

# ISRAEL'S RESTORATION

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## What Is the World Really Afraid Of?

02 | Ariel Blumenthal

## Family in Trying Times

03 - 06 | Eitan Shishkoff

## Trust Drives Out Fear

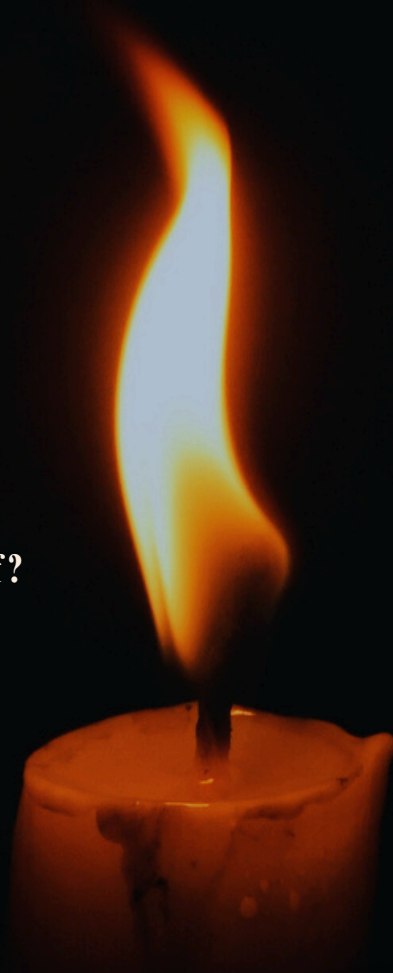
04 | Leon Mazin

## The Father's Love

05 | Guy Cohen

## Israelis Seeking God

07 | Kosta Bikesh



# Faith in the Night

Page 08 | By Tal Haroni

# What Is the World Really Afraid Of?



By Ariel Blumenthal



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Our little country Israel and our little city Jerusalem continue to be a global focus. A lot of news outlets are obsessed with what's going on in the Promised Land:

*"Is Israel going to going to attack here or there? Is Israel going to hold onto this part of Gaza or that? Is there going to be a ceasefire?"*

When the Jews and the Jewish state are down, when we're being abused and beaten up like we were on October 7th; we get a lot of sympathy around the world. But very quickly, as soon as we start fighting and even maybe winning a little bit, the world starts screaming "Stop." They don't want the Jews to win. Something about the Jewish State having jurisdiction over territory terrifies them.

It's a spiritual thing. It's not rational.

There are wars and refugee problems all over the world on a scale ten times bigger, that nobody cares about. They're in the news one day; then gone. But what happens HERE makes everybody feel the need to respond.

British commentator, Douglas Murray, said Israel seems to be the only country in the world which is never *allowed to win a war*. Look through the conflicts of the last 76 years since Israel gained independence. Whenever Israel starts to really win, the world screams "Stop! Give it back!" This happened in 1967 and 1973, in defensive wars, when the IDF start getting close to Damascus or Cairo and the borders started enlarging and we took over territory.

Historically, when a country wins a war, it often enlarges its borders. You don't just say, "Oh, we'll go back to the original borders. You guys stay over there and have a nice society, and we'll stay over here and see you next time!" That's not what usually happens in history. But that's what happens here. Have you noticed that Israel has had to return land after each war?

Just the idea that Israel might continue military rule in Gaza for a while terrifies people. But we know *who the world is really afraid of*. It's not the Jews, it's the Jewish King Messiah.

Note that that over 100 years ago at the beginning of the Zionist movement, when Jews started to return in numbers, the tremors began. At that time a document was produced called "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion." It was fake news telling of a supposed Jewish conspiracy to take over the world. This has been proven to be utter fabricated nonsense, yet it spread around the world and became one of the classic texts used by the Nazis to indoctrinate young people against Jews. Today there's a renewed obsession with conspiracies of Jewish supremacy. However, we know *what the world is really afraid of*. It's not the Jews. It's the Jewish King Messiah:

**"...out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God."**

(Revelation 19:15)

Revelation 19 and Psalm 2 are among the most important prophecies of the second coming of Yeshua. The world is afraid that He's coming back to *judge* and *reign* as God promised. As the ruler of this world, Satan will do everything in his power to try and stop that from happening. Therefore, his pawns – the nations of the world – are "raging" against God and against His Messiah (Psalm 2).





Sarah and Abraham - courtesy Jan van't Hoff

# Family in Trying Times



By Eitan Shishkoff

Israel is a family, especially since October 7. We are in an agonizingly shared experience of shock, loss, and grief. Yet also of determination, sacrifice, and solidarity. Each family that lost a loved one in that horrific attack, or lost a fighter in the solid year of battle that continues, or has hoped against hope for the return of a hostage, or had to vacate their home under repeated rocket attacks — is the entire country in microcosm.

Speaking of families, it is the beginning of a new school year. Attempting to carve out some semblance of “normalcy,” each family is navigating the ever-present threat of this multi-front war intensifying.

Among believers in Yeshua, together with our loyal friends in the nations, there is an *increased sense of needing each other*. We know that God is calling us to a higher level of united prayer, worship, and mutual faith-strengthening. **We are, after all, the House of God, His entire family** — Messiah’s Jewish and Gentile disciples together.

So, where does this concept come from? What does it mean to be a family? And what are the implications for my life, day to day?

## I. Family: Where Does It Come From?

“**In the beginning God created... בראשית ברא אלהים.**” All of creation and the entire human family come from God the Father “**...of whom the whole family on heaven and earth is named**” (Ephesians 3:14).

The vocabulary of family is woven into our nature, into our relationships, and throughout the Bible. We are His sons and daughters, created in His image, with an eternal inheritance. In fact, all creation waits for us to enter the fullness of what it means to be His children (Romans 8:21).

In the beginning was family. God created us male and female and told us to multiply. We were given an unimaginable garden and a simple instruction — which we didn’t follow! This problem of rebellion has plagued man ever since. God’s Book is one long story of **His search for a family through whom** He could restore, redeem, and reclaim His whole human family.

## After Adam & Eve, Abraham & Sarah

Twenty generations after the first couple, God chose a man and a woman to save mankind — Abraham and Sarah. Since the world was lost through family, it had to be saved through family.

The turning point was Abraham placing Isaac, the future of his promised family and of world redemption, on the altar. The Almighty’s response was to declare by oath (!) that all the **families of the earth** would be blessed by Abraham’s radical trust / obedience (Genesis 22:16-18). God then called Himself the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, indicating the central place of Abe’s family line in His eternal plan.

That divine oath would be fulfilled in another 28 generations through another family. In Nazareth, Yosef and Miriam (a direct descendant of Abraham — “the seed of a woman” Genesis 3:15) raised Yeshua, Savior of the world, until He began His public ministry.

God’s plan required (and still requires) families. Adam and Eve, Abraham and Sarah, and then Yosef and Miriam were His means of creating His everlasting kingdom on earth.

Continued on page 6







Martyrs' Last Prayer by Gerome 1883 public domain

# Trust Drives Out Fear



By Leon Mazin

Thank you for the continued prayers and support you provide to Shavei Tzion in these difficult times.

In recent weeks the words of the Apostle Paul often came to my mind. **“Indeed, we felt we had received the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us again. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us...”** (2 Corinthians 1:9).

Paul writes about the danger of persecution for those who proclaim the name of Yeshua. During those days the spies of the Caesar Nero hunted and murdered any “sprouts” of faith. The persecution was so strong that the believers saw Nero as an Antichrist.

Yeshua’s disciples recalled the words of Yeshua Messiah: **“If the sufferings of those days had not been reduced no flesh would have been able to bear them.”**

Paul wrote about the “death sentence” that forced him to rely not on himself but on the Lord. Today his words to the Corinthians are still relevant. I know people who have appropriated them in critical situations. For example in the midst of fighting disease, they were strengthened in God! The doctors’ verdicts were unquestionable, but the Lord’s miracle triumphed.

Many in Israel are “on the edge.” Fear of danger is very real. When Islamic militants desire to kill a huge number of non-Muslims, even sober-minded people are filled with fear. But like Paul, we seek hope in the Lord. And God who has rescued us before, DOES SO AGAIN! And even though the threats of Iran and Hezbollah, terrorism inside the country, and many other depressing news have become our reality and sentence of death; yet we trust in Yeshua!

As for our congregation, we continue to function in our usual mode because it is important to encourage people and lift their spirits. Our youth had an activity filled summer. The “Nesher” Project took IDF soldiers for a time of “rehabilitation” in Texas. Many thanks to all of you for your participation, support, and prayers. These veterans experienced rest, renewal, and the love of the believers hosting them. In September our Music School started operating again after the summer holiday.

So, life goes on!

We kindly ask you to keep praying for us to be God’s mouthpieces, to receive from Him support and ability, to empower and encourage other people, and to be His witnesses for our fellow Israelis.

With prayer for God’s protection over each of you and with love.

## Return to Zion Congregation

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# The Father's Love



By Guy Cohen

There are over eight billion people in the world. Each one of us is unique and special. Each of us is known personally by God, and we are all connected by the need for love.

In 1 Corinthians 13, we have a definition of what love is and how we as human beings are designed and expected to walk in that love. Sadly, these days we see society manipulating concepts of love into strange directions. Rather than the pure, unselfish and unconditional love that Paul described, we witness "love" warped into selfishness and control.

The love that comes from God is available to all of mankind. When Yeshua was baptized, a voice came from Heaven saying, **"This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased"** (Matthew 3:17). In these words I can see the pure love of God for Yeshua, expressed even before Yeshua did anything. He had not yet performed any miracles, nor fed any multitude, nor healed a leper, nor raised anyone from the dead, nor cast out demons, nor preached good news, nor gone to the cross.

*Yet, God was well pleased!* It is very important for us to understand that the Father's love for us is unconditional. It does not depend on what we do or don't do. He is love, God IS love. (1 John 3:16)

Yeshua's prayer before going to the cross was that the world would see this same love among His disciples as well; that even today, His followers would be one as Yeshua and the Father are one (John 17:18-23). We are called as believers in Yeshua – His modern day disciples, to walk in this same definition of love, where we know that we are beloved children of God, in both good times and bad. Our Father accepts and protects us, and there is nothing we can or cannot do to receive this love. It is unconditional, He is always there for us.

King David wrote, **"Even if my father and my mother forsake me, the Lord will take me in"** (Psalm 27:10).

David's soul cried out again and again to Abba for His love, because there is no greater love than the love of God. It is only when we are filled with the love of God that we can reflect the Father's love to a world in chaos.

We pray that billions of people in the world will come to know the love of the Father through Yeshua the Messiah.





## II. What Does It Mean To Be a Family?

The grand plan I just outlined is thrilling. But as a family man with “feet on the ground” I want to know my part. What am I aiming for? How can we reflect the original design and touch other families?

Of the numerous elements we could point to, I’ve chosen three. LOVE, IDENTITY, and MATURITY.

**Love.** God IS love. His love is at the very root and foundation of our lives as his sons and daughters (Ephesians 3:16-19). In an individual family, love is the sine qua non (that without which it cannot exist). The only way to build a blessed family is (A) to RECEIVE God’s love in abundance, and (B) to GIVE it in abundance. This love is not without discipline. Biblically, discipline is an outworking of love (see Hebrews 12:5-11).

**Identity.** When children and spouses are well-loved it creates an atmosphere of security. The ability to form and develop healthy relationships in life flows from being secure. As parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and spiritual moms and dads, we help lay this groundwork of personal security through loving affirmation, correction, and patient communication. The Lord instructed Israel to teach our children in the home environment “... **when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up**” (Deuteronomy 6:7).

**Maturity.** We love, cuddle, and enjoy our children when they are little. Their gifts are to be discovered and nurtured along the way. Yet if they never mature, we become justifiably concerned. The ultimate goal of family and the fruit of secure identity is mature adults who are able to raise their own families. We can easily apply this to the family of God. Young believers mature to the stage where they can disciple others.

## III. How Can We Foster a Healthy Family Day-to-Day?

I suggest these elements: INTERCESSION, HEALING, and LEGACY.

**Intercession.** Prayer is the privilege and responsibility of everyone who cherishes family. The devil hates what God loves, right? Knowing that God loves family, it’s no wonder that the enemy uses his heaviest artillery against the well-being of each family. How else but on our knees can we respond to the complexity of raising children in the “smart phone” age, relating to inter-generational sensitivities (often multi-cultural), military service, aging, and so much more?

*Are you PRAYING regularly for your family and for other families?*

**Healing** Every family has broken areas. I invite you to pursue the healing of your own family history. Forgiveness is a major key. Also, it is vital to foster open communication — the freedom to speak of hurts and offenses without defensive reaction. In receiving healing, we are able to bring healing to others (2 Corinthians 1:3-5).

**Legacy.** What am I passing on? Both natural families and spiritual families (i.e. congregations!) are the God-given environment to absorb values, priorities, character, and rich faith.

In addition, those without biological family nearby are to find a secure, welcoming, and productive home. “**He sets the solitary in families**” (Psalm 68:6).

More than ever before, we are called to be the “family of God.” May our homes and congregations reflect the reality of “children like olive plants all around your table.”



Author with daughter



# Israelis Seeking God



By **Kosta Bikesh**

From the Covid crisis to the October 7th attack, fear, isolation and trauma are forcing Israelis to look for answers to existential questions; and many are looking to the New Testament. Here at Tiferet Yeshua, seekers and new believers reach out to us regularly. Each month, we receive requests for Hebrew New Testaments. We get to meet and disciple these people who refuse to let their search for the truth be deterred by religious and cultural stigmas.

## Young man who read New Testament on his own

About five months ago, Yaniv started coming to our services. He had read the New Testament several times already and deeply connected with what he found there. Moti and I began meeting with him every week.

The process of discipleship with Yaniv was very special. God had already revealed spiritual truths to him through the New Testament, things which usually take new believers time to understand. Because of this, we were able to delve deeply into the Word.

We were excited when Yaniv was ready to make his public confession of faith by water immersion, in early August. Moti and I were honored to be with Yaniv at his immersion, along with some of his family members who are not believers but have been amazed at the positive transformation in him.

Our part does not end here: as a spiritual family, we are committed to meeting with Yaniv and encouraging him as he begins his walk as a new creation in Messiah. Please keep him in prayer that he would grow and be strengthened in his faith and that God would complete the good work of transformation that He has begun!



Courtesy Tiferet

## Man from religious background seeks connection with God

Uriel contacted us to ask questions about the New Testament. This young man lives in an Orthodox community and serves in an IDF combat unit. Our initial contact was through text messages and short conversations. Then we began meeting on “zoom” every couple of weeks to talk about faith in Yeshua. At the beginning of the Gaza war, he was called to serve in the reserves, first in the south and then on Israel’s northern border with Lebanon.

Uriel was looking for a personal connection with God. Our conversations centered around his question about how and where to seek God, how to feel His presence and know Him, and how to pray (in Orthodox Judaism liturgical prayers are read and recited instead of spontaneous personal prayer).

At first, Uriel was not willing to touch the New Testament himself, but only for me to read to him or send him portions of verses in text messages.

After a while, I finally told Uriel, “Listen, you need to read the New Testament yourself. You need to get to know it yourself, not through me.” I thought this might end our discussions, but he surprised me by saying, “Ok, where should I start?” Uriel began reading in Matthew, and suddenly our conversations changed. He was anxious to digest what he was reading, and I could see that God was touching his heart.

Please pray continued revelation through God’s Word, and for that real personal connection for Uriel with God. Uriel admits he has not been able to connect with God in the Orthodox framework. Please pray with us that hindrances and fears will be removed; that the Holy Spirit would guide him into all truth; and that he would accept and experience that Yeshua is the way, the truth and the life, and that no one comes to the Father but by Him.





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# Faith in the Night



By Tal Haroni

Times are getting tougher, and the Scriptures say the days will grow even darker. What can equip and help us? What will help us stand firm even with no end in sight, especially when we don't feel God's presence? I know I don't always see His promises being fulfilled, and I don't always understand the full plan. But one thing I stand by is the faithfulness of God!

**“To declare Your lovingkindness in the morning, and Your faithfulness every night.” (Psalm 92)**

This psalm speaks about faith in the night. Night represents the moments when nothing seems to succeed; everything is dark, and there is no hope. Morning represents the return of light and warmth; we meet other people and easily feel grace. At the moment of seeing success and promises fulfilled, we don't need to believe for what we already have. *But when it's dark, when it's hard to see, when we reach a dead end – that's when we need to remember God's faithfulness.*

The word faithfulness – אֱמוּנָה in Hebrew comes from the root א.מ.נ (A.M.N.), and so does the word faith – אֱמוּנָה. Faith is accepting a fact as truth without asking for proof. Faith is not something you can argue with. Moreover, faith is not something we either have or don't have; it's a muscle. You can train it. Anyone who has trained athletically knows you can't see results without consistency. Muscles grow when we keep training, and so does our faith.

During strenuous physical activity, such as weightlifting, small fibers of the muscle stretch and tear, resulting in microscopic injuries. Then, the body begins repairing and rebuilding the muscles. The body not only repairs the torn fibers but also strengthens them to *better withstand stress the next time.*

In other words, while we're living in this world, we go through various experiences. Maybe I didn't succeed in an exam or didn't get the job. Maybe someone insulted or hurt me, or I had to deal with a serious health condition. These are the small tears in my muscles of faith. These are the moments when I want to remind myself that God is faithful to change me, help me, and complete me. The more I train the muscle of faith, the more my faith grows, and the next time I encounter a difficult situation, I can activate this muscle with less effort.

**“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” (Hebrews 11:1)**

Our faith in Yeshua is not dependent on our feelings, because emotions come and go. Today, I woke up in a good mood, and tomorrow I might not. Our stability comes from God's faithful, unchanging character. What God said, He will do, even if we don't see it right at that moment.

**“If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.” (2 Timothy 2:13)**

Here are some practical exercises that help me overcome and strengthen my muscle of faith when things get tough.

1. Read the scriptures.
2. Turn to others.
3. Remember what He has already done in my life.

It's easy to let the darkness overwhelm us and choke our faith. There are moments when we feel like giving up. But to dispel darkness, you only need a small light, and faith is light. God invites us to believe in who He truly is, to trust in His faithfulness and to know that even in the dark, He is our true light.

