

ISRAEL'S RESTORATION

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Ancestral Message & Desert Encounter My Journey to Faith

Page 7 & 8 | By Deborah Luquer

The Widow and the Judge

02 | By Asher Intrater

Bringing the War Home

03 - 06 | By Hannah Tekle

This Present Darkness

04 | By Guy Cohen

My Experiences Volunteering in Haifa

05 | By Norman Patrick

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The Widow and the Judge



By Asher Intrater

Prayer is such an important topic. Yeshua is found some twenty times in the Gospels praying or teaching about prayer. One of the most challenging teachings is His parable about the widow and the judge.

*Then He spoke a parable to them, that men **always ought to pray and not lose heart**, saying: “There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man. Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, ‘Get justice for me from my adversary.’ And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, ‘Though I do not fear God nor regard man, yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.’” (Luke 18:1-5)*

There are many lessons to learn here:

1. Just Do It

The first is that we “ought to pray.” It is important. We have to just “do it.” It is not just a theoretical teaching. It is something to do, to put into practice. We learn by doing.

2. Pray Always

It is correct to pray “always” – at all times; for all things; and in any situation. It is not occasional but continual. Prayer opens the door for positive spiritual influence.

3. Pray Energetically

Real intercession is a lot of work. Yeshua said “not to lose heart” or to “faint.” There is an emotional and psychological price; it is draining. But we have to overcome; not become tired or hopeless. The evil judge said the widow was wearying him. But it’s not the judge who gets weary; it’s our own flesh.

4. Legal Demands

Praying is like a lawyer making legal demands before a judge. God of course is a good judge. The image of the judge who “doesn’t care” is to encourage us to make strong demands. It is not saying that God is uncaring.

5. Overcome Evil

There is intelligent, conscious evil in the world. Our prayers are not on neutral ground. We have to overcome an “adversary” during prayer. There is purposeful, demonic resistance to our prayers. We pray against the forces of evil that are opposing God.

6. Be Bold and Pushy

Prayers are not based on our self-righteousness. God has given us righteousness by grace through Yeshua. However we live in the flesh in the midst of the world. We have to push through all the carnality to get ahold of God’s power. Good intercessors tend to be gentle and unassuming in their day to day personality, but warrior-like in their prayer life.

7. Be Faithful

Yeshua closes the parable about the widow and the judge, by asking a question (vs. 8): “When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith?” He says this in the context of prayer. Let’s be like the widow, praying with overcoming faith and with consistent faithfulness.

Let’s Be Like the Widow

The image of the widow is one without worldly and human resources. The point is that because of her lowly position, she puts all her dependence and emphasis on the prayer. It is ALL she has. So let’s put ourselves in a similarly “lowly” position in the human sense, and pray with all we’ve got.



Bringing the War Home



By **Hannah Tekle**

It has been just over a year since Russia invaded Ukraine in late February 2022. In March of 2022, the number of Ukrainians coming to our humanitarian aid center rose dramatically. Many had received refugee visas of three months or more depending on the Israeli government's judgment. Those who came as refugees longed to return and have been waiting in limbo for the fighting to let up, but the war has raged on.

For the first four months or so, those arriving were in shock and traumatized from the atrocities and difficulties they had witnessed and experienced. Together with the government and many other organizations, Tents of Mercy mobilized to assist them. We were grateful for the opportunities to listen to and love on the shell-shocked human beings coming out of Ukraine. As the fighting continued, and Putin called for mobilization of reserves for escalated fighting, a new group of people began coming – Russian Jews and descendants of Jews who were making Aliyah in order to escape the Russian military draft and a political regime that they didn't agree with.

The immigrants arrived in large numbers from St. Petersburg and Moscow. They were not allowed to come directly to Israel from Russia, so they came through Poland, Turkey, Georgia and Moldova. These young, professional, secular families were escaping however they could – desperate to get away from Putin's politics and a deadly war they did not believe in.

Among these new arrivals was Peter. *He and his family were from Siberia.* Just prior to the onset of the war, he visited all the political parties with policies contrary to Putin and went to multiple demonstrations. *He was constantly worried that the KGB would come for him, but they never did.*

Like many others, Peter and his family “took a vacation” to Turkey and then immigrated to Israel directly from the airport, doing quick *aliyah* upon arrival. Quick *aliyah* is a good option for those who have sufficient documentation about their Jewish background. Coming in as tourists, they can apply for citizenship under the Law of Return immediately upon arrival at the Israeli airport. This law grants people with one or more Jewish grandparents the right to receive Israeli citizenship. Especially under refugee type circumstances, quick *aliyah* is a terrific route for immigration. Straight from the airport, families are given one month of free health insurance, a paid taxi to their requested destination and a SIM card. If they don't have a place set up to stay they are given paid lodging for a week.

And that's where we come in. Tents of Mercy receives calls from all over our local “Krayot” and Haifa area, but we also receive queries directly from Russia and Ukraine. People hear about us via word of mouth – or as they say here in Israel – “a friend brings a friend.” They call and often come right away, and we are here to fill needs that the country and the municipality are not able to fill. For example, last year we were able to bless over fifty refugee and immigrant families with a “basic household goods package” for new arrivals.*

Once apartments are found, those in need can come and take what they lack – beds, dressers, tables, chairs, mattresses and more. We have functioned as a humanitarian aid center since our inception in 1995, but this last year has been a noteworthy one. Following the war on the news from afar is one thing, but hearing about it firsthand from those who have fled and being a direct source of provision for refugees

Continued on page 6



This Present Darkness



By **Guy Cohen**

In recent weeks I have received many questions about the political turmoil and controversial judicial reforms in Israel.

When I look at Israel today I see signs of chaos, and I see how we are losing the ability to dialogue respectfully. It's reminiscent of the days before the flood when *"the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually"* (Genesis 6:5).

Yet at the same time as sin increases, we see that God's grace and righteousness are increasing. *"...But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."* (Romans 5:20-21)

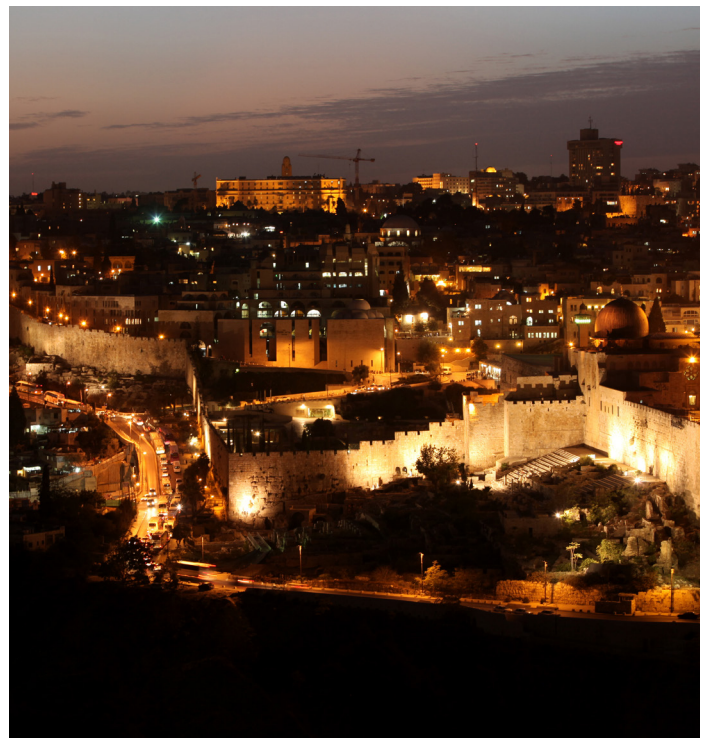
Yeshua speaks about these difficult times in Matthew 24 and Mark 13. When we look at the world today, we see many crises taking place before our eyes – from earthquakes and famines, to wars and rumors of wars. Yet, remember that we as His followers are the apple of His eye and **"His eyes are searching to and fro throughout the earth looking for those whose hearts are wholly with Him"** (2 Chronicles 16:9).

My brothers in the Lord, even though we are witnessing the world growing darker; remember that the Lord is calling us to bring His light into this very darkness, so that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Let us be filled with the anointing of the Holy Spirit. May our lamps be shining and continually filled with oil (Matthew 25). We are the ones called to intercede and seek for His Spirit to come so that His Kingdom wonders will break through. Indeed, I see growth in the house of God and I see people coming to drink from the spring of living water.

Let us be the generation that proclaims the return of our Lord. May we see Him coming, bringing the heavenly Kingdom to earth where He will sit on His throne in Jerusalem. Yeshua is the only one who can bring peace between man and God, between man and man, and between nations. He is the Prince of Peace.

His eyes are looking upon you, even and especially in this present darkness. *"Arise, shine for your light has come... Behold, darkness will cover the earth, and a deep mist will cover the nations. Yet, the LORD will dawn over you..."* (Isaiah 60:1)



My Experiences Volunteering in Haifa



By **Norman Patrick**

I was working in the humanitarian aid clothing warehouse sorting and hanging clothes. We had just finished checking out some boots that were donated. I am certain they were brand new. We were placing them on a rack when we noticed that one of the young mothers had her eyes on those boots. We suggested that she try them on, and they were just her size! Those boots will last a long time and keep her feet warm on chilly days and nights. The smile of joy that came over her face when she realized the boots were meant for her was so rewarding!

You might be wondering who I am and how I ended up volunteering at Return to Zion's center. I live in the United States and act as an emissary on behalf of their ministry. It is my responsibility to speak with people and congregations in the US and raise support and awareness. To ensure that I have first-hand experience of the humanitarian work they are doing in Israel, I felt it necessary to come visit and serve alongside the other volunteers.

Although my intention was to bless the needy by being the hands of the LORD toward them, I found that I also received joy and blessing while serving. It is truly more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35). Employees alongside volunteers, work together to fill the many needs amongst the refugees, Holocaust survivors and new immigrants – from providing food and clothing to delivering hot meals to those who cannot leave their homes. Music lessons are also being given to young students daily at the ministry center which is the hub for all congregational and humanitarian activities.

During the Shabbat worship services I was intrigued to see how the meetings were not just a group of disconnected people gathering for a few hours on Shabbat. They were a spiritual family gathering together to worship the LORD in fullness and joy.

During my time in Haifa, I was privileged to witness the engagement announcement of a newly-betrothed couple, a wedding, and a Bar Mitzvah. There were special evenings when I was welcomed into congregants' homes for Erev Shabbat family meals. I was also present during the celebration of Purim, and I wish I could have been there for Passover. These events highlighted to me the importance of friends and families celebrating significant biblical feasts and life occasions together.

If you have the opportunity, I encourage you to visit Shavei Tzion and join their celebration of biblical feasts. All are welcome, and every effort is made to provide a translation into your native language.

I am grateful to the LORD for bringing me in as a co-laborer with Leon Mazin and Shavei Tzion. I can rightfully call them my Israeli family. We are one in the Body of Messiah Yeshua.



Why Our Town of Kiryat Yam?

Strategically we are in an excellent spot to do what we do. According to our distribution director, many if not most of the immigrants and refugees come to Netanya or to the towns of the Haifa Bay area (the Krayot). The Mediterranean Sea is a big attraction, but the socioeconomic climate of the Krayot is also a significant factor. There is already a large Russian speaking community here and rents in this area are much more affordable than the Tel Aviv-Jerusalem corridor and even Haifa.

Since last fall, about 70% of our recipients have been from Ukraine and about 30% from Russia, and daily we see more and more immigrants. After the initial help we are able to give, families are invited to return to us after six months in the country when their initial government stipend finishes. At that point they can sign up to receive a year of monthly food baskets. (We serve 200 families on a consistent basis with a waiting list of 30-40.)

There is such an influx of immigration at this time that the waiting lists in the government agencies for services like language school and immigrant housing are long and tedious. The help we offer goes a long way towards assisting these families in getting established in apartments, jobs and even experiencing Israeli holidays. One of the new immigrant families who came to our recent Purim Party said she was excited to experience it for the *first time* and was eager to get to know the Israeli customs and holidays.

Not Just a News Item but Real Life

Svetlana and Vlad (not their real names) arrived in May from Kharkov. She was incapacitated with a back injury when they came and had to arrive by special transport that allowed her to lie down during her entire journey to Israel. When they came to our center and were receiving initial assistance, she asked who we are. When she realized that the humanitarian aid center was also a Messianic Congregation, Svetlana became very excited and shared that they were believers. They are now enthusiastic participants in the congregation and are putting down roots in their new country.

We are all used to seeing and reading news about things that happen far away, but in the meantime, those far away events are striking very close to home for many. We hope these stories are a window for you into how global realities are touching our daily lives.

** The basic household goods package contains a set of pots and pans, set of dishware, silverware, sheets, towels, microwave, electric kettle, and market cart.*



Ancestral Message & Desert Encounter - My Journey to Faith



By **Deborah Luquer**

At age twenty I decided to immigrate to Israel. As a young Jewish woman growing up in Argentina, I considered myself a Zionist and was very active in the Jewish community in Buenos Aires. For me it was a goal to reach the place where my grandfather and my father were not able to go – Israel. Even in the 1990s, all of us Jews still experienced antisemitism in Argentina.

On the eve of my immigration to Israel, there was a massive terrorist attack against the Jewish Community Center in Buenos Aires. This traumatic event strengthened me in the knowledge that I was doing the right thing.

All Alone in a New Country

The first year for new immigrants in Israel is the most challenging. I felt so lonely, but eventually found my place. Being a Zionist was still my main identity, and I became active working for political parties in Israel connecting the Spanish and Portuguese-speaking diaspora to the Jewish Agency. Over time I became the national absorption coordinator for Jewish immigration from Latin America. It was through this work that I met my future husband, and at twenty-eight, I was married. A year later, I had my first daughter. I was on cloud nine. My job was interesting and important; I was married and had started a family. I was living the dream.

Immune to the Gospel

I devoted myself entirely to my family, to my parents who had by then immigrated to Israel, and to our family business. My husband and I started a tourist agency for Spanish-speaking Christian and Jewish pilgrims to Israel. Through our work, I was constantly hearing the gospel, but I considered myself immune.

Worship – the Evangelist that Unlocked my Heart

In 2014, a tour group contacted us that wanted to worship at every site they visited. I was intrigued: **“What is this worship they want to do?”** At my synagogue, we barely had a cantor to lead us, and there were never musical instruments. I told my husband: *“I have to go with this group and see what this worship thing is.”* The first day I was with them, I thought, *“They are so insolent! Don’t they have any respect for God and His holiness?”* But very quickly my impression changed, and I found that I was deeply impacted by their worship. They praised God with such joy and freedom, and I could see they were experiencing a closeness to God and the presence of the Holy Spirit. I was torn. I wanted what they had, but I also did not want it because I was Jewish and what they were doing was Christian.

In 2015, my father became very ill. During the eight-month period I cared for him, I found myself constantly listening to a worship disc from that tour group. It was the only thing that brought comfort in that dark time. I would sing along with the songs, but instead of saying “Jesus” in Spanish, I would say “Luz” which sounds similar but means light – that way I wouldn’t have to say His name! I felt close to God when I worshipped with that disc, and I could feel His voice speaking inside of me in response.

Questioning Religion and Tradition

After my father passed away, I observed the traditional time of mourning for thirty days. According to Jewish tradition, many things are forbidden for the first year after the death of a parent, including travel.

Continued on page 8



I was a good Jew, and I wanted to honor my father by mourning him according to the traditions, but I also needed to travel for my business. A voice inside me said, *“Where is it written that you cannot travel the first year after parent's death?”* This question bothered me, and I started searching. *“Where was it written? Was it in the Bible?”*

Eighteen years I had attended synagogue, but never once had I read the Bible. I started searching in the Bible and quickly discovered my Judaism was like a layer covering the Bible, a man-made layer that didn't belong. Slowly, as I started asking questions, one thing after another broke away, allowing me to seek the truth more freely.

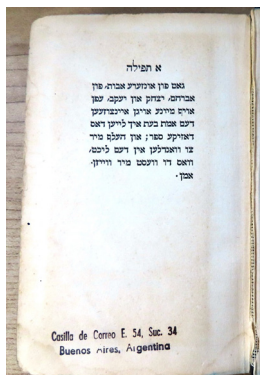
Powerful Encounters

Three months after my father passed away, I traveled to Peru for work and also attended a worship conference. At the conference, I experienced the powerful presence of the Holy Spirit for the first time, and I heard God's voice speaking clearly to my heart, *“I know you want to worship Me. I will show you how.”*

Still, despite these powerful experiences and my deepening doubts about rabbinic Judaism, I could not let Yeshua into my heart. *I was so afraid that I would be betraying my ancestors and my heritage.* I wasn't ready to believe in Yeshua until I knew that I would not automatically become a Christian and stop being a Jew. I begged God for confirmation, and He graciously obliged!

An Amazing Discovery

I asked my mother if there was something she could give me from my grandparents who had immigrated to Argentina from Europe. She had given my grandfather's prayer book (Siddur) to my oldest daughter for her bat mitzvah. She said there was one more book. I looked at the book and recognized right away that it was a copy of the New Testament in Yiddish. My



grandparents had ordered this New Testament from Europe when they were already in Argentina! ***My Jewish grandparents were believers! It was a powerful moment of revelation from God: I was not betraying my grandparents by believing in Yeshua, I was actually entering into the completed faith they had as Jews.*** However, I still felt torn.

The Final Confirmation – A Sign in the Desert

I wanted to devote myself to the right thing, and felt that it was Yeshua, but I asked God for one last confirmation. I felt God tell me, *“Meet me in the desert.”* I had become very attuned to and obedient to His voice that I had been hearing in my heart. So, I took a friend and went down to Timnah Park in the Arava desert where there is a replica of the Tabernacle. After we parked and started walking, I wanted to go to the area of Tabernacle replica, but I felt the Holy Spirit say to me, *“Stop right here.”* I stopped and looked around me. God wanted to meet with me here? Nearby I saw a vibrant green bush – conspicuous in the desert landscape. As I got closer, I saw the name of Yeshua written out in stones in English across the ground next to the bush. My skeptic self rebelled and I wondered, *“Why is His name written in English?”* Just then, I saw that above the name “Jesus” the Hebrew word *chai* (חַי) was written out which means “lives.” **Jesus lives!**

There in the desert, I dedicated myself completely to Yeshua. From that moment, He has taken me on an amazing journey of healing and a new life of freedom in my devotion to Him. Today I live to worship Him, and in Him I have my complete identity as a Jewish follower of the Jewish Messiah!

Editor's note: Deborah serves at Tiferet Yeshua congregation and leads a Spanish worship ministry called Fundacion HALEL

