



May 2022



FROM SARAH, OUR *SABRA* ON THE GROUND IN ISRAEL

Dear Friend,

Greetings to you from Israel. The heartbreaking situation in Ukraine has resulted in an influx of Jewish families making *aliyah* (a Jew moving from another country to live in Israel). Putin's devastating war has been causing many Ukrainians to flood into neighboring countries. The Israeli embassies in those nations have been helping Jewish families get their credentials in order to move here.

As these refugees arrive in Israel, they probably anticipate having to adjust to a new country. They wouldn't, however, expect to encounter a slew of terror attacks.

Recent Attacks

March 2022 was Israel's bloodiest month in recent years. We experienced 10 terror attacks — three of them in the last week of the month that took 11 lives. One attack occurred in Hadera, a town about 15 minutes from where my family lives. Two Arab men with over 1,000 bullets began shooting M16 rifles in the street during the evening as people returned home from work.

The two men were from an Arab town uncomfortably close to our home. This part of Israel comprises a narrow stretch of land between the Mediterranean and the hills of Samaria, which the Palestinian Authority controls. There is no safety barrier here like the wall in Gaza. Since officials expected such attacks, the police remained on high alert due to the ease of traveling from that hostile locale to towns around us.

The following day, another brutal attack occurred in the city of Bnei B'rak as Muslim Arab men began shooting at ultra-Orthodox Jews. This attack was stopped by an Israeli Christian Arab police officer who rode a motorcycle directly into the line of fire, shooting and killing a terrorist before perishing from injuries he sustained in the gunfight.

Several days later, as I drove toward Hadera to run some errands, I thought, "What if I am attacked? What if I don't return home today?" I considered my plans for the week ahead: I was preparing for a trip abroad, working on a new music video in Arabic, and taking care of the children's Passover camp preparations.

(over please)



Men mourn at the funeral of Avishai Yehezkel, an Israeli man who was killed in an attack in Bnei B'rak, Israel, March 2022

As I pondered the question, I arrived at the same conclusion that I've maintained all of my years living here: **My life is in God's hands** — *"the Lord gave and the Lord has taken away"* (Job 1:21). He is in control of my life and my days.

Growing Up in Israel

When I was a young adult, I wondered if my perspective would change once I had my own small children to raise. But living here with my family now, I still believe Job 1:21 to be a foundational truth.

I was born in Israel and grew up here — in the shadow of periodic terror. I remember traveling as a young child to England and wondering why no guard stood at the entrance to the shopping mall. I found it strange that no one, as we entered the mall, inspected my mother's bag to determine if she was carrying a weapon.

During my last year in high school, a terrorist shot one of my classmates to death on a street in Jerusalem. As a university student in Jerusalem, I regularly boarded buses that I supposed could explode from a suicide bomber, as had happened in some of Israel's major cities. When my husband Evan and I first married, we regularly drove on a road where commuters were occasionally shot at while driving to and from work.

When we moved to the U.S. for several years, I was amazed that the radio didn't have news updates every 30 minutes. I thought, "How do people know what to look out for? What if there were an emergency?" I eventually settled into California's ease of life, forgetting about the constant need to be on high alert. [Editor's note: These days, gang violence in many U.S. states wreaks more havoc than Holy Land terrorists.]

When we moved back to Israel, I eventually returned to the habit of regularly checking the news.

Now that we have smartphones, I probably check news websites at least five times each day. Cautious awareness is the reality of living here, where life can change dramatically in minutes.



Israeli soldiers guard a bus stop in the ultra-Orthodox neighborhood of Mea Shearim in Jerusalem in 2015

Curbing Tensions

Tensions in Israel were already high leading up to the month-long Muslim observation of Ramadan, which started on April 2. This year Ramadan, Passover, Easter, and Israel's Independence Day all occur during April and early May.

Israeli security officials warned of a potential uprising connected to Ramadan, like we experienced last year during the same period. Hoping to curb unrest before it began, top Israeli

government officials made several visits to King Abdullah in Jordan, and top security officers traveled to the White House.

Over one hundred attempted assaults were thwarted before the March terrorist attacks, and most who succeeded were connected to ISIS and were not on recent Israeli security's "radar." Now, Israeli forces must learn how to combat these new threats and shield against such attacks.



credit: Gil Cohen-Magen, AFP

Israeli security forces gather at the scene of a shooting attack in the ultra-Orthodox town of Bnei Brak, near Tel Aviv

Facing Danger with a Psalm

Psalm 91 has become a favorite text in Israel when praying for protection — both among Believers* and unbelievers alike. This psalm holds wonderful promises about God being our help, our fortress, and our refuge. The first verse stands in complete contrast to what life feels like here occasionally: *"Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty."*

The writer of this psalm delivers an important principle using incredible imagery that can help us when facing danger, uncertainty, or outright terror. If we dwell in the shelter of the Most High God, we will rest in His shadow. The Hebrew word for "dwell" is *yoshev*, which means "he shall pass the night." It refers to residing in a place as a way of habit. It is not pitching a temporary tent or shelter; instead, the word denotes permanency.

Verses 9 and 10 echo this principle, and help us to better understand how we can experience this rest: *"If you say, 'The Lord is my refuge,' and you make the Most High your dwelling, no harm will overtake you, no disaster will come near your tent"* (Psalm 91:9–10). Note the stipulations of this sentence: *If you SAY... and you MAKE... [then] no harm will overtake you* (emphasis added). It is important to understand this conditional statement because not everyone who claims that God is their refuge will experience rest in His shadow.

Some people I meet are plagued with fear. While they believe in God and know the Bible, they seemingly cannot escape the grip of fear. If this describes you, remember that it is not enough simply to declare you believe; it is imperative to put your faith into practice by taking actionable steps each day until the position of faith in your heart becomes a habit.

So much of life competes with allowing God to be our resting place. Our lives are filled with distractions and noise. Still, we can give attention to the Lord's "daily updates" that come through spending time with Him in His Word, in prayer, and in worship. As we develop the habit

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(Psalm 91:9–10)

* "Believers" is short for "believers in Yeshua/Jesus as Messiah."

of dwelling in the shelter of the Almighty, the One who holds all power and authority will allow us to remain at rest.

Verse 14 gives us another clue about how to achieve this rest. In Hebrew, the verse takes on a beautiful meaning that is lost in translation: *"I will protect him, for he acknowledges My Name."* The word translated "acknowledges" is the Hebrew word *yada* — "to know." This refers to knowing by experience or intimate knowledge, and is the same word used in [Genesis 4:1](#), *"Adam knew Eve his wife...."*

The writer of Psalm 91 reminds us that God's protection is given to the one who is intimately acquainted with the Name (the Person) of the Lord. This one will call upon the Lord and will be answered, delivered, and honored. God will satisfy this person with a long life (Psalm 91:15–16). This is, as Yeshua/Jesus promised, life *"to the full"* (John 10:10).



Im tirdefu lada-at oto —

"Press on to know HIM!" (Hosea 6:3 NLT),

Sarah Liberman | *סarah ליברמן*
 Sarah Liberman ENGLISH HEBREW

P.S. The wonderful promises of salvation — of God coming to the rescue, or of His angels guarding you and carrying you through thick and thin — are lavished upon those who actively make God their resting place. ★



Zola Tours: Going with Confidence in God

All who have journeyed to the Holy Land will agree with Sarah's encouraging Biblical insights from Psalm 91. In addition, Psalm 121:4 reminds us that God watches over and "keeps" Israel. You will experience His protection and supernatural peace when you join us on a Zola Tour.

In March, our production team filmed in Tiberias. We felt safer there than we do in many places in the U.S. Come explore with us the glorious land of the Messiah this fall or next spring. You will transform your one-dimensional view of the Bible into a multifaceted display of newfound understanding.

Contact Sandra, our travel manager, at **214-696-9760**, travel@levitt.com, or levitt.com/tours. She will guide you through every step of the process.

Fall Tour 2022 options

Deluxe — Israel	Oct. 24–Nov. 3	\$5,688
Grand Petra — Israel & Petra	Oct. 24–Nov. 6	\$6,788

Prices include tips, taxes, and fuel surcharge (subject to change)

A Note from David and Kirsten Hart

Weeks ago, a ten-hour flight took our *OJR* production team to the Holy Land to film a new series on the life of the Apostle Peter. Dr. Jeffrey Seif, Hebrew-speaking Israeli actors, and Kirsten and I worked together to bring to life the deep relationship that Yeshua had with this influential disciple.

Ken Berg, our producer and director, envisioned this exciting dramatic series before COVID hit. Over two years later, his dream is becoming a reality. Dr. Seif teaches the Word of God beside the shores of the Sea of Galilee. Sets, props, costumes, cameras, lighting, and scripts all merge to create one of our finest Bible teaching series ever.

Kirsten and I joined the ministry's production team in Israel after Dr. Seif completed filming his teaching segments. We were honored to interview some influential Israeli Believers who live in the Galilee. Along with our other filming, we also taped new music videos of Zola's songs that correspond with the story of Peter and his love for Messiah.

While filming on a small fishing boat on the Sea of Galilee, we experienced the east winds that can instantly transform the waters from serene to overbearing. The waves soaked us, and it was rather exhilarating to encounter firsthand the winds and raging waters described in the Gospels.

Many hours of "film" are now officially in the can (as producers say) and are being edited at the Berg Productions office near Dallas. This television series was a long time in the making. And just as good meals are often better when cooked slowly, our pending Peter series has had to simmer. We are confident that it will be worth the wait.



Sha'alu shalom Yerushalayim!—

"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem!" (Psalm 122:6),

David & Kirsten
David & Kirsten

P.S. Our post-COVID production in the Holy Land presented us with higher costs than expected. While we are honored to bring Peter's exciting story to you viewers, it comes with a notable price tag. By helping offset our budgeted expenditures, you would be giving a gift of timely value. We thank you in advance for financially supporting this ministry's continuing vision. ★



Filming on the Sea of Galilee: *top*: Dr. Jeffrey Seif, *bottom*: David and Kirsten Hart



Saint Peter, copy by an anonymous artist of a painting (c.1618) by Paul Rubens (1577–1640), National Gallery of Art

Our Jewish Roots TV programs in May

A special thank you to our viewers. You continue to uphold our efforts as we strive to present the Bible through Jewish eyes. ***Kings and Kingdoms*** was the last series we filmed in Israel before COVID restrictions hindered traveling. Miraculously, we have been able to continue bringing the Word alive through Berg Productions' versatility and creativity.

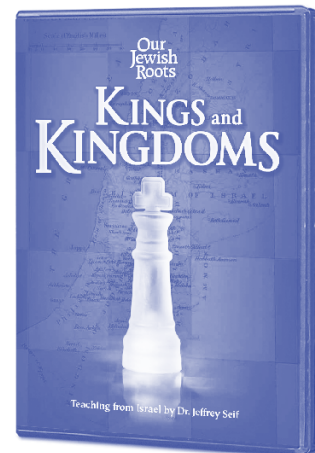
We hope you enjoy the revelations from ***Kings and Kingdoms*** as we finish broadcasting the series this month. In May we also introduce ***Jeremiah: Hope Over the Horizon***. This new series is about the weeping prophet — who did much more than weep! We are eager for you to learn about this man of God and his call to proclaim God's message.

***Kings and Kingdoms* —**

Judah's Hezekiah and Manasseh — Good King Hezekiah did not depart from following God. Faithfulness pays dividends! Unfortunately, his son Manasseh brought Judah horror and bloodshed.

Judah's Josiah and Zedekiah — King Josiah took God's Word seriously. Oh, that our leaders would do the same! Poor leadership leads to bad consequences. Josiah's son Zedekiah rebelled against the Lord, paving Judah's road to ruin.

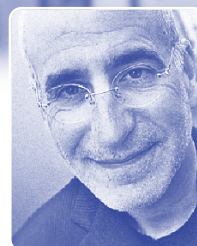
Israel's Future King — The prophet Isaiah looked to a reunited Israel's ultimate King — the Lord Yeshua, who will return to rule from David's throne.



Jeremiah: Hope Over the Horizon

Known as the weeping prophet, Jeremiah was assigned to warn his countrymen of the imminent judgment and deportation at the hands of the Babylonians. Nonetheless, a message of hope and deliverance is woven throughout Jeremiah's writings. This nine-part series features Bible teaching by **Dr. Jeffrey Seif**, dramatic reenactments by Israeli actors, commentary from **Dr. Michael Brown**, and applications in studio discussions with David and Kirsten Hart.

JEREMIAH HOPE OVER THE HORIZON



Jeff Seif



Michael Brown

Young Man's Visions — The Babylonian war machine was coming to Judah. The Lord chose a young Jeremiah to be His prophet and to deliver the call to return to the ways and values that God specified in His Word. Israel's culture, like America's, had veered off the path and was about to reap the consequences.

Psalms of Ascent DVDs

Eight 30-minute TV programs on two DVDs

In this eight-part television series, Jeff Seif and Sandra Levitt examine Psalms 120 to 134, known as the "Psalms of Ascent." These psalms, sung by ancient Jews going up to the Temple in Jerusalem, are surprisingly appropriate and timely for Believers today. "Our Man in Haifa" Eitan Shishkoff and the music of Marty Goetz are featured.

Psalms 120 & 121 From the UN headquarters in Jerusalem, Jeff reminds us that King David had to deal with deceitful enemies and distress but realized that his sure source of help was the Lord.

Psalms 122 & 123 This ministry's signoff is "Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem" from Psalm 122. Jerusalem has had its share of battles, yet is still central in the hearts of Jews and Christians.

Psalms 124 & 125 The Lord has sustained Israel these many centuries. King David saw divine protection and likened it to the mountains around Jerusalem.

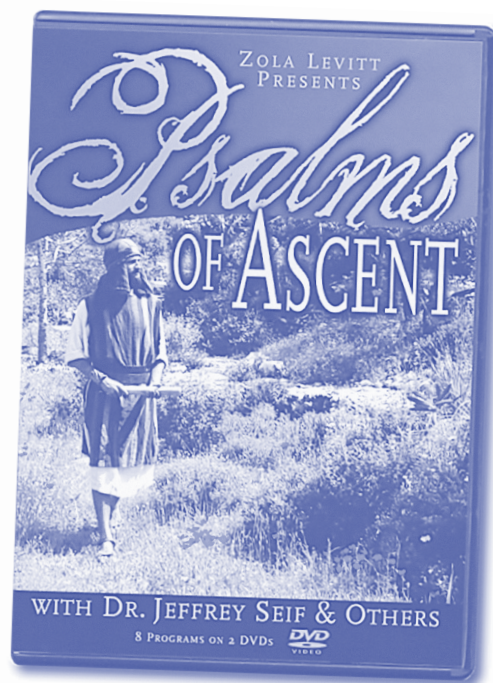
Psalms 126 & 127 The Israelites have returned to the Promised Land. At the Temple Mount, we learn that human efforts to build are in vain without the Lord's protection.

Psalms 128 & 129 The psalms clearly teach that fear of the Lord and honoring His ways bring blessings to individuals. Israel has seen much affliction, but the Lord's support is unwavering.

Psalms 130 & 131 God's ears are open to our cries for help. Always there, He faithfully pours out His forgiveness and redemption. Believers need to pray for an awakening among His People.

Psalms 132 & 133 The Lord chose Jerusalem as His abiding place; it remains His to this very day, despite replacement theologies. In this fractious world, dwelling together in unity is a blessing.

Psalm 134 Many come up to Jerusalem, seeking and praising God. Marty Goetz sings a wonderful rendition of "Benediction."



Psalms of Ascent DVDs

___ 1 set of DVDs— \$58

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Coming: The End! — Russia & Israel in Prophecy booklet

by Zola Levitt and Dr. Thomas S. McCall

This study of a primary End Times prophecy is vital for all who believe the Scriptures. One chapter, A Strategy for Unbelievers, even tells unbelievers how to cope with the Tribulation Period! This basic book of prophecy analyzes the world situation in surprising terms. Hal Lindsey called it, *"A must-read for everyone who wants to know where we are on God's timetable."*

Coming: The End! booklet

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2205

Dear Sarah,

(please check appropriate boxes)

I believe that drawing close to the Lord every day protects us Believers from harm, as promised in Psalm 91.

- ☐ Agree
☐ Disagree

☐ Here is my donation for **May**. I want to help complete production of OJR's series on Peter and his faith in Yeshua.

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