



**The
Chosen
People**

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PRAY FOR THE PEACE OF JERUSALEM

PSALM 122:6

**INSIDE
THIS
ISSUE:**

The Iran/Israel Conflict: How Will It End? • Personal Testimonies of Iranian Believers • Bible Study: Peter's Denial of the King

GOD IS OUR SHIELD AND OUR SURE DEFENSE



Dear friend,

Shalom! I just returned from spending two weeks in Israel, visiting with our staff, training new leaders and hosting a wonderful gathering of Chosen People Ministries National Directors from almost all of the 17 countries where your Mission to the Jewish people is working. My heart is full to overflowing!

It would be difficult to tell you everything about the trip in this brief letter, so I have posted a number of video blogs on our website so that you can meet some of these leaders and see some of the great work being done by our Israel staff—just go to www.chosenpeople.com/Israel. The videos will help you pray for the work of Chosen People Ministries in Israel and around the world!

I especially want to give you my take on the “mood” of Israelis—particularly regarding the possibility of continued conflict with Iran as well as other critical national security issues.

Israelis Are “On Edge”

There is no question that the looming threat of increased hostilities with Iran makes the average Israeli deeply uneasy. For most, the issue is fairly clear: If the Iranians develop nuclear weapons and the ability to fire these weapons on Israel (it is generally agreed that Iran already has the missile technology to do this), then it is likely that Iran will use these weapons against Israel.

The problem faced by Israeli leaders at this moment is whether to be proactive or reactive given the circumstances. If the decision is made to be proactive, then the question of timing arises—when should Israel launch a preemptive air strike on Iran? Every Israeli understands that the longer they wait, the more opportunity Iran will have to secure reactors and other nuclear machinery in underground bunkers that will make it more difficult for Israeli warplanes to find and destroy them.

Additionally, even if some diplomatic progress is made, Israelis

profoundly distrust the current Iranian leadership, which only increases the tension felt by the average Israeli.

The Potential for Severe Retaliation

If Israel performs a first strike on Iran, the threat of



retaliation is an overwhelming concern. However, it is not direct retaliation from Iran that is the most worrisome. From what I gathered from listening to the news in Israel, reading the paper, and talking with our staff and with many Israelis, they fear that a barrage of missiles will rain down upon Israel from southern Lebanon and Gaza—as has happened in the past—possibly causing tremendous destruction of property and human life. The “Dome,” a new defense system that blocks missiles from entering Israeli airspace, has proved to be moderately effective, but would never be able to keep out all of the missiles fired from such close range.

The previous severity of attacks by Hezbollah from southern Lebanon upon the northern part of Israel caused almost 1,000,000 Israelis to leave the North and move to the “safer” desert cities in the southern

part of Israel. This disruption is what led Chosen People Ministries to begin what has now grown into a very robust benevolence ministry. Can you imagine what would happen if one or two million Israeli citizens fled their homes to get away from the missiles fired from southern Lebanon or from Gaza? The impact upon Israeli society, the economy and upon quality of life would be incredibly disruptive.

I believe Chosen People Ministries must be in position to bring practical relief as well as the Gospel to Israelis in the event that Israel attacks Iran, and Iran’s proxies, Hezbollah and Hamas, retaliate against Israel. Israelis live each day with implacable stress and tension, not knowing if it is safe to take their children to the park or to go to the grocery store, as events could turn dramatically within moments!

How Can Christians Pray about the Potential Israel-Iran Conflict?

I realize that this report is alarming. Yet we know that nothing is impossible with God and that He hears the prayers of His people. I ask you to join me in prayer—pray that Iran stops developing nuclear weapons! Even more importantly, pray that the leaders of Iran turn to Jesus... and that the leaders of Israel do so as well! I still believe that Jesus is the solution to every problem, both large and small—so we need to keep praying with great faith, believing that God will touch the hearts of Iranian leaders and cause them to abandon their hatred of Israel. I believe that when people learn to love the Lord and the Messiah of Israel, they will also grow to love the people of Israel!

Although I am sorry Israelis are facing this terrible threat, it is also true that many are now more open to a relationship with God than ever before. In fact, a recent study in Israel suggested that the average Israeli now believes in God and is becoming more spiritually-minded and less secular! There is also

no question that the number of Israeli followers of Jesus has more than tripled in the last 10–15 years!¹ So, please pray for the peace of Jerusalem and that the Prince of Peace will reign in the hearts of individual Israelis.

Pray especially for the growing work of your Mission to the Jewish people in Israel. We continue to add new staff members, establish new centers and share the Gospel with hundreds of Israelis each month through our evangelistic efforts, benevolence programs (we are now feeding 3,000 families a month in Israel) and in so many other ways.

Are these events in the Middle East part of the unfolding of end time prophecy? Of course! You only have to visit Israel to know this is true! The hope of Messiah’s coming gives my soul great comfort, but more importantly, it motivates me and our global staff to do more, to be more faithful and to rely on the power of the Holy Spirit as we know that the days will grow more difficult before He comes!

I treasure the words of the Apostle Paul, who reminds us that God is still working among His chosen people and that one of the critical events of the last days is the turning of the Jewish people to Jesus. How I long for that day!

For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written... (Rom. 11:25–26).

Looking forward to His coming,


Mitch



Dr. Mitch Glaser
President

1 <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/news/survey-record-number-of-israeli-jews-believe-in-god-1.409386>

The Iran/Israel Conflict: HOW WILL IT END?



At first glance, the conflict between Iran and Israel seems like a mismatch. Iran has 10 times the population and nearly 80 times the land area of Israel. Also, Iran's proven oil reserves (150 billion barrels) place it third on the list of oil-producing nations, whereas Israel currently stands in 94th place out of 97 oil-producing countries! Iran pumps nearly a thousand barrels of oil for each one pumped in Israel.

The mismatch continues in the military sphere. Counting all active, reserve, and paramilitary forces, Israel can muster a total of 750,000 troops. Iran can muster 5 times that number—over 3.8 million. The one area where Israel has an advantage is in nuclear weapons, but Iran is pushing hard to close that gap. Israel's small size gives Iran a strategic advantage, should they finally develop a nuclear weapon. Over a decade ago, Iran's former president noted that "the employment of even one atomic bomb inside Israel will wipe it off the face of the earth."

Are demographics destiny? Is the eventual elimination of Israel unavoidable? Don't write the obituary yet!

Israel and the Promises of God

Throughout Israel's history, the nation has survived in the face of insurmountable odds and against overwhelming force. The Jewish people have experienced an unending cycle of existential threats coupled with God's miraculous deliverance. From a human perspective, Iran seems to have all the advantages—but the events of the Bible remind us that the God of Israel is "high above all nations" (Ps. 113:4).

As I watch the current conflict, I'm reminded of God's promise to Israel in the Bible. Iran cannot wipe

Israel off the map because God promised the land to His people "forever." How certain is that promise? In Jeremiah 31:36, God said it this way, "If those ordinances [of the sun, moon, and stars] depart from before Me," says the Lord, "Then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before Me forever." Israel's continued existence as a nation is as certain as the fixed order of the heavens.

Although Iran tries to push forward with plans to destroy Israel, God has said they will fail. I do not believe it is an accident that "Persia" is singled out as one of the nations that will seek to attack and destroy Israel "in the latter years." God doesn't mince words about what He will do as a result. "You shall fall upon the mountains of Israel, you and all your troops, and the peoples who are with you; I will give you to birds of prey of every sort and to the beasts of the field to be devoured" (Ez. 39:4).

I pay particular attention to the conflict unfolding between Iran and Israel because God identified Persia as one of the nations to watch as the end times begin to unfold. The current conflict is real, and so is the threat posed by Iran. However, God has already pulled back the curtain of time to reveal how the conflict will end—and the results will be startlingly similar to what God did for Israel in the past!

Dr. Charlie Dyer is Professor at Large of Bible at the Moody Bible Institute and host of *The Land and the Book* radio program.



BOOK REVIEW by Scott Nassau

Reading Joel C. Rosenberg's latest book, *The Tehran Initiative*, feels eerily similar to reading a behind-the-scenes account of the headlines of today's newspaper. The novel brings to life current news stories involving espionage and international diplomacy in a world on the brink of war. Rosenberg captures the reader's attention from the very first line as the main character, David Shirazi, hurtles through the streets of Tehran, attempting to smuggle the leading Iranian nuclear physicist, Najjar Malik, out of the country. As the second book in the series, *The Tehran Initiative* begins immediately where the first novel, *The Twelfth Imam*, ends. The fast-paced, highly suspenseful tale keeps you on the edge of your seat from cover to cover.

Rosenberg creatively blends contemporary political themes with spiritual issues, creating a captivating fictional narrative. Anyone interested in Israel or Middle East politics will appreciate this story, as it paints a vivid portrait of the tenuous situation in the Middle East and Israel's continual need to respond to the persistent threat of extinction. *The Tehran Initiative* presents a thought-provoking look into potential events in this ongoing conflict. While the reader should not use the novel to draw political or theological conclusions, the story can function as a catalyst for undertaking a deeper study of the complexities and significance of the current situation in Israel and the Middle East.

TESTIMONIES

Finding New Life in a New Land

I was born into a Conservative Jewish family in Iran. The foundation of my faith was set when I was a child, as I went to Jewish school and had the privilege of attending synagogue for morning prayers during the week. At home, our family observed ancient traditions. My parents used to have a hen sacrificed for the family for *Yom Kippur* (Day of Atonement) and had the rabbi pray to transfer our sins to the chicken, which cemented the words of the *Torah* more clearly in my mind.

At the time, the *Shah* (king) of Iran was still in power and Jews were treated well and prospered under his regime. Towards the end of my high school years, my parents sent me to the United States in order to complete my education—after which I would return to Iran to work in my father's business. During high school and college, I began wandering away from faith in God as I watched my American Jewish classmates who did not believe in God and who had mostly let go of their Jewish traditions and practices.

While I was attending college, the *ayatollahs* took over Iran. I ended up applying for refugee status and remained in the U.S. After graduating from college and getting a job, I met a few business associates who were born-again Christians. At first I was afraid of them “converting” me and had a lot of misconceptions about them—but the more I saw the integrity in their business dealings and the love they showed me, the more I developed a trust which shook off all the misconceptions. The biggest challenge was their claim that Jesus is God who came to earth in the flesh.

Wrestling with the Message of Salvation

I started reading the Bible in order to equip myself. While reading Genesis, I came across the passage where Jacob wrestled with a man during the night and later said, “*I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved...*” (Gen. 32:22-31). As I continued to read, I found more passages where God had appeared in the form of a man. At one point, a friend pointed out Isaiah chapter 53, which convinced me that the Jewish Jesus of the New Testament is the Messiah who died for my sins.

After coming to faith in the Jewish Messiah, I experienced much resistance from my family. Yet miraculously, God arranged for me to meet my wife, who is also an Iranian Jewish believer. The biggest change in my life has been learning to be dependent on Him even in the smallest daily decisions, where His guidance has led to many blessings. Best of all is the knowledge that as much as I may miss the country of my birth, Iran, or Israel—which my heart considers home—my real home is with Him in Heaven.



Messiah: THE OFFERING FOR MY SIN

I was born in Tehran, Iran and raised in a wonderful, traditional Jewish family. My parents were not very religious, but we kept all the Jewish holidays. My favorite was Passover; it usually fell around the time of the Persian New Year, which was a national holiday.

As a child, I was curious about God and wanted to learn to pray. I remember approaching the rabbi during *shiva*, the traditional Jewish seven-day initial mourning period, after my grandfather had died, and he taught me to recite the *shema* (Hear O Israel). I was also interested in reading the Jewish Bible, but I didn't have a Persian translation.

We left Iran after the Islamic revolution of 1979, when I was 16 years old. Once in the United States, I became friends with Christians for the first time in my life. Their belief in Jesus as the promised Jewish Messiah bothered me, so I set out to study the Hebrew Scriptures and the Messianic prophecies to disprove what they claimed had been fulfilled in Jesus' life.

I could accept that my good works and my attempt to follow the commandments were not enough to please God and that I needed an atoning sacrifice as a sin offering. As it says in Leviticus 17:11, “...it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.” Our Iranian Jewish practice of slaying a chicken every year at Yom Kippur for each member of our family as a sin covering confirmed this need to me.

It was Isaiah 53 that proved to me that Messiah had died for my sins. Verse 5 says, “*But he was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised because of our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.*”

On June 19, 1980, as I was pondering all these things, I confessed to God that I believe Jesus is my Messiah, my sin bearer. The result was life-changing, as God became a personal friend and a guide in my life.

SEE THE BIBLE THROUGH JEWISH EYES

BY DANIEL GOLDBERG, TH.D., D.D.



Dr. Goldberg serves as International Ministries Representative for Chosen People Ministries and lives in Pineville, North Carolina with his wife, Madeline.

PETER'S DENIAL OF THE KING MATTHEW 26:31-41; 69-75

Peter is one of the most controversial figures in the New Testament. His life was one of opposing qualities, as the Scriptures portray him both in the heights of ecstasy and in the depths of despair. Peter's behavior oscillates from drawing a sword in the garden to protect his Master, to a denial of his association with Jesus just a few hours later.

PORTRAIT OF PETER

Peter's original name was Simon (Acts 15:14). He was married (Mk. 1:30) and his father's name was Jonah. He worked at the Capernaum lakeside as a fisherman (Lk. 5:1-11) and had abundant contact with Gentiles.

Peter received his call to follow Jesus along with Andrew and ultimately became one of the twelve who followed the Master. (Mk. 3:16-ff). Jesus gave him the new name of *Cephas* (Peter), which means "rock." As one of the first disciples whom Jesus called, he became one of the three who formed an inner circle around their Master (Mk. 5:37). Shortly before Jesus went to Calvary, He prophesied that, "All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night..." (Mt. 26:31).

PETER'S CONFESSION AND DENIAL OF THE KING (Mt. 26:33)

Peter boldly replied to Jesus' prediction, "Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble." George Matheson, in his book *Portraits of Bible Men*, states that Peter's life is an example of the principle: "Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:12).

Peter's confession to Jesus and his subsequent denial of Messiah three times illustrates his conflicted personality and the coexistence of bravery and cowardice in his soul (Mt. 26:69-75). Human beings are subject to failure in our strongest qualities unless fortified by prayer and dedication to Jesus the King.

PETER'S RESTORATION AND RESOLUTION

Jesus commissioned Peter in Matthew 16:18, stating that He would build His Church upon the rock of apostolic convictions. Years after Peter's restoration and appearance before his Risen Lord and King (Jn. 21:14), we find Peter assuming leadership and responsibility in the Apostolic Church, especially in the reception of Gentiles.

PETER'S LETTERS

We are thankful that the Lord has preserved two of Peter's letters in the New Testament to show us how Peter thoroughly repented for his denial of Jesus. Peter became an apostle to the exiles in the dispersion, especially the Jewish people, in an area that lies in modern-day Turkey and the region around the Black Sea (1 Pet. 1:1).

According to tradition, Peter was crucified upside down in Rome because he felt it unworthy to die in the same manner as that of his Lord. The theme of Peter's letters is one of encouragement, showing the growth and transformation of his former self. Yes, Peter was fully restored to fellowship with Messiah.

CONFESSION OR DENIAL

Confession or denial of Jesus means the difference between heaven or hell for each of us. Jesus stated clearly that, "Whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven" (Mt. 10:32-33).

NEWS BRIEFS

THE HEALING POWER OF GOD

Kirill Polonskiy relates the truly astonishing story of our missionary Victor in the city of Vladimir, Russia. While visiting a Jewish family with a gift of food, he shared the Gospel with the hostess, Ruta*, who was elderly, bedridden and suffering from Parkinson's disease. When Victor began witnessing about the love of God, Ruta felt a desire to rise from her bed. Victor writes, "The power of God healed her and she got up from the bed. Her sister started crying. Then they called their brother in Israel and told him what had happened to Ruta. All of them received Yeshua (Jesus) as their Lord."



POWERFUL PREACHING LEADS TO JEWISH DECISIONS FOR MESSIAH

Steve and Carol Fenchel, who lead the Mission's Messianic congregation in

Manhattan, were invited to lead a Passover banquet for a church where they had previously ministered. One of the church members invited a Jewish woman with whom she works. This Jewish woman, who had attended many Passovers in her life, saw for the first time how the elements of the Seder all pointed to the Passover Lamb being Jesus. She eagerly received Him as her Messiah that night! Two days later, Steve gave three Palm Sunday sermons in a church where a number of invited Jewish guests responded to the invitation to receive Jesus as their Messiah.

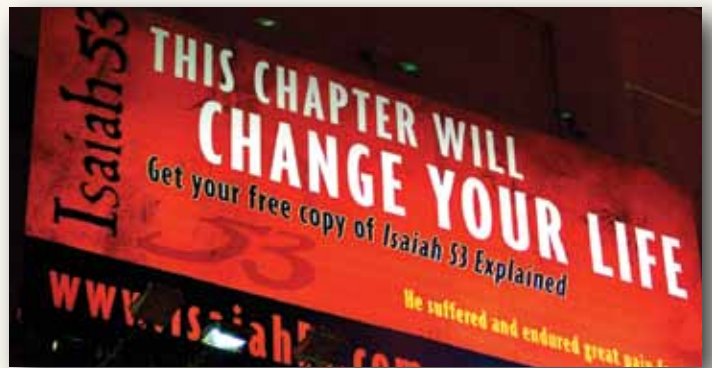
A PLANTED SEED MATURES AND BEARS FRUIT

When Igor and Vita Swiderski began their studies at Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, they also began a ministry among senior Russian Jewish couples, some of whom prayed to receive the Lord. After the Swiderskis moved on to continue their studies elsewhere in the area, this ministry was continued by some other Russian students. Igor writes, "These Moody students invited the seniors to special services in the suburbs where my father was preaching. One of the couples to whom Vita

and I were ministering, but who had never received the Gospel, came out—and guess what? After the service, they approached my dad and said, 'I don't know what to tell you—we were staunch atheists all our lives, but now we believe in Messiah!'"

BROOKLYN MESSIANIC CENTER DRAWS LOCAL INTEREST

The rapidly progressing renovation of the Brooklyn Messianic Center is attracting neighborhood interest. Bob Seemar, our carpenter-in-chief, was on site when a Jewish woman asked the typical question, "What is this place going to be?" Bob answered, "This is going to be a place where Jewish people can investigate the prophecies in their Scriptures that show that Yeshua is the Messiah." She shrugged her shoulders and asked, "So why do you care about Jewish people?" Bob told her how he was grateful for the Jewish people because Messiah was Jewish. He asked if she would be willing to go to Chosen People Ministries' website. She agreed, and after they had spoken for a few more minutes, she left with a smile on her face.



"I'M GOING BACK TO LOOK AT THAT SIGN!"

The evangelistic team with the Isaiah 53 Campaign in Los Angeles talked with students about this wonderful passage of Scripture and gave out hundreds of copies of our brochure inviting people to visit Isaiah53.com. Doug P., one of our veteran evangelists, writes, "On our way to an Israeli café, we all were thrilled to see two of our big billboards with the statement, 'This chapter will change your life.' One Jewish man who called us was captivated by our sign and said, 'I need my life changed now' in response to the sign's words. At the end of our conversation, I urged him to find a Bible and read this amazing chapter. Just before he hung up, he said, 'I'm going back to look at that sign!'"

*name has been changed

MESSIANIC RESOURCES



Joined Together? is a 45-minute documentary featuring four interfaith married couples who share their discovery that faith in the Jewish Messiah, Yeshua, can bring a dynamic and joy-filled basis to their marriage.

Joined Together? DVD
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Saturday August 4 - Sunday August 19



More than two thousand people attended the **Israel, the Church and the Middle East Crisis** conference in March at Biola University to hear addresses by the featured speakers: Author Joel C. Rosenberg, leading evangelical Old Testament scholar Dr. Walter Kaiser, and Dr. Mitch Glaser. The conference also included a variety of workshops and panel discussions



on topics such as how to witness to both Jewish people and Muslims, the impact of antisemitism on Jewish evangelism, and the plan and purposes of God

for the Jewish people. Many were encouraged and equipped to delve further into the Scriptures, and to share the Gospel with their Jewish and Muslim friends.

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Please remember Chosen People Ministries in your will. "I will bless those who bless you." (Genesis 12:3)