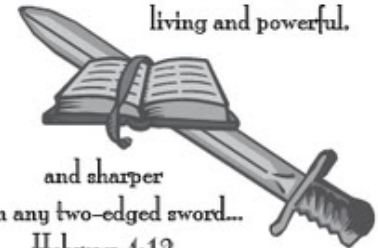


February 2009

For the word of God is
living and powerful.



and sharper
than any two-edged sword...
Hebrews 4:12



**DON'T MISS THIS
MONTH'S OFFERS.
THEY WILL INSPIRE
YOU, AND EQUIP
YOU FOR BATTLE!**

Dear Lovers of God and Israel,

Israel at War

War in Israel at this time should not surprise anyone. *"And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet."* (Matthew 24:6) As we write this letter in the middle of January, Lebanese militants firing rockets into Israel have threatened to open a new front for the Jewish state already at war in the south.

It is crucial that all people, especially God's children, understand the truth about the situation in Israel. Israel launched a major military operation against Hamas targets in the Gaza Strip in January because a quarter of a million Israeli citizens have been living under incessant terror attacks from the Gaza Strip for the past **eight years**. Thousands of missiles and mortars (some estimate 10,000) have been fired into southern Israeli towns. One young soccer player in Sderot, who was on his way to buy his father a birthday present, lost his legs from one of these missiles. When we were notified about the need of a special motorized vehicle for him, we sent YOUR MONEY to buy it. (We keep funds designated for Israel in a separate account, and seek GOD'S HEART in dispersing these love gifts.)

During 2008, more than 3000 rockets and mortars have been launched into Israel. When President Obama visited Sderot in August, 2008 he said the following, "If somebody was sending rockets into my house where my two daughters sleep at night, I would do everything to stop that, and would expect Israel to do the same thing." Incredibly, Israel has exercised tremendous restraint in not responding during the past several years. Finally, they had no choice. Enough is enough. Terror forced a response. Yet, the world portrays Israel as the villain!

Israel's goal: to strike the growing infrastructure of terror and the ability of Hamas and its allied organizations to launch missiles at Israeli citizens and carry out terror attacks. Israel is particularly interested in destroying smuggling tunnels, Hamas' lifeline used to bring in arms, money, and basic goods. Unfortunately, local homes are used to conceal the tunnels. Israel does not target Palestinian civilians, but Hamas uses civilians for cover, making it virtually impossible to avoid civilian deaths. The media does not report this, but instead condemns Israel for killing innocent civilians. Please know that in the midst of Hamas' rocket and mortar attacks, Israel has continued to allow humanitarian aid to pass through Gaza's border crossings. Israel is not at war with the Palestinian people, but with the Hamas terrorists. Israel even treats wounded Palestinian terrorists in her hospitals.

Casualty figures reported by the secular media should not be received as "truth," since the vast majority of those killed by the Israeli Defense Forces have been terrorists who very often are without uniforms to distinguish themselves from the general population.

WE STILL PLAN TO GO TO ISRAEL ON MAY 31. GOD HAS OPENED MIRACULOUS DOORS. ISRAEL NEEDS GOD'S LOVE NOW, MORE THAN EVER. PRAY ABOUT JOINING US. IF TOUR GROUPS ARE IN DANGER, ISRAEL WILL NOT LET US VISIT. FEAR NOT! GOD IS WITH US.

The Battle in Our Backyard

On December 28, 2008, as reported by the Palestinian Media Watch, there was a video on Hamas TV titled "Hamas celebrates targeting Israeli civilians." Pictures of skulls dripping with blood included captions such as, "Let them taste violent death," and "Send them to Hell! Tear them to pieces!" Two days later, on December 30, 2008, there was a Pro-Hamas rally in downtown Ft. Lauderdale, fifteen minutes from our home, ten minutes from our synagogue. We watched the demonstration on the internet, and could hardly believe our eyes as we saw between 200-300 Palestinian supporters carrying signs and screaming hate-filled diatribes against Israel and the Jewish people. To be exact: "Nuke Israel." "There is no Israel." "Go to Hell, Israel." "Free Palestine!" "Occupation is a crime." "Go back to the ovens."

The same spirit that seeks to annihilate Israel and the Jews is at our doorstep. This is a SPIRITUAL BATTLE, first and foremost. The word HAMAS in Hebrew means VIOLENCE. Violence is not a person. It is an evil spiritual force, and the battle is a spiritual one. Messiah's *talmidim* are exhorted to put on the whole armor of God before engaging in this ongoing battle. *"For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places."* (Ephesians 6:12)

William Gurnall, in the Puritan classic, **The Christian in Complete Armour**, written in 1655, explains why saints (that's us!) must "wrestle." The word wrestling used by the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 6:12 does not refer to the sport of wrestling as we know it today, but rather describes the SHARPNESS of our encounter with the enemy. It is a one-on-one contest, much like that between David and Goliath. Each one of us needs to learn to fight against the enemy on an individual basis. As Gurnall points out, whether we like it or not, each of us must go into the ring with Satan. "You give Satan a dangerous advantage if you see his wrath and fury bent in general against the saints, and not against you specifically: Satan hates me; Satan accuses me; Satan tempts me. Conversely, you lose much comfort when you fail to see the promises and providences of God as available for your own specific needs: God loves me; God pardons me; God takes care of me."

The Body of Messiah at War

We are at war both individually and collectively. As individuals, we are encouraged to *"Fight the good fight of faith..."* (1 Timothy 6:12) The Lord of Hosts, *Adonai Tzvaot*, teaches us how to fight or "wrestle," and gives us the victory as we remain "in Him." *"Blessed be the Lord my Rock, who trains my hands for war, and my fingers for battle—"* (Psalms 144:1)

We know how weak we are in ourselves, and yet, we embrace by faith the promises of God: *"...He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world"* (1 John 4:4). *"Through God we will do valiantly, for it is He who shall tread down our enemies."* (Psalm 108:13) *"If God is for us, who can be against us?"* (Romans 8:31b) *"Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us."* (Romans 8:37) And finally, *"And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death"* (Revelation 12:11).

While we are individual soldiers engaged in battle with an unseen, though very real foe, we are also part of an ARMY. As such, we need to adopt a warrior's outlook, attitude, and even lifestyle. As Paul instructed his spiritual son, Timothy, *"You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Yeshua HaMashiach. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier"* (2 Timothy 2:3-4). Soldiers in the Lord's army must relate properly to AUTHORITY. *"Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account."* (Hebrews 13:17) The way to have authority is to be under authority. Lone rangers, rebels, and those with an "independent spirit," open themselves and

the Body of Messiah to demonic activity. A soldier in the Lord's Army must understand DISCIPLINE. A disciple or *talmid* of Yeshua must live a disciplined life—a life of prayer, Bible study, fasting, giving, serving, and sharing the Good News as led by the Ruach HaKodesh. We have a rule book—the Holy Scriptures—which tells us how to live. We have a Captain of the Host of the Lord, Yeshua, who gives us our marching orders. What would happen if the soldiers in a platoon all decided to do their own thing instead of following their commander's orders? Defeat by the enemy would almost be certain. The same applies to soldiers in the Army of the Lord.

If an army, a team, a marriage, or a family can be divided, it can be conquered. Yeshua said, *"Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand"* (Matthew 12:25). Soldiers in the Army of the Lord should have a TEAM MENTALITY. There is anointing and power in UNITY (Psalm 133:1). We must stand together, valuing unity, not demanding uniformity, submitting to one another in the fear of the Lord. As stated in Philippians 2:2 we should be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. *"Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others."* (Philippians 2:3-4) This is what soldiers in the Israeli army are taught to do!

Soldiers in the Army of the Lord need to KNOW THEIR ENEMY. Unfortunately, our enemy is harder to figure out than Hamas. He has many names, many faces, and many tactics. He is the accuser, the adversary, the dragon, the serpent, the prince of the power of the air, the god of this world, an angel of light, satan, the devil, Beelzebub, Belial, the father of lies and more. He is a king with a kingdom that includes a hierarchy of demonic spirits. Satan's methods include temptation, manipulation, deception, lying, accusation, condemnation, and oppression, to name a few. He is a very subtle enemy. The Bible says that he is cunning in Genesis 3:1, and crafty in 2 Corinthians 11:3.

Our Weapons of War

The Lord has not left us defenseless against our formidable foe. He has given us weapons with which to fight: *"For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Messiah, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled"* (2 Corinthians 10:4-6). This verse seems to indicate that the major battle for the believer is in the mind. **Your mind. Our mind.** The battle begins with the individual believer. Cindy Jacobs, a leader in strategic spiritual warfare over nations, makes a very interesting point in her book, **Possessing the Gates of the Enemy**. She notes that a stronghold is a mindset impregnated with hopelessness that causes the believer to accept as unchangeable something that he knows is contrary to the will of God. Strongholds in our lives make us susceptible to the enemy. Chapter 6 in the book of Ephesians deals with relationships before dealing with spiritual warfare. If the enemy has a foothold in our RELATIONSHIPS, he can render us ineffective in wrestling against principalities. Another stronghold is SELF. Cindy lists the following rights we have to give up in order to tear down strongholds: the right to be offended, the right to our time, the right to do what we want with our possessions, the right to self-pity, the right to self-justification, the right to be understood, and the right to criticize. The author likens this to boot camp in God's prayer army.

Humility, and dying to self, are weapons of warfare. So is FAITH. It is our shield (Ephesians 6:16). TRUTH is another weapon, the first part of our armor mentioned in Ephesians 6:14. The devil is a liar. We defeat his lies through Yeshua, Who is the Truth. Derek Prince astutely explains in his wonderful little book **Spiritual Warfare** that "Satan deliberately and systematically brings strongholds in people's minds. Those strongholds and fortresses resent the truth of the gospel and the Word of God and prevent people from being able to receive the message of the gospel." Two of these are

prejudices and preconceptions. Another is unbelief. PRAYER is an effective weapon in bringing down these strongholds. The BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS is our weapon against accusation, condemnation, and guilt since God made a way for us to live free from guilt through faith in Yeshua. *"For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."* (2 Corinthians 5:21) The HELMET OF SALVATION protects our mind. Derek Prince makes an interesting case for HOPE being the protection for the mind, and a powerful weapon. Hope is based on a solid foundation of faith. It expects good from a Good God. It is effective in putting depression, doubt, and self-pity to flight.

Both the description of the whole armor of God in Ephesians 6 and the weapons of our warfare in 2 Corinthians 10 are taken from the actual equipment and military tactics of Roman legionaries. Derek Prince expounds upon the armor in **Spiritual Warfare** and Dr. Randy Smith explains the weapons on both the **Jewish Jewels Warfare DVD**, and on a CD message given at our home congregation.

On The Offensive

This month, the Lord is telling us just what He told Joshua, following the death of Moses: **CHAZAK!** Be strong! *"...for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go"* (Joshua 1:9). Yeshua alluded to the same thing when He said to Peter, *"...on this rock I will build My kehilah (church), and the gates of Hades (Hell) shall not prevail against it"* (Matthew 16:18). Many believers throughout the ages have thought that this was a picture of Yeshua's body defending itself against the enemy. It is not. Having been to Caesarea Philippi many times (now called Banias) and seeing the huge rock formation which was called *The Gates of Hell* (because sacrifices were cast into the dark gates as offerings to the Greek god, Pan), we realize that Yeshua was proclaiming victory over the devil, idolatry, and paganism. He was declaring an OFFENSIVE STRATEGY. His followers would STORM THE GATES OF HELL. They would be victorious because of who He had revealed Himself to be—the Son of the Living God (Matthew 16:16). This promise actually had its roots in the covenant that God made with Abraham at the binding of Isaac when the Lord promised, *"... your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies"* (Genesis 22:17).

How do we take the offensive and possess the gates of our enemies? We build and battle at the same time, making special use of the one weapon in our armor that is used primarily for OFFENSE: THE WORD OF GOD. We must move from passivity to action, from busyness to business! God's business. We are in a holy war for our marriages, our children, our families, our nation, Israel, and the world. **It is time to take out our swords!**

Finally, PRAISE, PRAISE, PRAISE! When Israel broke camp, and when Israel went forth in battle, the tribe of Judah (PRAISE in Hebrew), went first (Judges 1:1-2; 20:18); (2 Chronicles 20:15-22). Judah comes from the Hebrew root *yadah* which has a two-fold meaning: the confession of God's attributes, and the confession of our sins. When we enter the daily spiritual battle, praising God for who He is, and acknowledging our need for repentance, we are placing ourselves in the proper position to be personally delivered from the evil one—who has been, in fact, already defeated by our Messiah on the tree of sacrifice: *"Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it"* (Colossians 2:15).

"Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Messiah..." (2 Corinthians 2:14)

One with you in the battle,



P.S. Our dearly beloved Jewish Jewel, Rona, has been "promoted to glory." We thank God for her many years of fruitful, faithful service to our King, and the tremendous blessing she was to this ministry. *"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."* (2 Timothy 4:7)