



How Many Days?



By Hannah Tekle

*Lord, You have been our dwelling place through all generations.
Before the mountains were born or You brought forth the earth and the world,
From everlasting to everlasting You are God.
You return man to dust, saying, "Return, O sons of mortals."
For in Your sight a thousand years are but a day that passes, or a watch of the night. ...
So teach us to **number our days**,
That we may present a heart of wisdom.
Return, O LORD! How long will it be?
Have compassion on Your servants.
Satisfy us in the morning with Your loving devotion,
That we may sing for joy and be glad all our days.*

(Psalm 90:1-14)

The verses above, attributed to Moses, paint the broad strokes of human existence, from creation, through the generations, to the life of the individual. We are but one link in a long chain of generations. We are mortal and will return to dust at the end of our days. Wisdom, compassion, love, joy and gladness – these are what make our days meaningful and worthwhile.

Isn't the passage of time a strange thing! One moment I was 15, and the next moment 50! "Numbering our days" is just a fancy way to describe evaluating life in terms of goals and resolutions – a natural and beneficial exercise for the soul. You know... like New Year's resolutions.

What are your goals for 2024?

Lose weight? Read the whole Bible? Get in shape? Be kind to your mother-in-law? Make sure the kids do their chores? Get your taxes in order on time? Paint the house? Bring the hostages home? ... Oh, wait! – That one's not on everyone's list, just for Israel and friends.

As a country we are numbering the days that kidnapped Israelis are still being held in horrifying captivity. In our workaday routine, we never lose sight of the terribly tragic fact that 136 of our citizens are kept hostage only a few miles away from our border, in Southern Gaza. While Israelis bravely and necessarily continue on with normal tasks, life is anything but normal.

Even deciding what to write in this article was a challenge – how can one insignificant collection of a few hundred words impact the desperate circumstances we are facing. However, by God's grace we press on, heartened by the fervent prayers of the righteous worldwide, standing in the gap for those bound in captivity.

Just days ago, it was reported that 6 more IDF soldiers were tragically killed in an explosion along with nine wounded. One of the soldiers injured was a beloved national celebrity. Idan Amedi is a singer, songwriter and actor. A Jerusalem native, on October 7th he abandoned his celebrity "glory" to show up for duty in his combat engineer unit like every other reserve soldier.

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I Know That You Have *Little Strength*



By Guy Cohen

"I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name... I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown..."

(Revelation 3:8,11 spoken to the congregation at Philadelphia)

Can you feel the relevance and reassurance of Yeshua's words, right now? He knows everything that's happening, and He will take care of it all. During these challenging days, I am drawing strength from these words and experiencing a depth in God in ways I never have before.

The congregation of Philadelphia in the book of Revelation paid a high price for their loyalty to Yeshua, yet they did not deny their faith. They were willing even to be humiliated in the eyes of many, in order to be considered worthy and respected in the eyes of God. He saw their works and heard their prayers. As we read the verses above, written so long ago, their choices still resonate and stand as an example to us today.



When a person is strong and capable or rich and successful, he is convinced that success is the result of his own abilities. However, when a believer in God is weak and yet overcomes, it's clearly God's doing. Also, when a believer who is poor succeeds in advancing in life and building a better future, it is clear that God is the one who helped him.

The human weakness of Philadelphia's believers allowed them to remain humble and dependent on the grace of Messiah. Humility leads to continual purification and blessings. As believers we must seek to live a life of surrender and humility. It's not wrong to be wealthy and successful or strong and motivated, on the condition that Yeshua is the center of our lives.

As His disciples, our eyes must be on Yeshua all the days of our lives (Hebrews 12:2-3). He will enable us to focus on Him and to give Him our pain and sorrow – physical pain as well as emotional and spiritual exhaustion.

The Emotional Drain of Danger

Residing in dangerous regions, such as Israel, necessitates a constant level of alertness and wariness that is emotionally draining. Normal life is hard enough, but now the continuous exposure to injustice, violence and the slaughter of innocents is thoroughly exhausting. I see in the life of believers here in Israel how suffering challenges our soul's ability to remain in His Peace. Yet in 2 Corinthians 12:9-10 we see that: ***"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."***

"I am still confident of this: I will see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living. Put your hope in the LORD. Be strong and take heart and hope in the LORD." (Psalm 27:13-14)

Living in a war zone, with uprooted border populations and hearing the pain of God's children, I continually ask Him to show me how to reflect His love. Through God we will overcome! He brings victory to the battles in our lives, even in our weakness—especially in our weakness, when we lean on Him.



“Thus far has the LORD *helped* us.”



By Leon & Nina Mazin

Last year was not easy for the Israel and its citizens. It was marked by much division and stress; and then the war, which broke out on October 7th, turned our reality upside-down against all expectations. We are still in the midst of the war and its repercussions which have drastically altered the lives of people in Israel and many outside it.

But those who trust in God know that He has never abandoned us. He is with us. He helps us, protects, and leads us forward to victory. As 2024 begins, we stand in faith the Lord will continue to bless His children here and throughout the world.

Thanks to God's mercy and grace we are able to continue ministering during this hard time. It's a great blessing for us to provide hot meals to elderly people, and to help new immigrants who arrive in Israel. We are also involved in helping parents of children who come to Israel for medical care, specifically for cancer treatment.

God has blessed our music school “Keshet Tz'ilim” (Rainbow of Sounds) with new teachers. Some of them are new immigrants who have recently come to Israel. New students have also joined us and they actively and joyfully participated in the recent concerts for new immigrants, Holocaust survivors and local seniors. The Spirit of God visibly touched the hearts of our guests as the young children and professional musicians played together.



As you know, since the war began over 300,000 reservists were called up to serve in the army, among them many believers. We were led to begin a ministry to serve our brothers and sisters in the IDF to provide them with hot meals, warm clothing and more. We also seek ways to provide for the needs of IDF soldiers in general. It's an honor and blessing for us to bless them as they sacrifice their safety and comfort to protect us.



We want to thank all of you for praying for Israel and for being partners in all these ministries in 2023. May God bless you and your loved ones with health, prosperity, genuine joy and shalom in our Lord Yeshua!

“While Samuel was sacrificing the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to engage Israel in battle. But that day the LORD thundered with loud thunder against the Philistines and threw them into such a panic that they were routed before the Israelites... Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen. He named it Ebenezer, saying 'Thus far has the LORD helped us.' So the Philistines were subdued and did not invade Israelite territory...” (1 Samuel 7:10-12 NIV)

A Call for Prayer Warfare:

During peace time soldiers train, prepare and simulate battle... the object of their training. When war breaks out, they are called to the battlefield and engage. Their routine peacetime lifestyle is disrupted. In war mode they are in the field, alert, using physical and mental effort to overcome the obstacles at hand, and defeat the enemy.

In a similar way, we as believers are called to be prayer warriors - to stand in the gap, intercede and pray for God's will to be done; to foil the plans of the enemy, and overcome evil with good.

Since October 7th, Israel has been fighting a battle for its very existence that could develop into a global war of Ezekiel 38-39 scale. This is a universal clash between good and evil. Please join us by warring in prayer!

Return to Zion Congregation

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Amedi is known for his skillful and honest songwriting, as well as his dramatic climb to fame as an actor. He first became nationally known when he participated in a TV singing contest (A Star is Born - "kochav nolad") singing an original song with poignant lyrics about his experiences in the military.



Idan Amedi (R) with IDF Chief of Staff Herzl Halevi (© IDF)

While our countrymen can seem honest to the point of being rude, Amedi is a beautiful representation of what is positive in the modern Israeli. One can't help but think of the historical and Biblical tradition of King David as the warrior poet, fierce yet sensitive, who penned the majority of the verses in the psalms that so faithfully offer us comfort and give voice to our souls' need for God the Father.

Many of Amedi's songs are self-effacing existential ballads, with thoughtful lyrics about time, regret, love and humanity. We pray healing for him and all the other wounded soldiers – body, soul and spirit!

As we passed the 100 day mark of the war, commentators have compared the national atmosphere to the years of the Covid-19 pandemic, but sadly are concluding that this crisis is so much worse. In that difficult season we figured out how to proceed with daily life – and we are having to do it again. Even our entertainment has come to reflect the new normal. The popular Israeli satire show, *Eretz Nehederet* (A Wonderful Land), is now calling itself *Eretz Nilchemet* (A Land At War). The content of the show deals in a surprisingly real and sensitive, yet humorous way with the reality of war; unexpectedly inspiring us to tears and to prayer. "A cheerful heart does good like medicine" (Proverbs 17:22)!

When we came out of the Corona crisis, I remember looking back and counting. How many people critically ill? How many years? How many weeks of lockdown? *How many days* in quarantine? How many milestones and holidays missed and negatively affected by the epidemiological regulations?

The longer we lived with the pandemic, the more the reporting of the numbers changed. So too has it been with this war. In the first week the numbers of those killed and captured, and the number of rockets and the days experiencing war, were reported meticulously. **As the numbers grew, we became numbed to the sharp significance of each life, each day.** To put it mildly, War is awful!

If we were already desperate for God to step in and intervene during the COVID Crisis. How much more now!

Israel is seeking God in spirit and in truth – like I have never seen before. Pray and fan those flames.

In our own way, at Tents of Mercy, we too are "numbering our days" – looking back and looking forward in our community's activities; to find the balance between emergency projects and regular life. We have revamped our weekly and monthly schedule to encourage fellowship, worship and breaking bread together. And we just published a beautiful calendar for 2024 – to celebrate the yearly congregational life cycle and to treasure our days as a community.

