

"War Cry"

Page 5
By Leon Mazin



Page 2 & 7
By Asher Intrater
**Will You Choose
the Better
Part?**

Page 3 & 6
By Hannah Tekle
**Ukrainian
War - Close
to Home**

Page 4
By Guy Cohen
**End Times
Dream**

Page 7
By Tents of Mercy
**Springtime
Discipleship
Intensive
Program**

Page 8
By Tal Haroni
**Only... Be
Strong
and Very
Courageous**

Will You Choose the Better Part?

A lesson from Miriam (Mary) and Martha



By **Asher Intrater**

Recently at Ahavat Yeshua Congregation in Jerusalem, we were having a worship time with a sweet presence of the Lord. I was feeling uplifted. But then, due to a couple of technical difficulties, I noticed that some of our leaders were getting perturbed, worried, and bothered.

I thought to myself, *“See how they are getting worried and bothered instead of concentrating on the worship. What’s the matter with them?” I kept thinking about that, and thinking about it some more, until I totally missed the spirit of the worship, and realized that I had become more perturbed than they were. Oops!*

“Yeshua entered a certain village; and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. She had a sister named Miriam, who also sat at Yeshua’s feet and heard His teaching. However, Martha was bothered with so much serving; she approached Him and said, ‘Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her to help me.’

“Yet, Yeshua answered and said to her, ‘Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. Only one thing is necessary; and Miriam has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.’” (Luke 10:38-42)

This is a challenge we all face – the challenge of missing what the Lord is saying, because of all kinds of responsibilities. Unfortunately, the challenge becomes even greater the more we serve the Lord.

We love God, so we serve Him. To serve Him more, we take responsibility for what needs to be done. With those responsibilities, we often miss out on the intimate presence of the Spirit for which we chose to serve in the first place. **Ouch!**

Can we learn from this passage to keep ourselves centered on our loving relationship with Yeshua and not become worried and troubled people? Can we resist a negative attitude and keep a godly faith-filled positive one? Here are some pointers:

1. Perspective: From Martha to Miriam

We all have some of Martha and some of Miriam inside of us. They both are good in certain situations. Yet to stay in a worshipful attitude, we have to identify with the Miriam side. We need to see things from a Miriam perspective and see ourselves, first and foremost, as a Miriam-type person.

2. Interrupt the Negative Thought Chain

Martha’s “sin” was not that she wanted to clean and cook a meal for the Lord – that’s a good thing! But instead of finding joy in her heart of service, she compared herself to her sister and became bitter. When Yeshua called, “Martha, Martha,” He wanted to interrupt her negative monologue; to stop the *offended* story she was telling herself; to stop the *“victim narrative.”* We have to catch ourselves in those moments and interrupt the chain of thoughts.

3. You Have a Choice

Yeshua said that Miriam had made the right choice. It is possible to choose. You don’t have to be forced. It is your choice. You are not a slave to circumstances. If Miriam could choose, so could Martha. If Martha could choose, so can you and I. Let’s decide to make the right choices.

Continued on page 7

Ukrainian War – Close to Home



By **Hannah Tekle**

It would be hard to exaggerate how deeply the current war between Russia and Ukraine is already impacting the huge portion of Israeli society that has roots in the Former Soviet Union. To give just a tiny glimpse, here are a few everyday ripple effects on those in our closest circle.

Shortly after the war began, a dear friend of the bookkeeper at Tents of Mercy called her, crying and asking for prayer. Her daughter and the daughter's family are trapped in Ukraine. The mom is terrified for her daughter's life, and distraught that as the great-grandchild of a Jew and not a Jew herself, she has no legal right to immigrate to Israel.

Shelly is an English teacher in a local Israeli middle school. After the first few days of fighting, she dedicated the home-room hour to asking the kids in her class how many of them have family in Ukraine; how they are feeling about the situation and what they would like to share with the class. She shed tears as her students openly talked about their fears and concerns for their grandparents and some even for a divorced parent or half-sibling who remained in Ukraine.

Our son returned home from school yesterday and said that one of his best friends (Russian-born) was explaining that his relatives had described how Russians were supposedly ill-treated and discriminated against in Ukraine. In a casual conversation among the friends, a diverse group (including at least 3 Russian speakers) of Israeli 8th graders were discussing the claims of both Ukraine and Russia.

Lev and Sonya have been in Israel since the early 90s. She is Russian-born and he is Ukrainian-born. She spent the first third of her life in Russia, the second third of her life married in Ukraine, and now has been in Israel for just as long! Her elderly father lives with them and is sympathetic to the Russian side – it seems hard for many among the older generation to conceive of Russian leadership being in the wrong.

Millennial husband and wife, Lilly and Sasha grew up in Israel. She just discovered that she is half Ukrainian. She grew up knowing only about her roots in the area of the Republic of Georgia, just south of Russia. He left Ukraine as a child, but can still understand and speak viable Ukrainian. They, like so many in our community, are heartbroken and struggling to process the reality of what their friends and family in Ukraine are experiencing. Sasha will shortly be joining a delegation of believing Israelis serving on the Hungarian border of Ukraine to minister practical help along with a smile and prayers for comfort and hope.

There are so many other stories. This is just a tiny sampling.

We are honored to be a recognized humanitarian aid center that offers first line assistance to those in need. Local Israeli agencies and welfare offices have come to rely on us to regularly provide food, clothing, furniture, and more. Now Ukrainian refugees are being referred to us for help.

Continued on page 6

End Times Dream



By **Guy Cohen**

In the midst of these difficult times, God is still in control! He is like the chess grandmaster who knows all the moves and when to make them. God has a master plan, and it is being revealed before our eyes. The plan even encompasses things like money and food.

We read in Psalm 37:25 of God's promise to those who are righteous. God will provide for them and their descendants. They will have their daily bread – just as Yeshua guided us to pray in Matthew 6:11, *“Give us this day our daily bread.”*

Dream of Economic Crisis

The night before I wrote this, I had a detailed dream. In the dream, I entered a grocery store with a long line of people waiting to buy bread in the corner of the store. I purchased three loaves, one white loaf and two brown, for 20,000 shekels (\$6,000); and I gave them 5 checks in payment. Then I realized this was the wrong thing to do so I returned the bread, took back the checks and left the long line of people waiting behind me.

The exaggerated cost of bread in my dream recalls Revelation 6:6 where John heard, *“A quart of wheat for a day's wages...”* For comparison, in Israel today, this quantity of wheat flour costs only a few minutes of wages. In times of desperate economic crisis, when starving, people will be willing to give their gold just for a loaf of bread.

At the beginning of Revelation 6, we see four horses: white, red, black and pale. Why is the **white horse** the **FIRST** and not the last? Our answer can be found in Yeshua's words in Matthew 24:14.

*“And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, **and then the end will come.**”* We are called to **FIRST** be God's messengers throughout the world, preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, reaching out in every area of need.

The **red horse** symbolizes an absence of peace, brother turning against brother to the point of killing each other. The **black horse** symbolizes economic crisis. The poor will be poorer while the rich get richer. The **pale horse** will herald death by sword, by hunger and by the beasts of the earth – with power over a fourth of the earth.

Where does this put us?

“Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away” (Matthew 24:35). We can be assured that God's Word will be fulfilled. He has put us here for this time, each of us according to His purpose. We are the ones who carry the Gospel, the Word of God.

One way to be God's hand and feet is to serve those in need. Currently our congregation is working to help people affected by the war in Ukraine through a local ministry there. Here in Israel we are also working with the aliyah office to provide whatever we can for the new immigrants and refugees expected to arrive in Akko and the surrounding areas of the Western Galilee.

In these hard times let's shine with His light. May we remain faithful as He is faithful, doing the work He has given us to do.

"War Cry"

from a Former Soviet Citizen



By **Leon Mazin**

"Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Yeshua the Messiah." (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)

That is an extreme commandment during tragic times, at least for me.

I was born and raised in the former Soviet Union. I completed school and university, and spent two years in the Soviet Army (in a tank repair battalion in Siberia, not far from Khabarovsk and the border with China) before immigrating to Israel.

Even though the Communist Soviet Union broke apart in 1991, today's Russian military mindset is not much different from that of its Soviet predecessor, which was "victory at any cost" – with a single soldier's life being valued at less than a Kalashnikov assault rifle.

Under Soviet rule, there was little difference between Russians, Ukrainians, Belarusians, and the other Soviet nations. Only Jews were kept at a distance (due to the lingering effect of Slavic anti-Semitism).

Now I watch with horror as Russia bombs Ukraine in what appears to be an all-out invasion. Before February 22, such an act was unimaginable – something I never dreamed could happen, even in my worst nightmares. *It is clear that the ruling elite only care about solving their imperial "problems," while the common citizens pay the price with their blood. I feel this problem so viscerally, that I cannot adequately express it in a page of text.*

A "War Cry" for Prayer

Dear friends, our most powerful weapon in times like these is prayer. I exhort you to **"pray without ceasing"** (1 Thessalonians 5:17). Ask the Lord God to stop this senseless war of ambition. Pray for those under attack. After being an Israeli for the last 30 years I know the feeling, having experienced three wars here. Yet, the One enthroned on High hears our prayers... Let us storm heaven with our requests!

The Jewish Kaddish prayer says, *"The One who makes peace in His lofty heights, He will make peace over us..."* May He bring peace to Israel, peace to Ukraine and peace to Russia.



One of the families that came the day I wrote this article was completely moved by the kindness that they were met with at Tents of Mercy. Overwhelmed with gratitude, they both said how eager they are to come back and help pass on the kindness as soon as they are settled.

And what about the rest of us?

When crisis rages all around us, when people around us are lost and hurting or threatened by seen or unseen enemies, how should we respond?

Even as this war tragically drags on, we are now celebrating Purim, the story of a dignified and beautiful queen who sacrificed her own security in light of a vicious attack on her people. In that moment in time, she rose to the occasion, endangering her very life, to stand in intercession, in advocacy, and in leadership.

In the upcoming biblical spring feast of Passover, we see how God used Moses, another weak and frail but willing human being, to deliver the Israelites out of Egyptian slavery.

Our great and awesome God, who called the universe into being, chooses to use human beings as agents of salvation. The Bible is full of stories of His partnership with us.

And as we look again at the pattern the feasts set out before us, we recognize our modern reality, and the actions of our Biblical heroes paving the way for our own response as we assume an attitude of intercession and get in sync with the plans of God.



How do we do this?

Firstly, by being ready to live radically and sacrificially. Esther took a stand for her people even though it meant jeopardizing her comfortable position in the King's palace.

Secondly, by interceding. Intercession is the act of spiritually coming before the King on behalf of another. But it can also be a physical intervention to bring help or assistance.

Mordecai challenged Esther with these words : *“For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place...”*

In this season may we all be equipped in our spirits with the traits of sacrifice and intercession, so that we may lead, serve, and give in the situations before each of us – individually and corporately.



4. Good Part and Bad Part

Yeshua said Miriam had chosen the good part. Every situation has two parts. Right now, you face a good part and a bad part. The two parts are there as a kind of test or opportunity. The good and the bad parts will always be there, but which part you live in is up to you.

5. Focus on Yeshua

Yeshua also said there is only ONE thing that is totally needed. That is Himself. If there is one thing, then we can be single-minded. As we focus our inner “listening”

to Yeshua, we will not miss the good part, and we will not fall into the bad part.

There are times we need to be like Martha, taking responsibility, serving, and sacrificing. Yet there are other times when the same obedience means putting aside the “responsibility-taker” and just enjoying the presence of the Lord (Psalm 37:4).

Let’s prevent ourselves from being “bothered” and “negative-minded” people. Let’s choose the good part in every situation and focus on the Lord. **Okay!**



“And the LORD God took Adam, and put him in the Garden of Eden to cultivate it and protect it.”
(Genesis 2:15)

For the past two years, in the Judean Hills just west of Jerusalem, the Revive Israel Discipleship Center has been pioneering a variety of spiritual programs for young Israeli adults. The programs take place in small groups of up to ten, in a family atmosphere of community life. We focus individually on each student, with mentoring and training from experienced staff.

We build the framework, the “platform,” and invite the Lord to act in the lives of the students. We figured that if God used a garden to nurture Adam, we would try it as well. So the discipling programs operate as an integral part of the “Third Day Farm,” where we grow seasonal vegetables and raise farm animals while preserving and improving the soil organically.

In recent programs, we have observed that students form a strong connection to the Creator through working the soil. Contact with His creation makes the truths of Yeshua’s agricultural parables completely tangible and draws us closer to Him. We have seen that in fieldwork combined with praise and prayer there is healing for soul and spirit (Psalm 147:3). Significant changes are made in a relatively short time. Students clearly comprehend who God is as Creator (Romans 1:20).

Forty Days of Fire

In the upcoming program, we will set apart the time from May 1 to June 9, 2022

To be filled with the Holy Spirit,

To draw near to Yeshua the Good Shepherd and recognize His voice,

To love Yeshua with all our heart and with all our soul,

To be filled with both passion for the Lord and the fear of God,

To acquire tools for future daily life with our Master, at work or studies,

To serve as unto the Lord and not for human beings

To receive direction for life.

“... And for forty days, He appeared to them and spoke with them concerning the kingdom of God.” (Acts 1:3)

Our framework includes praise and prayer together with teaching and practical serving - a daily routine similar to the normal daily routine of the average person who gets up for work in the morning. We direct students to invite the Lord into their daily routine, so that at the end of the program they can apply the newly acquired habits, to continue to grow in the Lord, to serve in the community and to have a positive impact on others.



Only... Be Strong and Very Courageous (Joshua 1:7)



By **Tal Haroni**

I once heard someone define courage as taking an action without knowing its outcome. The Lord is asking us to be strong and very courageous in our walk with Him, to trust fully in His good plan for our lives.

In fact, we are in need of courage in every area of our lives – especially in relation to other people. We need courage to start a new job or finish an old one well. It takes courage to go back to school. It takes courage to go out and meet new people and show them the real you. It takes courage to start dating with the hope of marriage. It even takes courage to bring children into the world.

What is it that we are so afraid of?

I believe it is the decision to leave our comfort zone, lose control and not know what lies ahead. For some, the new and the unknown is exciting, but for me it is scary. I begin to worry and fret. *What might happen? How will I react? Will I be able to enjoy this? Is it going to produce the outcome I was hoping for?*

One of the things I try to do when all of these questions start whirling in my head, is a small thought exercise. I ask myself a simple question like – *What is the worst that could happen? What if I fail?* These questions help to neutralize the fear. Because at the end of the day, I know for sure that God is with me wherever I go, and He promised me (and you) that **“in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to his purpose”** (Romans 8:28).

So, here’s a different question to ask yourself when you are facing fear and are in need of courage. *Am I loved by God? Am I called according to His purpose? And if so, do I really believe God is holding me, and will fulfil His word?*

Actually, facing our fear is a great opportunity to grow in our faith and trust in God. Every time we’re called to face our fears, our courage, our trust and our faith in God are increased. God is inviting you, and me, to examine ourselves – to seek out things we have avoided doing because of fear. That’s exactly what God did with Joshua. He knew Joshua was afraid and uncertain in his new position but He kept on calling him higher.

What false comfort or security is God calling you to surrender?

Maybe you keep making excuses about why you shouldn’t do things because you are unsure of the result?

Or maybe you still think your way is the only way to go?

In any case, God is inviting you to a higher walk with Him – to walk hand in hand with Him as the creator and to trust He has your best interests at heart.

Hold on to courage, knowing that no matter what happens, God is on your side. He is for you, not against you, He loves you, and you are called according to His will and purpose!





I AM WITH ISRAEL

#IAmWithIsrael

Dear Friends and Partners,

Addiction is one of the most crippling traps one can fall into. Seeing someone overcome addiction is like watching their life being given back to them. The people who have dedicated their lives to helping addicts find freedom are some of God’s most highly favored servants.

Roni Rejuan and the team at Beit HaYeshua (House of Salvation) in Jerusalem are among those precious servants. Their ministry is both a rehab center and a congregation of recovered addicts who have now become believers and are reintegrating into Israeli society.

Beit HaYeshua’s rehab center works closely with other Tikkun-related projects in Tel Aviv and the Judean Hills, specifically seeking out homeless drug addicts who want to escape the trap of drugs and alcohol. [For instance, when Moti Cohen goes out into the streets of Tel Aviv to feed addicts and pray for them, he refers them to rehab with Roni.]

Roni reports:

“Over the last months several people came through our rehab program and were freed from their addiction. We see a real change in them, and they have received the faith!”

#IAMWITHISRAEL, together with you, is coming alongside Roni to assist in the humble, nitty-gritty

process of getting addicts saved and free. This is the mission of Beit HaYeshua – offering a ladder to lost Israelis of many backgrounds who need to climb out of their pit and into Yeshua’s life-saving grace. And then, to become a powerful witness of *God’s saving power*.

Let’s help Beit HaYeshua in ways that will make such a difference!

- One member recently got married, but his pregnant wife from the former Soviet Union, does not yet have health insurance. The temporary medical coverage will cost a few thousand dollars.
- Roni wants to purchase a newer, more dependable vehicle for the congregation – enabling them to reach out to the homeless addicts in Tel Aviv and invite them to enter rehabilitation.
- There is a real need to increase the rehab staff salaries. They are currently \$2,000 US dollars a month. (\$2,000 in Israel is comparable to \$1,000 in the US because of the high cost of living here).

Your gift this month to #IAMWITHISRAEL is going to result in changed lives, new disciples, and the Gospel going forth to the most rejected in our culture. Thank you!

Ron Cantor
Director, #IAmWithIsrael
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