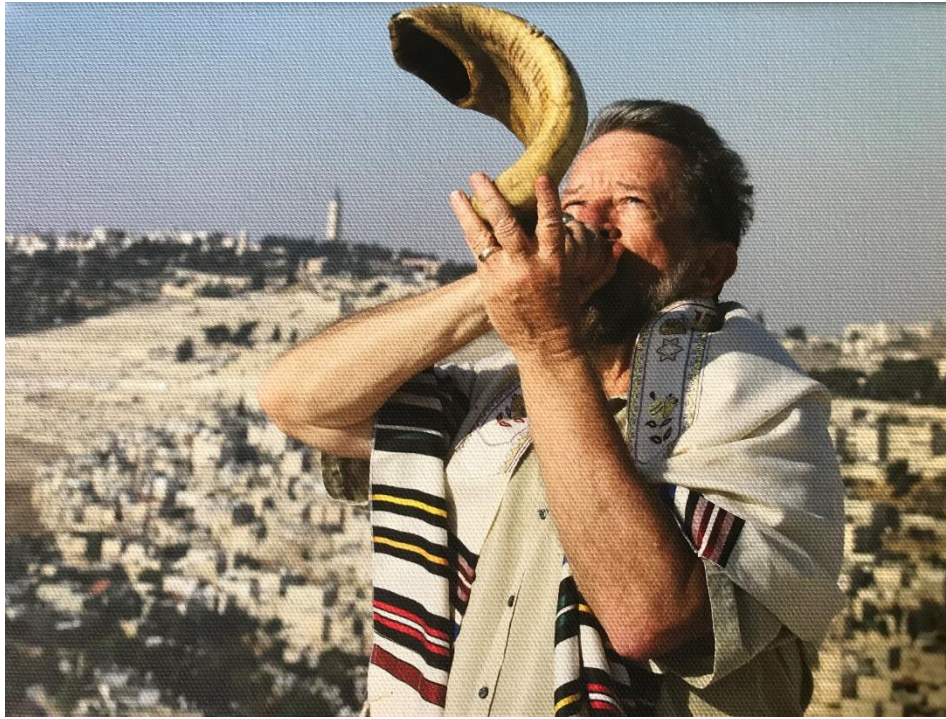


Newsletter from Martin & Norma Sarvis
Special Report



SOUND A SHOFAR IN ZION - - -

Shalom, Dear Ones . . .

As we write, Israel is at war. Hundreds of thousands of troops, both active duty and reserve, are poised on the border to the Gaza Strip, at any hour expecting the order to enter in order to crush and put an end to the rule of the terrorist Islamic group *Hamas*. It was two weeks ago, the last Holy Day ending the Feast of Tabernacles that we awakened here in Jerusalem to find ourselves diving into our "safe room" as the air-raid siren wailed that rockets from Gaza were headed our way. At that moment they were also falling in Tel Aviv and over large portions of the south. Yet that, which has happened often in the past, was really a diversionary tactic to take Israel's attention away from something infinitely more terrible which was taking place. While Israel's attention was diverted, all along the border with Gaza, the fence began to be breached—huge front-end loaders tearing away the fence, secret tunnels opening up as around 1,500 Hamas terrorists poured into Israel—in trucks, on foot, on motor bikes, some even flying in para-gliders. The surprise attack had obviously been well planned, intelligence gathered and troops trained for months. They knew exactly where they were going. They cut the communications around the sparsely manned military outposts (Israel, thinking Hamas was not presently a serious problem, had recently been focusing its military elsewhere). As happened in the Yom Kippur war, soldiers unable to defend their posts were overrun, killed and mutilated. Then the wholesale slaughter of civilians began—the militants descended upon the sleeping, unsuspecting villages and kibbutzim along the Israeli side of the border. They knocked on doors, when opened they began killing everyone inside. They took over a police station, slaying dozens of officers, and after capturing the Kibbutz's armoury, began turning

the weapons on the citizens. People were captured in their "safe rooms"...whole families summarily executed. Babies decapitated and burned. Old women (some Holocaust survivors), children, young women taken hostage across the border into Gaza. Hamas knew precisely where a vast all-night "Nature Party" *Rave* entitled *Supernova* was going on...thousands of young Israelis tragically giving themselves over to drugs and alcohol and trance music under the stars. The terrorists, dressed in flak jackets, and armed with automatic weapons quietly surrounded the event—then began firing. Panic-stricken young adults begun running wildly across the fields—and were mowed down in the cross-fire. Likewise, those who made it to their cars. It would take days for Israel to begin to take account of what happened—over 260 murdered, many raped and abused, scores taken hostage and dragged back into Gaza.

It took days to root out and neutralize the terrorists...and finally discover what they had done. What was discovered was a horror Israel has not experienced within her borders since she was reborn in 1948. In one community, over a quarter of the population had been murdered or kidnapped. Each day the toll grew higher. As of this writing, more than 1,400 are dead, over 4600 wounded, at least 200 missing, presumed captured and taken into Gaza. A great amount of milk and vegetables for all of Israel is produced in those communities. With no one to work dairies, thousands of cows have died (many hundreds killed by the terrorists)—no one to harvest the crops, vast amounts of vegetables have been lost.

As with the *Yom Kippur War*, exactly 50 years before, Israel had underestimated our enemy—Hamas was thought to be no present threat, we had turned our military's attention elsewhere. From information found in documents on fallen terrorists, we now know that the group had been quietly preparing the invasion for almost two years—gathering intelligence, equipping itself with high-tech equipment and armament. In the surprise *Yom Kippur War*, it was military forces on far-away borders which had been struck, borders which had been taken in a military campaign. That entire war cost Israel around 2400 lives. Here, over half that number were civilians, mercilessly murdered in their homes in one awful morning—all for being Jewish and living in their Land of Covenant.

Israel is still in a state of shock and deep mourning—

for those who were slaughtered (yesterday saw the funeral for an entire family, father mother and three children), for those who were dragged across the border as hostages or worse, for those family members who have been called up to military service. Yet we are recovering; as rockets continue to fall from Gaza, Israel has continued to pound the Strip with airstrikes preparatory to the ground invasion which must come. This evil power (which years ago forcibly took over the government and has been ruling the Palestinian Arabs there with an iron hand) must be eliminated. Israel realizes that the incursion will cost lives of the innocent. It will do all it can to avoid killing civilians. Hamas, which scorns its own people, plants its weapons and rocket launchers under or near hospitals and schools. Israel has already sent thousands of leaflets in Arabic to those civilians living in the area of Hamas' strongholds, to withdraw south. But there is little question that when Israel goes in, there will soon be pictures displayed throughout the world depicting her as an aggressor. It will not be about an Israeli "reaction" or "response"—it will be a surgical operation to cut out a violent, inhuman, darkness which has murderously attacked our citizens, so that it can never attempt to do so again. At the same time, the Iran-supported militant power Hezbollah, which has an arsenal of tens of thousands of rockets across our northern border with Lebanon has begun sporadic firing into Israel—it is feared that they are waiting for Israel's incursion into Gaza to launch a

full-scale attack from the north. Yesterday, missiles were fired our way from far-away Yemen, south of Saudi Arabia by forces also under the power of Iran. Might the war spread to Iran? Might this be the time Israel must seek to take out the nuclear threat which they have been holding over us for years? We are in what is probably the most grim and dangerous period since our re-birth as a nation in 1948. Israel must rise and stand in this hour and prevail if we are to survive as a nation.

But Israel cannot do that without her God!

The One who presented Himself to Joshua (Joshua 5:14) as the *Captain of the Armies of the LORD*. Who David knew as the *God Who Arrays the Armies of Israel* (I Samuel 17:45). We pray for our people to seek the face of our Lord. A unity-government has been formed, with a war cabinet of some of our most experienced military leaders. We pray that they seek divine council and be granted to move in integrity and discernment in the battles ahead.

All of tiny Israel's present-day wars require service from her reserve force—all past servicemen up to just over the age of 40 can be required to return to duty. To the anguish for those lost last week—there is the pain and fear of families all over the land who are now having family members called up to fight.

The army being assembled contains more Messianic believing soldiers than at any time in Israel's modern history.

It is estimated that there are now between 1,500 and 2,000 soldiers who are trusting Yeshua (Jesus) as their Messiah and Saviour. These are among those already in active service, and those who have been called up from the reserves. We know two believing families who presently have three children in service. And a number of older adults, whom we worked with as young teenagers over 25 years ago, have had to leave their wives and children and report for duty.

WE ARE SO GRATEFUL FOR THOSE OF YOU, OUR FRIENDS IN THE NATIONS, WHO HAVE STOOD WITH US FOR SO MANY YEARS --AND ARE STANDING WITH US AND OUR PEOPLE AND NATION IN YOUR PRAYERS—AS WE MOVE FORWARD THROUGH A CONFLICT BOTH PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL.

PRAYERS

* That He Who Watches over Israel (Psalm 121) will have mercy and guide and protect His people and land during this war to destroy them. That we in Israel would be moved to *seek His face—to confess our pride and our sin, and our need of His grace, mercy and salvation!*

* That Israel's civil and military leaders would humble themselves and seek divine guidance from the *YHVH Tzevaot*—the "LORD of Armies". That *Hamas* would be rooted out and destroyed as a terrorist power. (In Hebrew, the word for "cruel violence" is *hamas*—the same as the acronym for the Islamic Resistance Movement which has taken over the Gaza Strip—whose charter is destruction of the "Zionist Entity" – Israel.)

*** That Israel will be given guidance in how to execute a sharp, surgical operation—with as few innocent victims as possible. That in battle, Israeli soldiers will remember mercy. Pray for mercy and deliverance for innocent Palestinian Arab citizens of Gaza. (Only today, we received word that a believing Arab citizen and friend of an Arab staff-member at Succat Hallel, was killed.)**

*** For the believing soldiers—that they would be protected from harm, that they will move in courage and integrity among their fellow soldiers, with the light and hope of their God shining through them. (Daniel 12:1, 3). That God's angel armies would be released to fight on behalf of those who will inherit Salvation (Hebrews 1:14; Daniel 12:1).**

*** For God's timing and strategies and protection to Israel in this conflict. There is no question that the nation of Iran, who regularly calls for our annihilation, is behind the murderous attack of October 7th—and the awakening conflict with Hezbollah on our northern border. That the war won't spill over into the region, igniting war with Iran and other Islamic countries except in the timing of God.**

*** For the scores of captive hostages being held in Gaza (from many countries besides Israel), that God's Spirit would move over them—awakening hope, giving them grace to seek their God, revealing their Redeemer. Pray for the fear of the LORD upon their captors—for their miraculous release.**

*** For the Father of Mercies, God of all Comfort would minister to our people—who have been so violated and are moving through trauma and deep, despairing sorrow more than at any time since the Holocaust.**

Here in Jerusalem, we continue in our place of worship and intercession before the Lord in Succat Hallel ("He inhabits the praises of Israel!"). This morning our Hebrew congregation met in Jerusalem, a time of worship and intercession which went into a time of corporate crying out to God in travail for mercy. There are also daily meetings for prayer over Zoom. We have been able to be in contact with and pray for some of the believing pastors from right near the Gaza border, who have seen terrible things—others who have been under almost constant rocket attack. One night we hosted a Messianic leader from the States who had been in the bomb shelter of his house in Ashkelon for many nights in a row. And were able to offer our home as a haven for a pastor and his wife who live near Gaza, but have no bomb shelter, and whose next-door neighbors were hit by a rocket. We also have been able to distribute funds sent from Believers in the Nations to help those in need in Zion at this time. We continually meet Israelis on the street, in shops, in our neighborhood who are in deep despair, sorrow, fear. Please pray grace for God to minister His mercy, courage, hope, strength through us!

Yours In the Name of Yeshua, our Captain, Saviour and King,

Martin and Norma Sarvis

Jerusalem

"There are many who say, 'Who will show us any good?'
LIFT UP THE LIGHT OF YOUR FACE UPON US, O LORD"
(Psalm 4:6)

*"The LORD is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear
The LORD is the defense of my life, Whom shall I dread?
When evildoers come upon me to devour my flesh, My adversaries and my enemies,
They stumble and fall
Though a host encamp against me, My heart will not fear
Though war arise against me,
In this I will be confident...
Do not deliver me over to the desire of my adversaries...
Such as breath out violence (Hebrew: hamas)*
**HAD I NOT BELIEVED THAT I WOULD SEE THE GOODNESS OF THE LORD
IN THE LAND OF THE LIVING
HOPE IN THE LORD
BE STRONG AND HE WILL INFUSE COURAGE INTO YOUR HEAR
HOPE IN THE LORD!
(Psalm 27:1-3, 12-14)**

לא-ישמע עוד חמס בארצך

"Violence [Hebrew: hamas] will not be heard again in your land..."
(Isaiah 60:18)