathan Moore

Psalms 16:11 says, "In Your presence is fullness of joy!"

These are tough times in Israel. Our hearts are often heavy, not joyful. The days seem dark, reminding us of Isaiah 60:2, "...darkness covers the earth, and deep darkness the peoples."

Yet the verses before and after say, "**Arise, shine, for your light has come! The glory of the LORD has risen on you. For behold, darkness covers the earth, and deep darkness the peoples. But the LORD will arise upon you, and His glory will appear over you. Nations will come to your light, kings to the brilliance of your rising.**"

Though it feels like the end-times are on our doorstep, we can also see our light has come. The glory of the Lord has risen! There is revival in the midst of the darkness. There is joy and hope and laughter!

We are built for "presence." We are each created in the image of God, designed to walk with Him in daily life. Only after sin and disobedience appeared, did we get cut off from that constant fellowship. Ever since that day, God has been trying to reconnect with us. He has brought His presence closer and closer. He put His spirit on Bezalel for the purpose of building the Tabernacle. He put His spirit into people like Elijah and Elisha. He placed his abiding presence in the Temple. As amazing as this was, it STILL wasn't enough. God isn't just interested in being present, He wants presence with relationship.

Can you imagine how insane it must have sounded to the disciples when Yeshua said, "*It is better that I go away so I can send the comforter!*" After walking with Yeshua for more than three years, could anything be better? Better than God-made-flesh touching our hearts, minds, and even bodies? But Yeshua DID say it is better that He go, in order to send the Holy Spirit. Because this is what we were made for – to house His presence. To be reconnected at the deepest level and commune with God day and



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night all the time until the end of time. Our proper state, which returns in the New Jerusalem, is full intimacy with God where we know Him in full just as we are fully known today by Him.

You were created for presence with God. The presence of God is His greatest gift. Your presence is your greatest gift. Congregations were created for the presence of God... and the presence of one another. When you meet together, it isn't just a way to convey a teaching to many at once, it is gifting one another with our presence, as creatures made in His image, filled with Him, each reflecting a unique spectrum of His light.

Congregational worship services are like "P multiplied."

My presence x Your presence x His Presence = P⁵

Both Joy and Mourning

The human heart is incredible in that it can do more than one thing at once. We often feel that if we are sad, we cannot also be happy. If we are mourning, we cannot also be joyful. But that's not the case.

On June 8th, four living hostages were rescued; and the entire nation rejoiced. A joy we had forgotten was in our hearts and smiles were on our faces. But one commando soldier died in that operation – a heroic young husband and father named Arnon.

It just so happened, that Arnon's family lived four houses up the street from me. We were privileged to visit the family while they sat "shiva." We spoke with his wife, and our smallest children played with his small children. Our sadness of mourning with his wife was real yet did not supplant the joy we felt for the four liberated captives. The same was true for Arnon's immediate family. They felt both at the same time.





The REAL Purpose of End Times Prophecies



By Bassem Adranly

The subject of prophetic texts concerning the end times has intrigued me recently, particularly after hearing sharp criticism of Sheikh Bassam Jarrar, a Palestinian Lebanese Sheikh, who predicted the fall of the State of Israel in 2022(!).

This critique felt like an attack not only on him as a Muslim, but also on us as Christians. Unfortunately, the issue of setting dates for prophetic events is not confined to the Islamic world. Many Christians throughout history have made predictions about the end of the world which did not come true. So what is the intent of the prophetic and apocalyptic texts in Revelation, as taught by Yeshua? What is their true purpose? Here are some guidelines:

1. No one knows the day or hour of Messiah's return.

This is an indisputable fact. Yeshua Himself made it clear in the following verses:

"But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only." (Matthew 24:36 and similar in Mark 13:32)

2. Prophecy is meant to affect us in the present.

The true purpose of prophecy is not to make us obsessed with the future but to call us to faithfulness in the here and now. Yeshua encourages us to be faithful and play our role in serving God's eternal Kingdom. When we consider the coming Kingdom, it should prompt us to choose today to follow the Lord with integrity.

In Acts 1:6-8, the disciples asked Yeshua if He would restore the Kingdom to Israel at that time. Yeshua didn't address their question directly. Instead, He directed their attention to their present calling – to be witnesses, to focus on fulfilling the Great Commission rather than trying to predict events.

"...they asked Him, saying, 'Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?' And He said to them, 'It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.'" (Acts 1:6-8)

3. Prophetic texts that seem to speak of the future are not for prediction.

The purpose of these texts is to help us recognize events as they begin to unfold. For example, the prophet Jeremiah predicted around 588 BC that Israel would go into exile for 70 years (Jeremiah 25:12 and 29:10). Yet even the prophet Daniel, living during this time, only understood the prophecy around 539 BC, about 40 years later, when the return of Israel to the land was near.

"In the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years specified by the word of the Lord through Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem." (Daniel 9:2)

We see this principle in several of Yeshua's teachings.

*"Therefore **when you see** the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel..." (Matthew 24:15)*

*"But **when you see** Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. ... So you also, **when you see** these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near." (Luke 21:20, 31)*

*"But these things I have told you, that **when the time comes**, you may remember that I told you of them." (John 16:4)*

*"And now I have told you before it comes, that **when it does come to pass**, you may believe." (John 14:29)*

