



# Dry Bones and Dry Wineskins



By Hannah Tekle

Israelis are taught from a young age to acknowledge and remember the great tragedy our people suffered over 80 years ago. As a result, Holocaust Remembrance Day is a big deal in Israel. It's not a half-hearted, nod your hat to it, kind of holiday. On the evening before, shops, restaurants, and entertainment venues close early. Television shows on all the major stations run pieces on Holocaust survivors and personal interest stories from the time of the Holocaust. Schools and military bases hold solemn ceremonies, often attended by Holocaust survivors. Then at 10:00 in the morning a siren goes off for 2 minutes while the whole country stops and stands at attention in remembrance.

Each year, there are fewer living survivors. It is painfully obvious that soon there will be no eyewitnesses among us to testify of those long-ago atrocities. This year, for the first time, Holocaust remembrance is overshadowed by (or at least joined with) the new and devastating stories of those whose lives *were brutally taken on October 7th* and those who survived.

Even more poignant are the stories of the Holocaust survivors themselves, founding members of many Southern kibbutzim and towns, who experienced the devastation of being hunted as Jews yet again. Approximately 2,500 Holocaust survivors were impacted directly by the attack on October 7th. Some were in their homes and neighborhoods as they were invaded by terrorists and others were evacuated from towns in the danger zone.

The feeling on the street as people go about their regular lives is one of being tired, overwhelmed, and burned-out. Passover and Israeli Independence Day celebrations were understated. Memorial Day for the fallen soldiers and terror victims was heartbreaking. At all times our hearts and minds were weighed down by the constant reality of war, the tragic loss of life and the hostages yet to be released. There is some comfort in going back to the consistency of daily routine after the holidays, but that is tempered by the sudden realization that there is only a month left before summer vacation! Among other things, the war has literally swallowed up the school year.

One Holocaust survivor who also survived the attack on October 7th, pointed out that during the Holocaust there was no State of Israel. When she came with her mother as a young child to a land that was not yet an independent state, her mother told her they were coming "to build up and to be built up." The tired and traumatized survivors who arrived, came to *build up*, literally transformed from being prisoners in concentration camps to serving as soldiers in military camps, defending their infant country, and making up half of the fighting force. A quick search into the numbers and facts reveals their many contributions to the building up of communities, settlements, social, political, and educational systems in young Israel.

The idea that the survivors also came to *be built up* is a harder thing to explain. In the years immediately following WWII and the Holocaust, the need to study and treat emotional and psychological trauma was not understood and accepted like it is today. From what we know now, the ramifications of the trauma sustained by those who lived through these horrible experiences, were deep and wide, impacting even generations to come.



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June '24  
03



# Who Are You, Prince of Persia?

By Leon Mazin

## Who are you, Prince of Persia, that you think you can defeat us!

Today we see the principality behind Iran, clearly labeled as Persia in Scripture, attacking Israel from multiple directions, together with its proxies Hamas and Hezbollah. But this is not the first time! The Book of Daniel refers to a battle of spiritual powers in the heavenlies involving this same principality. *"But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me..."* (Daniel 10:13).

God's angelic powers responsible for Israel are still on duty, and the words from the Torah are still valid: *"For the Lord's PORTION is his people, Jacob his allotted inheritance"* (Deuteronomy 32:9, my emphasis).

## Not All Were Free This Passover חג חירות שמחנו

This year leading up to Passover, there were posters in Israel wishing a "Happy Festival of Freedom." But the words "Happy" and "Freedom" were crossed out. This was an attempt to communicate the pain people feel for the hostages still kept in Hamas dungeon-tunnels, for the soldiers fighting in Gaza's complex urban warfare, and the tens of thousands of Israeli families evacuated from their homes in the north because of heavy rocket fire from Hezbollah.

For me, this current situation feels similar to the time when I was hospitalized with Covid-19. Even though I knew the virus could kill me, I felt sheltered from fear. I prayed and expected a breakthrough, for God to deliver me from the sickness. So too are the people of Israel today. They are constantly aware of the war forced upon us. Most Israelis are tense, but coping. They are longing for a BREAKTHROUGH. **They do not expect American intervention.** In their hearts, even if they are not aware of it, they are waiting for Divine intervention. This is part of Israel's heritage. When things get tough, *"I will lift my eyes to the Mountains. From where does my help come? My help is from the LORD..."* (Psalm 121:1).

## Today Israel Needs to Experience "The Mountain"

"Mountaintop" describes the extraordinary, awe-inspiring, state of experiencing the presence of God. *"On this mountain... He will swallow up death forever"* (Isaiah 25:7-8). Our people have climbed mountains to meet God before. When we came out of Egypt the mountain was called Sinai. Here, the Lord gave the Israelite tribes His instructions for life. The hearts of **all** who were standing at the foot of the mountain were gripped. God spoke that day from the flame of fire, burning our identity as His people into all the generations to come.

In this generation, we again declare that we are placing our trust in You, our Lord, and are waiting for You to intervene, to fulfill Isaiah 49:3. *"You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will display my splendor."* This is the promise of the Messiah. This is the promise given to Israel. This is the promise for everyone who believes in the God of our forefathers through the Messiah. **May God break through with signs and wonders in our lives, our families, our cities and throughout the world – for His glory!**

## Return to Zion Congregation

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June'24  
04



By Guy Cohen

***“Behold, He who keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.”*** (Psalm 121:4)

In the night-time Iranian missile attack on April 14th, the Lord performed a big, modern miracle for Israel which we witnessed with our own eyes. We experienced the faithfulness of our God who neither slumbers nor sleeps, and we give thanks for His protection.

It must also be said that we appreciate the modern technology involved in our aerospace defense systems, in addition to the well-trained military forces of Israel, and the help of the nations standing with us. However, we understand that the Grace of God tipped the scales in our favor. Warplanes and Iron Dome were only part of the defense against more than 300 Iranian guided missiles and drones.

Despite the fact that the nation of Israel as a whole, is not yet walking in God's ways, they remain the apple of His eye. He continues to watch over them as He has throughout history. Israel, as a people, is called by God's name. *“If My people called by my name...”* (2 Chronicles 7:14).

We are living in challenging, difficult days and the Lord is revealing to us that we are moving into the end time prophecies. This period of time before the Messiah returns will be filled with painful events – the birth pangs (Matthew 24:8). *“Oy! For that day is monumental. There will be none like it - a time of trouble for Jacob! Yet out of it he will be saved”* (Jeremiah 30:7 TLV).

Dear friend of Israel, our spiritual condition and yours, is being tested as never before. Strikingly, the Book of Lamentations speaks to the aftermath of October 7. *“They raped the women in Zion, young women in the towns of Judah...our dance has turned into mourning... Because of this our heart is faint...Turn us back to you, O Lord, and we will be restored; renew our days as of old”* (Lamentations 5:11,15,17,21).

Yeshua said that hearts would grow cold in the end times. The antidote for a cold heart is a heart that is continually warmed with the love of God. How else can we bring the light of His great salvation to these dark days?

I want you to be encouraged. As Mordechai said in the Book of Esther, we have come to the kingdom for such a time as this! Let us be steadfast together, continuing in prayer. Israel needs your faith to come alongside us for miracles, like what we saw in the Iranian attack. *“If God is for us, who can be against us”* (Romans 8:31). Please intercede with us for the wisdom and guidance of the Spirit of God.

***I will sing unto the LORD, for He has triumphed gloriously.  
The horse and rider thrown into the sea.  
I will sing unto the LORD, for He has triumphed gloriously.  
Intercepted Iranian missiles and UAVs.  
(Exodus 15:1, 2024 rendition)***





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A parable that Yeshua taught comes to mind – the new and old **wineskins**. Our lives can be compared to wineskins. We carry in ourselves, body, soul and spirit, the things we experience in life. As we process and respond to the “cup” we have been poured, it is our challenge to flex and accommodate the contents so that we don’t crack and break.

Newer generations respond differently than older generations, and thankfully many resources are available today that weren’t available in the past. Yet, the Holocaust survivors and others who escaped to Israel from Europe and the Middle East, were amazingly resilient. Somehow they managed to piece together new lives and a new country, even without the counseling and emotional support that is helping this current generation process the ongoing tragedy of October 7th.

And with the end of the war not yet in sight, Israelis are desperately asking questions: “*What will happen now? Where do we go from here?*” Even God asked a similar question: “*Son of Man, can these bones [Israel] live?*”

One thing remains clear. The same Breath that breathed life into the **Dry Bones** in Ezekiel 37, the same Yeshua Who coached His listeners to broaden and flex their understanding like a new wineskin, the same Everlasting Father who orchestrated the establishment of Modern Israel 76 years ago – that same Sovereign One is keeping watch over this impossible situation. He will not rest “*till He makes Jerusalem a praise in the Earth*” (Isaiah 62:7).

***“Comfort, O comfort My people,”  
says your God.***

***“Speak kindly to Jerusalem;  
And call out to her,  
that her warfare has ended,  
That her iniquity has been removed,  
That she has received of the Lord’s hand  
Double for all her sins.”***

***A voice is calling,  
“Clear the way for the LORD in the wilderness;  
Make smooth in the desert  
a highway for our God.  
Let every valley be lifted up,  
And every mountain and hill be made low;  
And let the rough ground become a plain,  
And the rugged terrain a broad valley;  
Then the glory of the LORD will be revealed,  
And all flesh will see it together;  
For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”***

(Isaiah 40:1-5 NASB)

