

# the Bridge הגשר

Life in Messiah International



“Sharing God’s heart for the Jewish people”

# God's Love Prevails



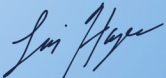
Though the headlines have begun to move on, the war in Israel and Gaza still weighs heavily on our hearts. We lament the appalling loss of life that has taken place in Israel and Gaza since the October 7 terrorist attack on Israel last year. How deeply and desperately this world needs Messiah.

As Life in Messiah staff have continued to pursue our calling to love and reach the Jewish people with the gospel, we have a front-row seat not only to the anguish of the Jewish people around the world, but also to God's hand at work in Jewish lives.

Even as the war rages on in chaos mirrored by global politics, we have seen God mobilizing believers in Jesus to demonstrate His love, care, and compassion. We have seen Him opening Jewish hearts that were locked tight to the gospel. We have seen Him provide tangible aid amidst a dearth of resources. We have seen Him foster connections between Jewish and Christian communities long divided by a dark shared history.

As you read these stories of God at work, I ask you to pray for a miracle of peace in Jerusalem (Psalm 122:6) and between the Jewish and Arab people. Let us also thank Him for the ways He is bringing about good in the midst of evil. Let us praise His work through believers who are faithfully reaching out with His love to the Jewish people in their lives.

Much love in Messiah,



Levi Hazen  
Executive Director

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\* Cover Image: Life in Messiah staff join other believers on a FIRM Hope and Healing trip to Israel.

Cover image and those in *God Mobilizes His Servants* were supplied by our friends at Firm Israel.

\* To protect our staff and those with whom we work, we will often alter names and faces in publications.

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Life in Messiah International

Wondering how to  
oppose antisemitism?  
Visit [lifeinmessiah.org/  
antisemitism](https://lifeinmessiah.org/antisemitism)

# God Loves through Believers

My wife, Kori, and I woke up on October 7 to the news that Hamas was carrying out a violent incursion into Israel. We were speechless at what we were seeing and hearing. Things only got worse as less than 48 hours after the attack, public opinion was already turning against Israel.

In New Jersey, our local Jewish community was reeling from the war and the national surge in antisemitism (in December 2023 the Anti-Defamation League reported that antisemitic incidents in the U.S. had increased over 300% since October 7). Kori and I felt a strong desire to show solidarity with our Jewish neighbors. We asked each other, "What can we do?"

One simple step we took with a group from our home church was to go to downtown Lakewood and set up a table with an Israeli flag and a banner reading, "We stand with Israel." Within minutes, multiple Jewish people were surrounding us and thanking us for standing with them against the rising hate.

Our church, located on a stretch of road driven by many Orthodox Jews, also posted a sign on the church grounds that said, "Praying for Israel." Later, I was wearing a hoodie with our church logo while eating lunch at a kosher restaurant. An Orthodox gentleman saw my hoodie and asked me and the pastor I was with, "Are you guys from the church up the road?" We said yes. He proceeded to emphatically relate a message for the leadership of our church: "Tell your pastors that the Jewish community sees you and your public display of love and solidarity." It was a small reminder of what a simple gesture of love and kindness from Christians can do to open hearts to the gospel message!

Out of the evil of this war, God has opened a tremendous door for the church to show our love and concern for the Jewish community. These are unprecedented times. The Jewish people are now more open to friendship with believers in Jesus than ever before. I believe what the enemy meant for evil, God is turning for good! May He bless these connections with the fruit of the gospel.

— *Scott, Life in Messiah staff in New Jersey*



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If you would like to support relief efforts in Israel, visit [lifeinmessiah.org/israel-relief-fund](https://lifeinmessiah.org/israel-relief-fund)

# God Cares for the Vulnerable

Since the beginning of the war, Ashkelon – a city of more than 150,000 people, situated close to Gaza – has been under numerous rocket attacks. About 15% of the rockets make it past Israel's Iron Dome defense system and fall on the city.

The situation in Ashkelon has been tense for a long time. People were afraid to go outside and were hiding in bomb shelters. When they did go out, they had difficulty finding basic necessities, as many shops were closed or half-empty. For the elderly and disabled, single mothers with small children, and new immigrants, the situation has been especially difficult. The municipality did try to help but was quickly overwhelmed.

When Eduard, my colleague at the Aviv Center, and his team saw the need, they started visiting people in their homes or at the bomb shelters, bringing hot meals, medicine, hygiene items, and other essentials. In the beginning team members used their personal savings. We are so thankful for the Israel Relief Fund, which has enabled this ministry to continue.

During Eduard's visits to distribute necessities, he has opportunities to encourage and support his fellow-Ashkelonians, establishing close and trusting relationships with many families.

Doors are being opened to the gospel: people are more open to talk about God and ask questions. They are seeing the love of Messiah in action through the help they receive.

Alyona\* and Andrei\* are one family Eduard has been in touch with. The couple are in their 70s and have no close relatives (their only daughter is deceased). During one of the barrages from Gaza, a rocket hit their building. Thankfully, they hid in the bomb shelter on their floor and were physically unharmed. However, the couple suffers from serious psychological shock – especially Alyona, whose emotional state has become very fragile. Andrei is a handicapped person and Alyona hardly functions now because of the trauma she has been through. Eduard and his team are taking care of this couple, bringing food and helping with other needs. They have also prayed with the couple and given them a Bible.

Please pray for them and for many other Israelis – that they would lift their eyes to the only One who can give them true peace and hope!

— *Dov, Life in Messiah staff and Director of Aviv Center in Israel*



Learn how to share the gospel  
with your local Jewish community  
at [lifeinmessiah.org/  
jewish-evangelism-training](http://lifeinmessiah.org/jewish-evangelism-training)

# God Softens Hurting Hearts

What is the Jewish people's greatest felt need? As strange as it sounds, they have a need to not be hated....

After the October 7 massacre in Israel, many believers in the U.S. felt overwhelmed and were looking for ways to support the Jewish people. Our church in South Florida put out a sign saying, "Pray for Israel." It was a simple statement but has had a profound impact on the local Jewish community. This sign, posted on a busy street, drew the attention of a rabbi, local politicians, and secular Jewish leaders.

- Many Jewish people called, some of them in tears, thanking the church for supporting them in such a difficult time.
- Cookies were delivered to the office in gratitude.
- The Jewish mayor of the city posted a picture of the sign on social media, thanking the church.
- A local rabbi came to a Sunday service to share with the church about the importance of supporting Israel during this time.
- The church pastors were invited to a memorial service and vigil and asked to pray there.

The most amazing aspect of these events was the doors that were opened for the gospel. At the vigil, the pastors were asked multiple times, "Why are you here?" One lady even put it more bluntly: "I thought Christians hated Jewish people. Why are you here?" Taking a biblical stand



with the Jewish people against antisemitism opened the door to share that Jesus and His teachings are the reason we love others.

We saw the ripple effect of this as we did outreach on a local boardwalk. While talking to an Israeli woman, I mentioned the sign on the church and she remembered hearing about it. She talked with us for half an hour and gladly accepted a New Testament as she left.

Unfortunately, we know antisemitism is not going away. There will be more hatred, more attacks, and more evil committed against the Jewish people in the future. Are you and your church prepared to respond when this happens? Sometimes the smallest gesture of love and support can open doors to the gospel that might otherwise be shut.

—Steven, *Life in Messiah Digital Media Director*



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Visit [lifeinmessiah.org/prayer-guide](https://lifeinmessiah.org/prayer-guide) to find suggested prayer points for Life in Messiah's ministry.

# God Mobilizes His Servants

My heart skipped a beat as I clicked “purchase.” I had just bought a ticket to Israel...during wartime.

“God, that was Your clear instruction, right? I’m a wife, a mother, and a daughter,” I prayed. “I’m pretty sure You’re sending me to Israel. And You flung wide the doors to go.”

My first night in the Holy Land, I stayed with my not-yet-believing friends. The first thing they did was show me where the bomb shelter was. Later, I lay awake for hours, hoping sleep would overtake my thoughts. I finally got up, grabbed a cup of coffee, and sat in front of the TV. The ceasefire had just ended. I glanced at my phone to see that rockets had resumed falling in southern Israel. “Lord protect us,” I said quietly, trying to remain strong like my Israeli friends, who had already endured this for months.

That afternoon, I joined a group of 74 Christian volunteers from 10 countries. Everyone had a story of how God had uniquely called them here to serve – some on their first trip to Israel.

During our short time in Israel, we packed food, painted buildings being repurposed as schools for displaced families, picked fruit that would otherwise fall to the ground and rot, and served breakfast to soldiers near the border. Wherever we went, people looked at us strangely. The tour industry was suffering; Israelis hadn’t seen a “tour group” in months.

One day while we were packing food near Tel Aviv, my phone received an alert: “You have 90 seconds to take shelter.” We heard several booms as we ran to the shelter.

Thankfully the Iron Dome stopped the rockets midair. While we waited for the debris and shrapnel to clear, our group sang a praise song. A few Israelis who were sheltering with us watched curiously.

"I don't understand," one man said. "We have Israelis leaving our country to find respite from the war, but planes are returning with Christian volunteers. Why?"

We heard this question over and over. The answer is that we serve a great God who loves the Jewish people and is mobilizing His church to help His people in their great time of need. I hope our meager efforts made a dent in those needs and that our presence communicated "you are not alone" to a people feeling increasingly isolated by rising antisemitism. I pray the Israelis who meet Christian volunteers will want to learn more about Jesus (Romans 11:11).

— *Stephanie, Life in Messiah staff and wife of Executive Director*



“For I know the plans that I have for you,”  
declares the Lord,  
“Plans for prosperity and not for disaster,  
to give you a future and a hope.”

Jeremiah 29:11



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