



May 2023

FROM SARAH, OUR SABRA ON THE GROUND IN ISRAEL



Dear Friend,

Greetings from the Holy Land. In a recent discipleship meeting, I met with a young woman who grew up in Israel in a non-believing home. She had been struggling significantly for some time about forgiving her parents who divorced when she was a child. Even though the divorce was “amicable,” she came to realize more recently just how much damage it had caused her and her siblings.

As we talked through taking this step of forgiveness, I watched her experience a choking sensation every time she considered pronouncing the words “I forgive.” She eventually declared, “I just can’t do it.” When we prayed together, I felt God’s leading to tell her my story about forgiving “the unforgivable.”

A Devastating Experience

When I was a child, one of my parents’ closest friends sexually abused me. This happened for several years in a recording studio. At age 15, I finally found the courage to tell someone. Revealing this secret was a major step to freeing me from the abuse. It was, however, only the first step. This revelation led to a police investigation and a trial where, as a 17-year-old, I had to testify in court about what happened to me.

For years, my whole family suffered devastating effects from the abuse. I tried to deal with it by burning all my notebooks with music and songs I had written. I quit playing the piano and avoided any activities that brought up the painful memories of the abuse.

HEALING FROM ABUSE

As I prepared for marriage in my early twenties, my parents recognized that I needed to heal before this new stage in my life. They sent me to a prayer and healing conference in Europe. At this conference, a team gathered around me and prayed for me. One lady asked me if I had forgiven the man who abused me. I answered that I hadn’t. When she asked if I wanted to forgive him, I replied that I didn’t.

She stated that offering forgiveness was the first step to my healing. Then she asked me to say that I forgave this man. I thought about it for a moment and again responded, “No.” The woman replied that I needed to take this step so that I could be free. As I considered her advice, I thought,



(over please)

“Why should I forgive this man? He did the worst thing to me, which ruined my life. Why would I forgive him — let him off the hook for what he had done? What he did is unforgivable.”

Just then, another woman said: “Forgiving someone doesn’t mean that you’re suggesting that what they did was OK.” I stared at her and tried to figure out why I should forgive this man.

FORGIVE AND FORGET?

Throughout Israel, children learn about the Holocaust. As they get older, they hear more horrifying details of what happened during that time. From a young age, this phrase is instilled into students: “We will never forgive; we will never forget.” I realized that for me, forgiving this man meant I would have to forget what he had done, as if it had never happened. That was the reason I knew I could never forgive him. After the woman advised that forgiving the man would not be absolving him of the responsibility for his actions, I tried to let bygones be bygones. Still, I could not speak the words. I felt a choking sensation in my throat.

FOLLOWING GOD’S ACTIONS

Next, the woman asked if I thought God had forgiven this man. I quietly replied, “Yes, God has forgiven him.” The woman continued, “Could you ask God to give you His forgiveness for your abuser?” I thought about it for a moment and realized I could do that. So, I took a deep breath, and with everything I could muster, finally I stated aloud: “I forgive you with God’s forgiveness.”

Suddenly, I felt like I could breathe again for the first time in a long time. I was, in fact, free. This was the first step of a triumphant healing process that transpired over several years.

As I recounted this testimonial to the young woman in my story, she experienced hope. Later that evening, she finally forgave her parents. Then, she received the same freedom that Yeshua (Jesus) purchased for us on the cross.



Sarah Liberman singing

Sarah’s Apology

For the past few years, I have been working on a project called The Invitation. This worship-based outreach to the nations in the Middle East includes an invitation to come back to the Father’s house — returning to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Two years ago, one of my mentors challenged me with a question: “What does Sarah, your namesake in the Bible, need to say to Hagar and Ishmael?”

“What do you mean?” I asked. She responded, “What about her apology to them?” I had never considered it, but as I prayed, I studied the story of Abraham, Sarah, Hagar, and Ishmael in the Book of Genesis.

Sarah and Abraham both used Hagar for their own purposes — they tried to fulfill God’s promise in their own way. Thus, Ishmael was born. This situation resulted in great tension between Sarah and Hagar, which caused problems for everyone. Finally, at God’s direction, Abraham sent Hagar and

Ishmael away with only a little food and water (Gen. 21:8–21). Except for God’s intervention, they would have died in the desert.

As I prayerfully considered the story, I realized that Ishmael grew up apart from his father’s provision, protection, and love. I understood the rejection and shame that Hagar and Ishmael likely experienced — rejection that was unforgivable.

I wondered what a meaningful and heartfelt apology from Sarah might sound like. Would such an apology make a difference today to people from many Middle Eastern nations — the descendants of Hagar and Ishmael? How could any apology I offered make up for what has been a family feud for thousands of years?

As I poured over Scripture, I wrote an apology, leaning on my experience of suffering and forgiving. While I started well, I couldn’t continue. I kept remembering Hagar’s disrespectful attitude and remarks to Sarah, along with Ishmael’s ridicule of Isaac.

“If they hadn’t done this,” I thought, “then perhaps they would not have been sent away. So why was I apologizing? Shouldn’t Hagar and Ishmael apologize for their part? And if Abraham and Sarah were only part of the problem, why did I need to apologize fully? Perhaps I should only apologize for Sarah’s part, noting that Hagar and Ishmael had their own apologizing to do.”

Soon, however, God challenged me with this wisdom: “There are no discounts in forgiveness.” I knew immediately what it meant. My apology had nothing to do with the wrongdoing of Hagar and Ishmael. Thus, I could not discount their actions and offer only a partial apology. I had to fully apologize for the actions of Abraham and Sarah, regardless of what Hagar and Ishmael had done.

God’s Outlook on Forgiveness

The “Lord’s prayer” clarifies that forgiveness is a two-way street. In Matthew 6:12, Yeshua teaches us to ask God to forgive us for our wrongdoing, even as we forgive those who have wronged us. If we do not fully forgive, how can we expect to be fully forgiven? Yeshua says that one-way forgiveness won’t happen: *“But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins”* (Matt. 6:15).

Yeshua did not die partially on the Cross. He died fully, enduring the full consequences of our sin, so that we could be completely forgiven and free. The Apostle James links forgiveness and healing: *“Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed”* (James 5:16, emphasis added). Forgiveness is the key to healing.

Probably, most of us Believers* have people we need to forgive. Likewise, many of us have people from whom we should seek forgiveness. Certainly, all of us need to ask God to forgive our



Expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael, woodcut by Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld (1794–1872) for *Die Bibel in Bildern*, 1860

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

sins. God's Word is filled with incredible promises for us if we don't ignore forgiveness. The Apostle Peter noted this amazing promise of renewal that comes with forgiveness: "Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, **that times of refreshing may come from the Lord**" (Acts 3:19, emphasis added).

I pray that these times of refreshing will come upon your life in abundance.



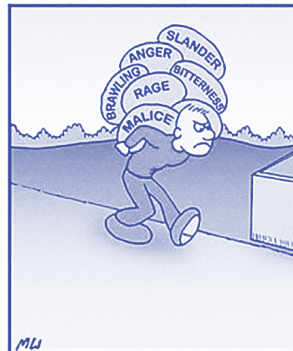
Im tirdefu lada-at oto —

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

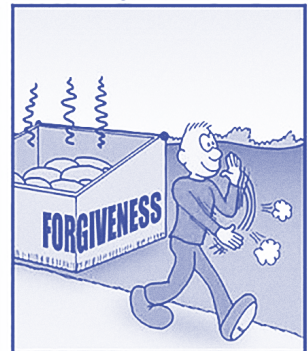
Sarah Liberman | *סarah ליברמן*
 ENGLISH HEBREW
 Sarah Liberman

P.S. Do you have a testimony about healing or freedom that you experienced after you forgave someone? Please write to me at staff@levitt.com or this ministry's P.O. Box and share your story. I'd love to hear it! ☆

DUMPSTER



A Joyful 'toon by Mike Waters



Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

— EPHESIANS 4:31-32 NIV



Zola Tours: Join us this October in Israel!

We had a phenomenal Bible study tour this past March. Our pilgrims instantly became family, and we greatly enjoyed journeying through the Holy Land together. If you have not been (or are ready to go again), please consider joining us in October. We still have space available.

David and I (Kirsten) have been with other tour groups to Israel, but none compares to the quality that Zola Tours delivers. Our hotels are wonderful, the food is extraordinary, and we visit sites that many other tours skip. In addition, our tour guides teach from a Jewish perspective.

Our recent tour included multi-generational families who made the journey part of their family story. Why not treat *your* family members to a trip that could impact them and future generations? Sandra, our travel manager, will guide you through your preparations. Reserve your spot by contacting her at **214-696-9760**, travel@levitt.com, or levitt.com/tours. She can help you prepare for your journey of a lifetime!

Fall Tour 2023 options

Deluxe — Israel	October 16–26	\$5,788
Grand Petra — Israel & Petra	October 16–29	\$7,288

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

Spring Tour 2024 options

Deluxe — Israel	Mar. 25–Apr. 4	TBD
Grand Petra — Israel & Petra	Mar. 25–Apr. 7	TBD

(We tentatively plan to offer our Greece extension again in Fall 2024.)

A Note from David and Kirsten Hart

A LIFE-CHANGING EXPERIENCE

Our March tour to Israel was remarkable. Each time we walk the Promised Land, we enrich our spiritual lives. We not only experience the Bible coming alive but also encounter new friends from many places. Truly, making this pilgrimage is a gift like no other.

SPECIAL OJR FILMING

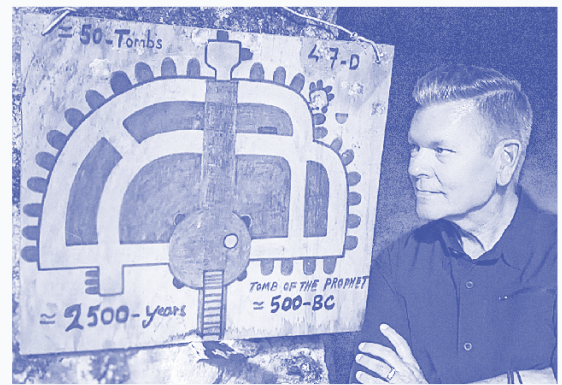
Following the tour, we remained in Israel a few extra days to tape new music videos for *Our Jewish Roots*. This taping was especially exciting. We went inside the Tomb of the Prophets, where we've never gone before. Only a few steps from the main Mount of Olives overlook (where we visit on each tour), there is a gated area with three smaller homes. We pass it whenever we walk along the Palm Sunday Road, yet we never knew what lay beyond the ancient metal gate.

We discovered that three generations of the same family have lived at that location for many decades. Louie Farhat, our Israeli producer, arranged for us to film for *OJR* on that family's private land! Beyond yet another old gate in the middle of the property, a set of antiquated, stone steps led to an ancient world that very few get to see.

HIDDEN ANCIENT TOMBS

Inside, over 50 archaic tombs were cut into Mount of Olives bedrock. Many chambers encircle the majestic cave entrance. (You can see the tomb pattern in the photo with David.) This site is the reputed burial place of Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi (and others). It was stunning and moving. We could not believe we could enter, much less film, inside these chambers.

The land of Israel continually surprises us. Going there is an unparalleled adventure. We would love for you to make the pilgrimage with us soon; but if you can't, we will bring the sites of the Holy Land to you every week on *Our Jewish Roots*!



David Hart with the map of the Tomb of the Prophets



Sha'alu shalom Yerushalayim! —

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

David & Kirsten

David & Kirsten

P.S. Taking our production crew to Israel to film new material for *OJR* is expensive. Prices have increased since COVID, yet we want to continue bringing you timely TV programs with solid Bible teaching and insights about current events in the Holy Land. Would you consider an above-and-beyond financial gift this month to help offset the major expenses we have encountered? As you give, you are helping to sow "Kingdom seed." Much love and thanks to you. ☆

(continued p. 6)

Our Jewish Roots TV programs in May

We're in the middle of broadcasting our new series, *The God of Miracles*. In this series, we see our miraculous God at work as recorded in Scripture — from Genesis to Revelation. Through teaching from **Dr. Jeffrey Seif**, testimonies from our *OJR* friends, and Zola's music, we believe that you personally will encounter the God of miracles.



Jeff Seif

If you have experienced a miracle, please email us at staff@levitt.com or write us at **P.O. Box 12268, Dallas, TX 75225-0268**.

In the monthly *Levitt Letter*, we will continue to share miracle stories we receive from our viewers and readers. We especially hope that you'll share your miraculous experiences with others. Someone might need to hear from you that miracles still happen!

The God of Miracles

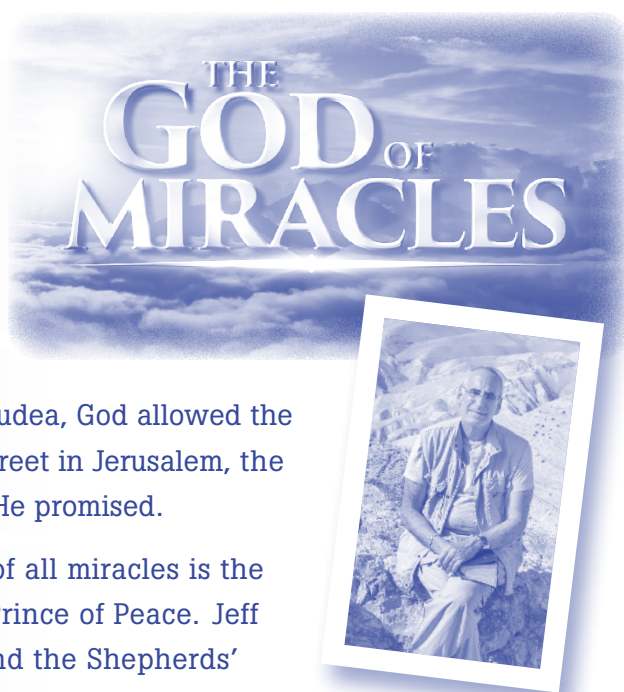
Death and Life — Some troubles are matters of life and death. Elijah resurrected the widow's son. Jesus resurrected His friend Lazarus. From Lazarus' Tomb to Bethany Church, Jeff teaches about the Lord's power over life and death — both physical and spiritual.

Exile and Return — God changes circumstances to accomplish His will. For those living in ancient Judea, God allowed the Babylonian captivity. As Jeff teaches from a busy street in Jerusalem, the God of Israel has brought His people home, just as He promised.

The Incarnation — One of the most magnificent of all miracles is the birth of the Messiah — the prophesied Child, the Prince of Peace. Jeff teaches from Manger Square, Shepherds' Field, and the Shepherds' cave near Bethlehem.

Our Daily Bread — Not all miracles are spectacular. Many are very practical — from the feeding of a large crowd to finding a coin in the mouth of a fish. The Lord is our benevolent Father who wants to give wonderful gifts to His children.

The Physical Realm — Jeff defines a miracle as the suspension of the laws of nature. Whether changing water to wine or transforming a paralyzed man's damaged limbs, the Lord moves in mysterious ways — not only yesterday but also today.



Zola Levitt Ministries is ECFA approved!



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Eretz Israel DVD set

Eight 30-minute TV programs on two DVDs

Dr. Jeffrey Seif takes us through the Land of Israel. By exploring the Holy Land's past, present, and prophetic future according to the Bible, **we discover an inextricable relationship between the people of Israel and the land of Israel.** Former CBS correspondent David Dolan helps explore the struggles in re-establishing the ancestral Jewish homeland. On-location TV footage, dramas, and wonderful music punctuate the series.

The Land Promised At Bethel, we explore God's promise to Abraham: that his and his children's destinies are eternally bound in the sacred soil — what we appropriately call the "Promised Land."

Promised to the Next Generation In Be'er Sheva, the God who cares for His people in every generation visited Isaac and confirmed His unwavering intention to give the Land to Isaac and to his seed after him.

To All Generations Bethel became a "gate[way] to heaven" (Genesis 28:17). God affirmed to Jacob that the promises made to Abraham and Isaac would be fulfilled through him and his descendants.

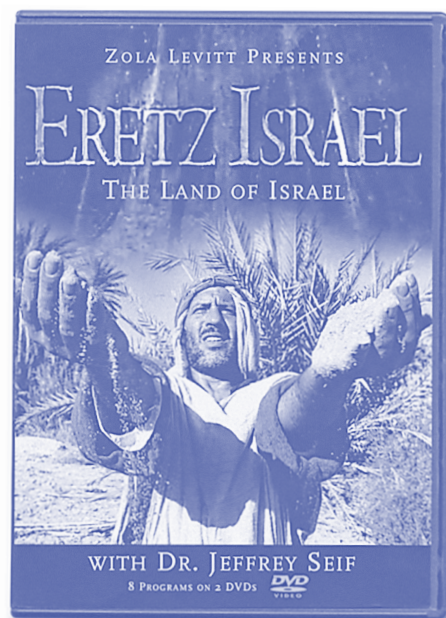
Entering the Promised Land Though the Patriarchs were long dead by his time, Moses picked up and ran with their living Land promises. At Jericho, the ancient Israelites began to contend for the destiny promised by God — their residency in the Land of Israel.

Fighting for the Promised Land The ageless mandate to lay claim to the patriarchs' promises was passed on to Joshua. The battle at Hazor secured the northern territories for Abraham's offspring.

Promised Forever At the Valley of Megiddo (Armageddon), we review God's Land promises to David and Solomon and clues that speak of victories to come.

Jesus and the Promised Land Jesus/Yeshua's New Testament vision for the Chosen People and the Holy Land underscores the basis for this series: The Land is forever significant; so is its possession by the Israelites.

Israel Fulfilling Prophecy Jeff and David review the State of Israel's Biblical significance, its changing borders, and the Biblical timetable ahead.



Eretz Israel DVDs

___ 1 set of DVDs – \$58

___ 2 sets of DVDs – \$98

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- ☐ DAYSTAR, Wed. 11:00pm ET, Fri. 6:00pm ET
- ☐ TCT, Sun. 4:30pm ET, Mon. 7:30pm ET
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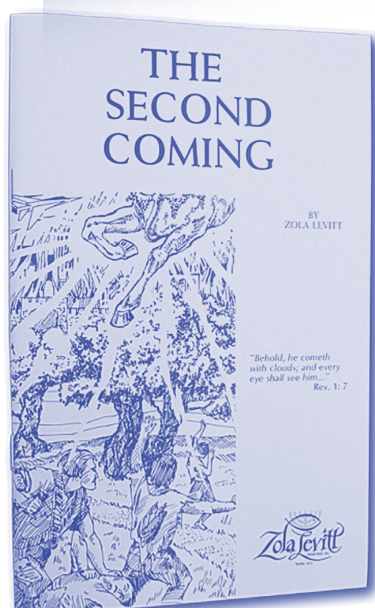


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This ancient Messianic symbol combines the menorah, Star of David, and Christian fish. Whether you put our unique golden decal on your Bible, car window, doorpost, or purse, you can be sure to stir curiosities and witnessing opportunities with this tribute to light, God, and abundant love. The delicate, hand-cut stencil measures 1.2" x 3".

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The Second Coming study booklet

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- 1 *Second Coming* study booklet

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2305

Dear Sarah,

(please check appropriate boxes)

Forgiveness is a two-way street. Since God forgives us, we can and must forgive others. Otherwise, we risk not being forgiven (Matthew 6:15).

- ☐ Agree
☐ Disagree

☐ Here is my donation for **May**. Please use it to help others understand God's forgiveness and its freedom that comes through Yeshua.

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