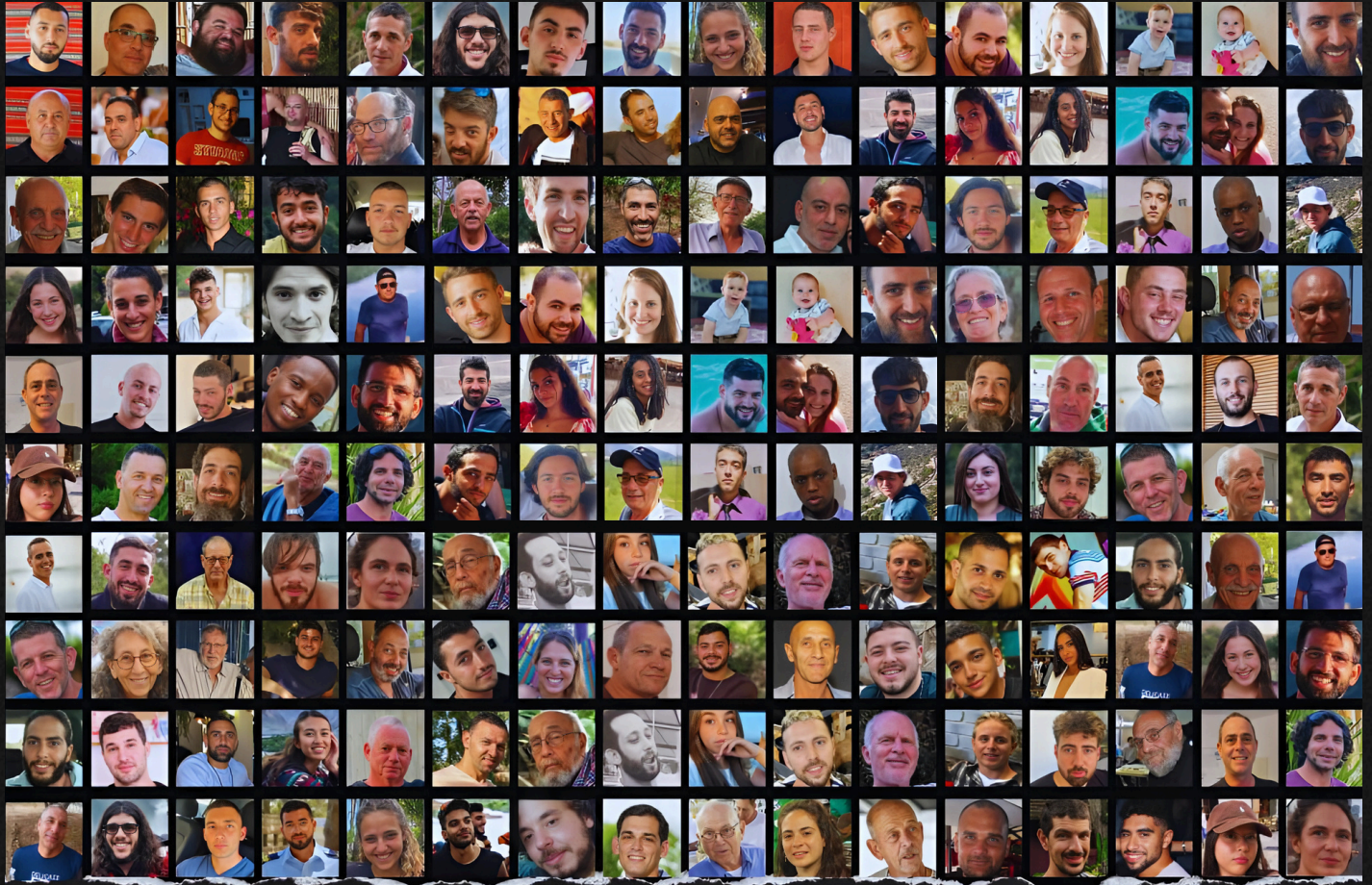


ISRAEL'S RESTORATION

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"For the restoration of all things." (Acts 3:21)

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SEXUAL SIN AMONG SPIRITUAL LEADERS

HOW CAN WE RESPOND?
HUMILITY, HOLINESS,
AND BROKEN-HEARTEDNESS



By Asher Intrater

What a difficult subject! How should we respond? Let's look at King David in Psalm 51. This is David who felled the Giant but then fell before sexual temptation!

***“Create in me a pure heart, O God.
And renew a right Spirit within me.
Cast me not away from your presence.”***

Can you hear the conviction? The fear of God? David realizes the need for a deep inner change. He is painfully aware of his inability to overcome his own flesh and sin. He's broken and crying out as he recognizes the holiness of God, understands that he could lose it all.

***“And take not your holy spirit from me.
Restore unto me the joy of your salvation.”***

David is crushed by the realization of his sin. It's as if he's saying, *“I've blown it for the kingdom of God!”* He committed adultery, and then lied about it and committed murder to cover it up. He knows that is the king of Israel, through whom Messiah the Savior of the whole world is supposed to come. He's stunned and terrified by what he has done.

Then he adds, ***“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise”*** (v.17). God is waiting for human beings to realize our sinfulness, come before Him in repentance, and then He will accept our response of humility and brokenness. That is a pure expression of worship.

This past year has been difficult – with allegations of sexual sin against many leaders across the world, including some we know personally. The situations are always complicated. Normally these kinds of sin take place with no witnesses present. It's one person's word against another's. When leaders are involved, there is an imbalance of emotional and psychological influence, which can make the situation spiritually abusive.

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© Rend your hearts
- sculpture by Rick Wienecke

We've had to spend hundreds of hours dealing with these cases, both in Israel and around the world. It's all messy. Everyone is hurt. It seems that God is purging us. It's humiliating for us human beings, but God desires to have sin exposed and removed. We are standing before a holy God. All of our good intentions of due process and covenantal relationships are not going to work if our hearts are not broken and humble before Him.

David was the head of the community of faith in his generation. So, *how could something like this happen?* Ephesians 4:22 says that the lusts of this world are deceptive. You don't even see that you are deceiving yourself. You justify the action while it's happening. We must be constantly aware that we're living in a sinful world, and must flee its lusts (2 Timothy 2:22).

David's Failure and Miriam's Triumph

Now let's go to the story of the conception of our beloved Messiah, the descendant of David.

Miriam tells the angel Gabriel ***“How am I going to be with child since I'm a virgin.”*** Coming from an Orthodox Jewish background that means she had never touched a man. And now notice that the word “holy” appears twice in Luke 1:35:

The angel answered and said to her, ***“The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So, the Holy One to be born will be called the Son of God.”***

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Feb' 25
02



ORIGINAL FACE TIME

- WHEN GOD SEES YOU



By Hannah Tekle

He had been there for what seemed like forever, sprawled out on the bedding his mother had prepared for him years ago. There were always people around – sometimes more, swarming and pushing, and sometimes less, leaving him a clear view of the water.

At the beginning, someone was always with him, helping him, keeping him company and watching the surface of the water to be ready to scoop him up into the pool in case the miraculous ripples appeared. They would bring him food and refresh his bedding and speak hopefully of his chances to be healed. As the years went by and he got older, family and friends came less and less often. Eventually, he was left all alone. The hope he once had drained into bitter resolve. Watching people come and go, he accepted that his destiny was to sit on the edge of the supernatural but never to be the lucky one touched by grace.

One Shabbat new people arrived whom he had never seen before. He was used to seeing groups like this look about with casual curiosity at the desperation of miracle seekers and then go on their way, with either pity or disgust in their eyes. He was used to being invisible, melting into the background, his face and plight unseen.

“Yeshua?” He heard one of the followers address the man who appeared to be the leader, “What is our task in this place? There are so many people here, what can we do for them?”

Just then, Yeshua turned and looked him full in the face. His gaze was like fire burning into his tired soul. Walking towards him, Yeshua asked, **“Do you want to be made well?”**

What else would he be doing here but wanting to be made well?! However, he peered into Yeshua’s face, and gave the most rational explanation: **“Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another steps down before me”** (John 5:7). Tears of compassion rose in Yeshua’s eyes, and the crippled man knew at once that **His** tears were the Pool of Grace in which to be healed. Immediately he followed Yeshua’s instructions and got up from where he had been lying all these decades, rolled up the mat and began walking home. Suddenly, he turned back realizing he hadn’t even thanked Him, but Yeshua was no longer there. Bending down to touch his newly-mobile legs, he closed his eyes and remembered the **face** of Yeshua shining on him.

Faces All Over Israel

Posters featuring the **faces** of kidnapped hostages are scattered throughout Israel, so that all may see and be confronted with the ongoing reality of their absence – these victims of the hate crimes perpetrated on Oct. 7, 2023 and since. Media platforms make their faces known, showing pictures and videos of each one with descriptions and stories of who they are.

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2024 WAS A CHALLENGE



By *Leon Mazin*

The ongoing war, frequent rocket attacks, running to bomb shelters, and concern for loved ones serving in the IDF put great strain on all of us. Every Israeli may not personally know someone that was injured or killed, but all have relatives or friends who do. Our lives are inextricably intertwined.

Israel is going through an internal shake-up. The initial national unity following October 7th, is giving way to familiar tensions between the Right and the Left, the Secular and the Orthodox.

War is expensive. Taxes are increasing to cover the costs.

The Middle East map is changing rapidly. Conflicts between Russia and Ukraine, China and Taiwan, the Turks and the Kurds, Libya and Sudan – all in some way or another influence Israel.

Stability can only be found in relationship with the Heavenly Father, Messiah Yeshua and the Spirit. It is wrong to put our trust in people and in the ambitions of leaders. Paul offers believers the formula: “*May the **grace** of the Lord Yeshua Messiah, and the **love** of God, and the **fellowship** of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen*” (2 Corinthians 13:14).

For this to happen our spiritual eyes must be opened. We need to be fully aware of God’s care for us, resist the lies of the world and refuse to be pawns in its chess game.

Please pray for us in Haifa and for our daughter congregations, for believers in Yeshua in Israel to have the strength to stand in God’s peace.

In 2024, by the grace of our God and your unfailing friendship:

1. Shavei Tzion Congregation, daughter congregations Or Chai and Netzer ha-Galil continued in outreach and sharing Yeshua Messiah’s testimony. We held water immersions for those who chose the way of salvation! Each congregation celebrated Purim, Passover, Shavuot, Sukkot, and Hannukah with abundant guests. We had three inner healing seminars. Our youth group grew and met regularly. Our home groups are proving an encouragement to those attending. In difficult times we have seen Messiah’s power demonstrated within the congregational family.

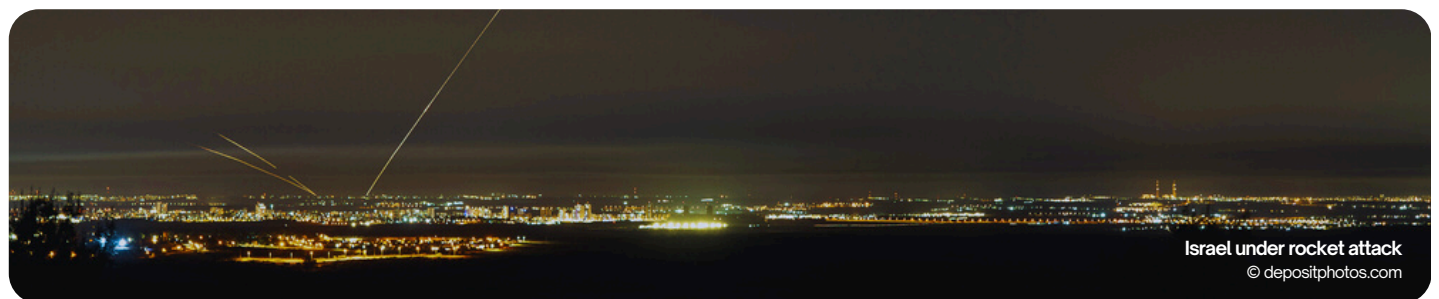
2. Humanitarian projects. We were able to provide hot meals to 60 elderly people 3 – 4 days a week. Also, in cooperation with the municipality, we assist needy people with food supplies during the biblical festival seasons. The New Immigrants Project has reached hundreds of people. We give them food, bed linens, kitchenware – and encouragement. Our humanitarian “Secondhand” warehouse operated full time, with a few short breaks. The warehouse is located in a bomb shelter, so during the intense weeks of rocket attacks the distribution was paused so that it could shelter residents from the nearby apartments. We also served foreign children who come to Israel for medical treatment by providing them with food supplies.

3. The “Rainbow of Sounds” Music and Art School has grown – now we are serving approximately 130 students, mostly children. We have opened a small branch of the school in the Nazareth area and conducted several concerts. The children did wonderfully. Many of the students come from underprivileged families, so our ministry subsidizes around half of the tuition fees to enable them to develop their giftings.

4. Serving IDF Soldiers. Throughout the year, volunteers from our congregation made food for soldiers and we delivered it to them in various remote locations.

5. We organized events for Holocaust Survivors.

May you have a blessed 2025, with God’s peace and protection over you and your loved ones.



Israel under rocket attack
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JACOB, MY MOTHER & THE BREAD OF LIFE



By Guy Cohen

The Torah portion from Genesis 47:28-50:26 is called “Vayechi” from the root meaning “life.” Here we read about the end of Jacob’s earthly life.

Genesis 47:28-31 is an account of Jacob’s conversation with Joseph before dying. Jacob asks him to swear he will not leave his remains in Egypt but carry them back to the land of Canaan, so that he may lie with his “*fathers in their burying place.*” Joseph honored his father’s request and brought Jacob’s body to the family burial cave in Hebron.

Why was it so important for Jacob that he not be forever buried in Egypt but rather in the Promised Land? The reason is that God promised the land to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Jacob’s vision was to be buried in the place where his father, grandfather, mother, grandmother and wife Leah were buried (Genesis 49:29-33).

Two thousand years ago, during the Second Temple period, some Israelites’ bones were brought to Israel from Babylon (Iraq), Iran and throughout the Levant. Even today it is considered a mitzvah (a good deed with great merit) to be buried in Israel.

Genesis 50:10 describes the custom of mourning for seven days. This tradition continues even now in Jewish homes. **On the last day of 2024, I completed the seven days of mourning (shiva) for my mother who passed away on the first day of Hanukkah.** Hanukkah is a feast of light and joy. My mother’s life reflected exactly that. She loved her family, loved to sing and loved to embrace and host family and friends in her home. She was a person who accepted everyone. I find comfort and joy in knowing that after over three months of suffering, she, during that time, came to know her Jewish Messiah and entered into the Light of the world.

Before Jacob’s life came to an end, he blessed the twelve tribes. I would like to focus on the blessing of the Tribe of Asher (Genesis 49:20). (As you may remember, our congregation is located in the inheritance of that tribe.) When we translate Jacob’s blessing literally, we see that Asher will have “*richness of bread.*” During that time, wheat was a form of currency and had value like gold has value. The blessing of richness of bread was to be royal provision. The word Asher in the Hebrew reflects the meaning of happiness (*osher*) and blessing. I see this as an indication that from its inception, the Tribe of Asher was to be a source of happiness and blessing, both in the physical and spiritual realm (Genesis 30:12-13).

Hundreds of years after Jacob, Moses also blessed the tribe of Asher: “*Let Asher be blessed with children; let him be acceptable to his brethren, and let him dip his foot in oil*” (Deuteronomy 33:24). I see it as Asher’s anointing. We see here a spirit of reconciliation which dwells in the oil of anointing over this area. Looking at the physical area allotted to the Tribe of Asher today (the Western Galilee), I see the fulfillment of God’s promise in the reconciliation among the various people groups and traditions living together in this area. Moreover, there is a greater calling for this area to bring the oil of anointing in Yeshua’s name throughout the region. I see growth and unity, many home groups, houses of worship and people joined together through the light of Yeshua, **offering the Bread of Life to hungry Israelis.**





So also, the faces and stories of the IDF soldiers who have died almost daily in the war, are published on the news, and interviews are held with their bereaved loved ones – to give a face to the numbers, to humanize the growing statistics of the heroes who have fallen. Even if one wanted to, it is impossible to escape the reality of how many people's lives have been taken. The pictures of the fallen are everywhere, and the sadness rises up at the strangest times:

- waiting at a red light (the fallen soldier's picture on the back window of a car or bus)
- at the post office (a poster of the manager's son who died in battle taped up on the wall by the service counter),
- driving along the highway on the way home (a picture of each hostage lines the road, their faces, names and ages enlarged to be seen clearly from passing cars).

Now, with the agreement signed, we are finally bringing more hostages home. We have been praying for and hoping for this day for so long. The families gaze into the faces of their loved ones, and they will get to be washed by the eyes of people who love them in place of the hateful stares of terrorist captors.

At the conclusion of our Shabbat service we proclaim the Aaronic benediction: "The LORD bless you and keep you; The LORD make His face shine upon you, And be gracious to you; The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, And give you peace" (Numbers 6:22-27). It is one of the most widely known Jewish prayers and twice mentions the face of God - emphasizing that if the face/countenance of God is towards you and upon you, so will His blessing be.

Yeshua - the Face of God

Yeshua is God made flesh, sent to earth to die for our sins, but also to put a face to The Name. If the God of Exodus was "I am who I am," and the God of Deuteronomy was the "God who was and who is and who will be forever more;" then the God of the Gospel is the "God of salvation, God in the flesh, the One who revealed Himself walking and talking among us." He ate and slept and wept. He spent time with the first disciples and performed miracles like the one described above in John 5 where he healed the crippled man by the Pool of Grace.

When babies are born, they are wired to thrive just by staring into the **faces** of their mother and father. When kids are little they sometimes even hold our cheeks between their hands so that they can capture our full attention.

With all of modern technology, phone calls, texts, emails and even video calls, there is nothing that compares to the fulness and directness of a face-to-face meeting.

As more hostages rejoin their families, we pray for them to be healed from all the trauma. We pray for comfort for the families who will receive their loved one back in a casket. **And we pray that all Israel will look into the face of the One who was pierced for them, and be healed inside and out.**



Continued from page 2

Miriam (Mary) and her intended husband Joseph are descendants of David. After so many generations in which sexual sin had done great damage to the kingdom of God... she wins. She breaks the curse and keeps herself holy. It's as if she says, *"I'm the great granddaughter of the kings and priests of our people, and I have determined that I am going to keep myself holy in this perverted generation."* She's a simple young Israeli girl who fought against the forces of sexual immorality and stood before the forces of Heaven and Hell. Yeshua's holy conception and birth is part of the victory of God's people, overcoming the carnality and the sinfulness of the world around us. Hallelujah!

John and James speak of not loving the world and not being a friend of the world. *"You adulterers and adulteresses do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God"* (James 4:4, 1 John 2:15).

SHINING THE LIGHT TO SURVIVORS

For several years, Tiferet Yeshua has been hosting special holiday events for Russian-speaking Holocaust survivors in the greater Tel Aviv area. On Passover, the Feast of Trumpets and Hanukkah, our very own Moti Cohen rolls up his sleeves and cooks almost 100 bountiful meals, including specialty Russian dishes, for these precious people who always show up with smiles and enthusiasm. In addition, we share a concert of holiday songs and a short message from the Word.

This past Hanukkah fell on New Year's Eve – the most important secular holiday celebrated in Russia, focusing on family and light. For the second year in a row it was my privilege to share a short encouraging message about the light of the world, Messiah Yeshua.

The creation of light is the first recorded of God, and Yeshua testified that He is the Light of the world. **It can be easy to focus on the increasing darkness in the world.** However, light has a unique power; darkness can never overcome it because **even a small amount of light pushes back the darkness.**



Tiferet Yeshua Congregation in Tel Aviv

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This is a challenging concept. We can't be "buddies" with everyone. Though we desire to be friendly and show Yeshua's love, we can't seek acceptance by aligning with social norms.

How do sexual sins happen in communities of faith, not just among leaders? Believers generally do not intend to sin, but when someone is "friendly" with the values of the world, he doesn't realize that he is getting stuck in the honey and the mud. And then suddenly, he says, "What happened?!" We must come to a deeper understanding that we can't be friends with the world around us.

Lord, our hearts are broken. We are so sorry that we have dishonored your name before the world. We tremble in fear at your word, your holiness, and your power. **But we also know that your grace is with us to forgive and heal. Lord don't take your Holy Spirit away from us; don't cast us away. Restore unto us the joy of Your Salvation.**



By Katy Sorsher Smith

We are called to shine our lights before others (Matt. 5:16). We are called to be like Yeshua – humble and servant hearted. These Holocaust survivors holiday events are an amazing opportunity for us to do just that. Our team of volunteers spread through the hall serving our important guests and taking time to chat with them, to give them attention and get to know them better. It was clear to us all that God's love and light were in the room.

Seeing the smiling faces of people who lived through the darkest times in Jewish history, hearing their words of gratitude as they held our hands, and noticing the twinkle in their eyes as they received our love – was a tangible demonstration of God's power to transform and give life. These Holocaust survivors are living examples that with God's grace people can overcome great suffering and sorrow, and live a life of hope. Please join us in prayer for all the precious survivors who are receiving the witness of the Light of the World, Yeshua; and that they would open their hearts to Him!



Feb' 25

07



DISCIPLESHIP TESTIMONIALS



By Revive Israel Staff

We were blessed and humbled to see the impact of our 40 day discipleship program in November and December of 2024. Here are a selection of testimonials from the participants:

1. This was one of the best experiences I ever had. So glad I had the courage to go for it. It's been a perfect balance between quiet time, community time, and practical work. The morning group format has had a very positive effect on me. I discovered how much it helps me to share my quiet time impressions with my brothers and sisters. Sometimes a thought or revelation can be life-changing for others even if it seemed minor to me. I also discovered that I really enjoy working with the soil. I felt the parallel between creating the best conditions for a plant to thrive, and the need to shape our own surroundings that we might grow and develop in our own life (Isaiah 22:22-25).

2. I enjoyed seeing God work in my heart through the physical work of gardening. At first, I thought there was no connection between growing vegetables and my process of growing in faith. Then I found out after 40 days of dedicating myself to the Lord, how God began to change my heart through the principles of laboring in the field and through the community life we shared. God began to heal wounds inside me and strengthen my identity in Him... I learned more about the Lord and went deeper with Him; and the thing I am most happy about is that I learned to better hear God's voice. In addition, I met amazing people, each of whom entered my heart deeply – staff, participants and volunteers. *Thank you to everyone who supported, prayed, cared and served in this program!*

3. One thing that surprised me was how community life brought deep healing and true happiness – to see the body of Yeshua through His eyes and how much He loves us.

4. I felt like a child being cared for by loving parents. I didn't need to think about food, clothing, or my schedule – everything was already taken care of for me. It was a wonderful opportunity to step away from the hustle and bustle.

5. I experienced God in an amazing and different way. I learned about our relationship with Him as His children. I learned about myself as an individual and as a team member. This has been like a dream I would like to repeat – an amazing time, just to pause and recalculate my life trajectory.

6. I found a life direction... The setting is beautiful and relaxing – surrounded by believers; and you just feel real peace there – like you are protected from all the evil in our world. I also felt that they accepted me the way I am, and didn't judge; that they really wanted to help me grow without any strings attached, which is rare these days.

7. I took this time to understand where my heart was with God, and He met me in the places I was most afraid of. He replaced fear with love and peace.

8. I finally understood the reasons behind my behavior and anger. It's as if I saw myself from the outside. This helped me stop blaming myself for everything. The people around me were amazing, and there was something to learn from each one of them. I believe many good seeds were planted, the fruits of which will grow in due time.

