

# ISRAEL'S RESTORATION

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## *A New Name,* **A NEW IDENTITY**

Page 08 | By Tal Haroni

03

March '25

### **"He Always Loves Me"**

02-06 | By Asher Intrater and David Ben Keshet

### **Baskets and Blessings**

03 | Hannah Tekle

### **Isaac's Comfort and Everyone's Golgotha**

04 | Leon Mazin

### **In Secret**

05 | Gity Cohen

### **Shock and Awe**

07 | Jonathan Moore

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## “HE ALWAYS LOVES ME”



*By Asher Intrater  
and David Ben Keshet*

Life in Israel has been like a rollercoaster with weeping, anger, and hope – all at the same time and one after another. We have seen death, evil, and mourning, but also miracles of biblical magnitude.

In one day, the dead bodies of little children who had been brutally murdered were returned to us. On that same day in the evening, five terrorist bombs hidden in public buses, programmed to be detonated at 9 AM during rush hour killing hundreds of Israelis, went off mistakenly at 9 PM without injuring even one person – a total miracle.

### Changing the Equation

At a time like this, we must return to foundational knowledge: God loves us. And for God to love us, He must exist, be all powerful, be good, and be for us. That should surely change how we look at the circumstances.

Many Israelis feel broken and traumatized from a century of constant danger and dashed hopes of coexistence. But if you add to the same “equation” the fact that God exists and loves us, everything changes: we are not helpless; the Master of the universe is with us. This gives us peace and confidence, intimacy and faith.

During this past year and a half of war, we see Israelis focusing on God and on prayer in the public sphere. The phrase “we are all praying” is suddenly heard in the mouths of secular journalists who probably never tried to pray before.

We are beginning to see how it will look when “all Israel” will be saved (Romans 11:26). We are part way there. Yes, it’s “stiff going” but we are still a stiff-necked people. The trials and difficulties are pushing our people to call upon God together. With the return of each captive from Gaza, we feel that we are all one family: these are our brothers and sisters, sons and daughters.

*“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son, so that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16)*

God not only loves us, He gave us Yeshua, His son, to save us from sin and death. This revelation is hard for Israelis to receive. Our rabbis claim that God does not have the image of a body, much less a son. But they miss the fact that God appeared in human form in dozens of places throughout the Hebrew scriptures. For example, Exodus 24:9-10 says 74 leaders of Israel beheld the LORD with their own eyes.

*Continued on page 6*



# BASKETS AND BLESSINGS



By *Hannah Tekle*

Think about that moment when you come home from the weekly congregational service and everyone is starving! How many hours have passed since they ate? Maybe you are the kind of family that doesn't eat breakfast before the service, and grabbing a coffee and a slice of cake during fellowship time merely exacerbates the hunger? How ironic it is that after a few hours of focusing on spirit matters - worship and the word - we are so fully consumed by our physical needs that, let's be honest, some of us turn grumpy!

John 6 tells of the miracle of the two fish and five loaves that Yeshua took and blessed; they multiplied and eventually fed 5000 men, not counting the women and children, with twelve baskets leftover. This all likely occurred after Yeshua finished teaching. Initially eager to hear Him speak and motivated to follow Him even to the other side of the lake, the people now remembered their hunger. Yeshua had been healing the sick and preaching for hours. He was clearly tired and would have liked that "after the service" moment to nap and recuperate after ministering, but the hungry crowd was not dispersing.

I don't suppose there were any fast food falafel stands nearby; and the motley crew of disciples with Yeshua hadn't prepared a potluck lunch nor caterers, nor food trucks on standby in the parking lot :-). As a mom who often has to feed a hungry tribe, I'm amused that Yeshua asked Phillip where bread can be bought for the crowd. Perhaps it was a teasing question meant to emphasize the obvious and wonderfully physical and practical need they were facing. I can certainly attest that on Saturday afternoons after the service I often wish for lunch to miraculously appear.

We also read in this chapter that the miracle happened just before Passover, which really feels familiar as we are also just around the corner from Passover. In fact, we are gearing up for our annual Passover holiday food basket distribution project in which we give out 900 baskets to help families in need celebrate this ancient feast. The monthly food bags and the special ones we give out during the fall and spring holidays, are shared with no strings attached. However, when people ask questions we are happy to answer about the source of love and generosity.

Ira came to the Tents of Mercy Humanitarian Aid Center about two years ago, part of the large wave of Ukrainian immigration from the Russia-Ukraine war. A widowed retiree, she has no children and no family in Ukraine or Israel, only one childhood friend named Genia who happens to live here in Kiryat Yam. Genia, a widow herself, invited Ira to stay with her when the situation in Ukraine deteriorated. As Ira signed up for the year-long immigrant food basket program, Genia seemed skeptical and distant, but Ira was thankful and came each month to receive the parcel of food.

When the year was up, we didn't see Ira for a while. Then recently she showed up and explained to Sveta, our distribution director, that she was still living with her friend and that things were hard. Seeing that the hardship was genuine, we signed her up for another year. The next month Ira came again. This time her friend Genia was with her and was visibly softened and grateful. "Who are you people?" she asked with gratitude, admiration and curiosity. Sveta explained and told them her own story in answer to their questions. Genia admitted that she had desired and tried to draw close to God a couple of times, once trying to study the Torah, and another time looking into Kabbalah. Both attempts had fizzled into nothing.

Sveta spoke at length with them; in the end, at their request, she gave them both Bibles in Russian, encouraging Genia that perhaps now is the right time to draw near to God! Ira and Genia's story is just one of many ways in which people's lives are being impacted daily in a physical, practical way. We invite you to consider partnering with us in prayer and/or donations to facilitate this holiday project and others like it, sharing the miraculous and practical love of God.



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# ISAAC'S COMFORT AND EVERYONE'S GOLGOTHA



By *Leon Mazin*

*"Then Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent and took Rebekah, and she became his wife, and he loved her. Thus was Isaac comforted..."* (Genesis 24:67)

Let's look at this verse in relation to the situation we face as a nation and as individuals.

As I write, there seems to be a truce with Lebanon and a ceasefire with Gaza. The hostages have begun to return. Still, deep trauma remains. Soldiers and civilians have been killed. Many have been wounded and face years of rehabilitation or permanent handicaps. Many who have lived through these months of war are mentally and psychologically distressed with anxiety, sleeplessness, and physical distress. Many are waiting to receive therapy for post-traumatic stress disorders. What can we do? How can we live with this?

The Bible describes Isaac's mental trauma, calling it "mother's grief." It may have originated from the altar and his father's obedience to sacrifice him. The traditional Midrash says that when Sarah learned of Abraham's plan, she died of grief. It may be that Isaac suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder, and became distant from his father. Jewish tradition says that for many years he lived as if he was "unalive." I expect modern psychiatry would have an explanation for this.

## Isaac's Paradox

Isaac was a man of God, a forerunner of the Messiah, a son of the Covenant, and yet he suffered from traumatic grief?! So what can we "normal people" expect? Unfortunately, we are all human and extremely vulnerable. Eventually, Rebekah helped bring comfort and healing to Isaac.

A good husband or wife is surely a comfort from the Lord. Every child of God has their own "Rebekah" sent by God to help in the healing process. Indeed, Paul writes about the gifts of assistance in 1 Corinthians 12:28, without specifying them, hinting that there are many of them and that we can be used by God to help heal others. Each of us can also expect healing through others. Even if we are overwhelmed by feelings of loneliness, destruction, and even betrayal, the Lord wants to reveal Himself and heal us.

## Everyone Has His Own Golgotha

Every one of us will experience hardship. We each need to arrive at our own point of connection with "Golgotha" – a place where we give Yeshua our broken-ness and receive His mercy, atonement and healing.

The Golgotha effect, the substitution by the Messiah's sacrifice, came into force when: *"...He was wounded for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him, and by His wounds we are healed."* (Isaiah 53:5)

This gives us hope for healing from that which afflicts us. In a brutally literal way, Yeshua took upon Himself our woundedness. His utter distress becomes the source of our peace. He has *"borne our griefs and carried our sorrows"* (Isaiah 53:4).

Knowing the help that is available to others in Yeshua, can we be a comfort to those who are navigating trauma? Can we share what we ourselves have received from that hill of love-filled sacrifice?

*"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Yeshua HaMashiach, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God."* (2 Corinthians 1:3-4)

Please pray for all of Israel and for God's miracles and renewal to flow throughout the globe. Thank you so much for your prayers and financial support. Peace and blessings in Yeshua.







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## IN SECRET



*By Guy Cohen*

Do you, like me, sense a need for prevailing prayer in our day? Yeshua taught us how to stand in prayer.

What are the conditions for the Lord accepting our prayers according to Matthew 6:5-18? He wants us not to be hypocritical; standing where we can be seen by others. Instead, He wants us to go into the inner room where no one sees us, alone with Him. Then, our Father who sees what is done in secret will reward us.

My conclusion is that God wants my heart to be pure when I enter the secret place. We need to remember that even before we ask, He knows what we need. That's why Yeshua taught us this basic prayer, which teaches us how to approach God.

First we lift up His name. He is our Father in Heaven, the Holy One. The Kingdom of Heaven belongs to Him. His will is what will be done on earth as in heaven. Then, we pray for our daily bread and forgive others, including ourselves, as He forgives us. When temptation tries to come against us, He is our rescuer.

We as believers in Yeshua worldwide are called to enter into deeper prayer. For many it will mean fasting before Him. The book of Esther records how she called for fasting and intercession to alter the course of history, to move the mountains standing before God's people, and the threats hanging over their heads.

“And when you pray,  
you shall not be like the hypocrites.

For they love to pray standing in the  
synagogues  
and on the corners of the streets,  
that they may be seen by men.

Assuredly, I say to you, they have their  
reward.

But you, when you pray, go into your room,  
and when you have shut your door,  
pray to your Father who **is in the secret  
place;**  
and your Father who sees **in secret**  
will reward you openly.”

(Matthew 6:5-6 NKJV)



## Deserving of Wrath

God loves us even though we don't deserve it. In fact, we deserve just the opposite.

*"You were dead in your transgressions and sins... you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath." (Ephesians 2:1-3 NKJV)*

Our disobedience has provoked God. We have all sinned; we have all betrayed God. Psalm 7:11 says that God is angry every day. Our sin is not negligible. We deserve wrath and punishment. Yet, God chooses to love us. We were dead in our sins. Many people who think they are "living it up" are spiritually dead on the inside.

When people sin, they are giving in to temptation and to the influence of demonic forces. To walk in faith, we must go against the flow – against the influence of sinful human society and against our own selfish desires.

*"But because of His great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Messiah even when we were dead in transgressions – it is by grace you have been saved." (Ephesians 2:4-5)*

Despite all our evil ways, God chooses to forgive us because of His great love. He grants us pardon based on Yeshua's willingness to take our punishment upon himself.

## A Godly Vantage Point

*"And God raised us up with Messiah and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms in Messiah Yeshua." (Ephesians 2:6)*

In addition to forgiving us, God invites us to be seated with Him in heavenly realms. While your body is here on earth, you can pray with Yeshua from the highest position of spiritual authority and power.

We should not allow circumstances to dictate how we live. We can influence the situation around us. Let's not waste even one sentence on complaining! You could use the same breath to help alter reality.

Proverbs 21:1 says God can change the hearts of political leaders. *"The king's heart is like channels of water in the hand of the Lord; he directs it wherever he wants."* In spite of how one might feel about Netanyahu, Trump or any other leader, we pray for God to direct their hearts and the hearts of all in authority.

We have seen the effect of this kind of prayer during this war almost daily. God has given revelatory wisdom to our government and miraculous victories on the battlefield.

Something good is happening here. Within the last half a year, a song about God's love has even become arguably the most popular song in Israel, garnering over 27 million views. It was written by an ultra-Orthodox rabbi, but is sung exuberantly by young secular Israelis – in a surprising display of unity and optimism.

## "He Always Loves Me"

(Words by Y. Elitzur and Rabbi S. Arush, performed by Sasson Shaulov.)

*Hashem is a good father, and He always boasts of me. He sees in me only the good points. Sees that I want to be good, but it doesn't turn out that way. And Hashem also saw my desire, that I tried and did not give up. He sees my disgrace, the bitterness I felt, how I started over each time.*

(chorus)

***And Hashem, may He be blessed, always loves me,***

***And always does me good. And even more good. And even more good. And it will always be good for me.***

*He hears, has mercy on me and always answers me, and if He has not yet, I continue to wait. Lead me in Your compassion. May all see that You do hear prayer. A beautiful happy life year after year.*

*He will shine His light in us, faith will shine. The wisdom of truth, knowledge and understanding. Our Messiah will finally come, and there will be no war.*

---

What a startling declaration is made in this song, which has gone viral among Orthodox and secular alike! Even though most of our people do not yet see Yeshua, this song echoes much of the love and faith found in the gospels and epistles:

***"Neither height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Messiah Yeshua our Lord." (Romans 8:39)***



# SHOCK AND AWE



By Jonathan Moore

God has been speaking to us about the Fear of the Lord. This word for fear in Hebrew is *yirah* (יראה) and is used in several ways. It probably is better translated as “awe,” and the root from this same word can be used for awesome – in the true sense and not in the modern, “groovy,” popular slang sense. Some translators have translated it as “terrible” as in “The great and terrible day of the Lord.” It’s terrible in an awe-some way, like a military “shock and awe” campaign.

This is quite an important word when you think about it. Proverbs 9:10 says *“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.”*

But why? Because to begin to understand anything we must first know God as the Source and Creator. Sometimes we “forget” to be in awe of Him. I think one of the most awe-some descriptions about the greatness of God is in the book of Job starting in chapter 38 and continuing through 41. Read this short sample in Job 41:10-11, 18-21:

*“Who then is able to stand before Me? Who has confronted Me that I should repay? Everything under heaven belongs to Me.”*

*“He sneezes out flashes of light; his eyes are like the eyelids of dawn.*

*Out of his mouth go flames, sparks of fire shoot out.*

*Smoke pours from his nostrils, as a boiling pot over burning reeds.*

*His breath sets coals ablaze and flames dart from his mouth.”*

Have you ever been jolted by the awesome power of a lightning bolt? Here in Job, that’s one of the ways God illustrates His might.

When we see the awe-someness of God, the completely sovereign, all-powerful, all-knowing, omni-present creator of heaven and earth and all that is in it... this serves as a good starting point to comprehend who we are and how we fit into the cosmos.



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And ironically, it’s not where you would expect, considering our frailties. God created this entire universe for us to inhabit. We are above angels in our importance to Him. And when we failed, casting away the awe-some image of His glory to idolize created things, He didn’t give up. God Himself became human in order to show us how to return to the Father. Yeshua, fully God and fully man, shows us the way back and also the ridiculous value placed on our reconnection.

He is awe-some in who He is. He is awe-some in what He does. He is awe-some in His covenantal Love for us - surpassing understanding. I’m in awe.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Let’s start perceiving who He is, and then all other understanding can flow from there.

## Congregational News

- We have an unprecedented 18 people interested in becoming members of our congregation.
- All four of the pregnant mothers have given birth within two months!
- Our youth group has doubled (young kids reaching teenage years without any graduating out) and we are excited to see how God will use them including a possible youth group worship team.







## A NEW NAME, A NEW IDENTITY



By Tal Haroni

*“The one who enters through the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep **by name** and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice.”*  
(John 10:2–4)

There is something profound in Yeshua’s words – the personal call of the Shepherd to His sheep. It is not just a distant voice or a general instruction; it is a personal call, a name, an identity, and a deep recognition. The sheep recognize the Shepherd’s voice because He speaks to each one by name.

On our farm, we also raise goats. To train a goat to recognize its name, we enter the pen and call it by name. When it responds, we reward it with dry bread (which they consider a real treat), a vegetable, or a gentle touch. Over time, the goats learn their own names and also who their owner is. They come to associate their name with something good.

This is similar to what Yeshua does. First, He calls us by name. *“Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have **called you by name**; you are mine”* (Isaiah 43:1). Then, He begins to provide us with our daily bread – everything we need for life and godliness. We receive His name upon us, just as children take on their father’s surname or a bride her husband’s.

Our name reflects our identity. Parents often choose a name that they hope will personify the child’s destiny or nature, bringing blessing and purpose into their lives. While no one can predict exactly how a child will develop, a name serves as a prophetic declaration over their future.

Yeshua defines our true identity, our true name, not just a combination of letters, but the very core of our being. When we listen to His voice and receive our “daily bread” through reading Scripture and prayer, we begin to recognize His voice and calling.

Throughout Scripture, when God changed a person’s name, it was a transformation of identity and purpose. Jacob was given his birth name because he grasped his brother Esau’s heel. The word “heel” in Hebrew is *akev*, and Jacob’s name essentially meant “the one who follows his brother.” His identity was tied to someone else, rather than to his own destiny. But in the moment of wrestling with the angel of God, he held on, fought, and prevailed. That’s when his name was changed to Israel, meaning “*one who prevails with God*” (Genesis 32:29). It was a shift in his mission and his relationship with God.

Abram and Sarai became Abraham and Sarah, as God added the letter “h” from His own name to theirs, marking them as the father and mother of a nation. Yeshua gave Simon a new name, Peter (*Kefa*), after he received the revelation of who Yeshua truly was.

*“Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock, I will build my community, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.”* (Matthew 16:17-18)

When we are born again in Yeshua, we receive a new name. This does not necessarily mean changing the name our parents gave us, but rather receiving our new identity in Him.

The good Shepherd knows each of us by name. What name does Yeshua call you by?

