

IDF/wikipedia.org

Rebecca J. Brimmer



Period between July 8 and August 6



Hamas tunnels destroyed by the IDF
Pictures by www.idfblog.com

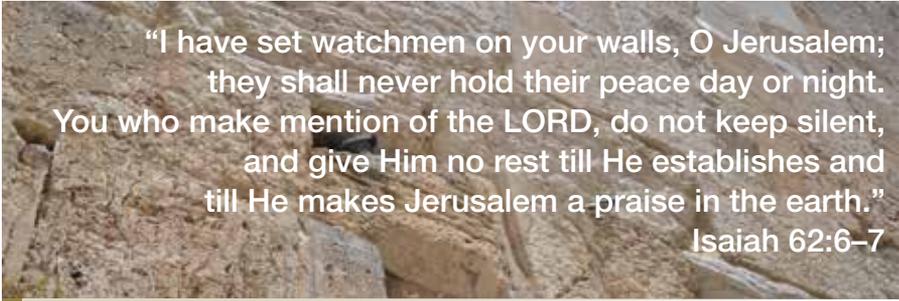
THROUGH THE CENTURIES, the Jewish people have endured persecution, danger, and death. They have experienced unparalleled pain as a nation throughout the long years of their dispersion. Hundreds of years of persecution culminated in the Holocaust as Hitler and the Nazis systematically attempted to annihilate the Jewish people. Six million Jews were murdered.

Today the Jewish people continue to fight for their survival. They are surrounded by enemies, both within their borders and without. Weeks of incessant rocket and missile attacks have totally disrupted life as children and adults race for shelter within 15–90 seconds of a Code Red alert or siren. I have run with my husband and little dog to the shelter in Jerusalem. Our team has experienced the trauma of sirens, riots and rocket fire.

Rocket attacks, especially close to Gaza, have rained down frequently in 2014, almost 200 from January to the middle of June. They increased dramatically in June after the kidnapping of three Jewish teens. Israeli security forces searched to find the boys in Judea and Samaria, much to

the ire of extremists in the region. On June 18, the murdered bodies of the three teens were found. Over 3,000 rockets and missiles were fired into Israel during July 2014. Southern communities in close proximity to the Gaza Strip were horrified to learn that Hamas had dug an extensive tunnel system emptying out in Jewish communities, for the purpose of carrying out terror attacks. The Israeli army found more than 30 of the tunnels and destroyed them. Ceasefires came and went; repeatedly broken as Hamas resumed firing rockets into Israel's population centers. As I write, we are in the midst of a 72-hour ceasefire which has entered the third day. Everyone hopes this means that a time of quiet is here. But a ceasefire should not be mistaken for peace. As long as the heart motivation of Hamas is to destroy the Jewish people, there will not be peace. War follows war as Israel strives simply to survive. With every ounce of their being, Israelis long for peace, but it remains elusive. Don't be deceived, this is a fight for the very survival of the State of Israel.

During these times, we are called upon to pray for Israel. We pray for God's protection. We pray that the people will put their trust in God. We pray that God will comfort them in the midst of pain and mourning. We pray for God's deliverance. We pray for God's miraculous work. We pray for God to raise up true believers around the world who will be watchmen on the walls for Israel.



“I have set watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem;
they shall never hold their peace day or night.
You who make mention of the LORD, do not keep silent,
and give Him no rest till He establishes and
till He makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth.”
Isaiah 62:6-7

God and War

As believers, we struggle with the idea of praying about war. Should we pray for a ceasefire and peace? Should we pray that Israel's enemies be squashed? How can we pray that Israel will succeed, when undoubtedly it will result in the deaths of many, including innocents? We are not the first to struggle with these questions.

Even as we read the Bible, we find seemingly opposing viewpoints. Yeshua (Jesus) lived at a time of political turmoil. The Jews were under the uncomfortable domination of Rome. Many of the Jews advocated revolt against the Romans. The Zealots were actively working to overthrow the government of the day. The disciples asked Yeshua when He would bring about His kingdom. It is obvious that they expected Him to save the Jewish people from the domination of Rome. However, this was not Yeshua's plan. Was Yeshua a pacifist? There are many who would think so. Yet, He also picked up a whip and fought for the sanctity of the Temple. Many must have been shocked when He said, *“Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword”* (Matt. 10:34). That certainly doesn't sound like a pacifist.

The Bible speaks of future events involving wars in which God will deliver Israel. Indeed, historically, God has often involved Himself in the wars of Israel. Sometimes directing the operations, as in Gideon's battle (Judg. 7); sometimes fighting the battle as in the time of Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. 20); and sometimes allowing Israel to be defeated (Josh. 7). In Ecclesiastes, it says, *"To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven...a time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace"* (Eccles. 3:1, 8).

Even though we serve the Prince of Peace, it is clear that He never intended for us to sit by and allow evil to triumph. We pray for the time of peace that He will bring, but in the meantime we live in a world that is far from peaceful. At times He calls us to fight for righteousness, and to battle against evil. We are living in one of those times, when Islamists would like to take over the world. We live in a time when Christians are being martyred for their faith across the Middle East and Northern Africa by Islamic fundamentalists. We live in a time when evil is fighting for supremacy over good. We must determine what task God is calling us to do and faithfully stand with Him in this spiritual conflict that is being played out in the natural.

Preparation for Prayer

It is important for us to discern the heart and voice of God for the tumultuous times we live in. We need to search the Word of God and pray the Scriptures. Now, more than ever, we need to commit ourselves to relationship with our God and seek His direction for our lives, our families, our churches, our nations and our world. It is time we grow up spiritually and realize that there is a spiritual battle raging around us. The lines have been drawn. God is calling us to stand with Him and join the fray against the forces of evil.

I know that prayer is not just a spiritual exercise. It is a powerful tool that God has given us to effect change in our hearts and in our world. When I was a child, my family had a plaque on the wall, which said, "Prayer changes things."



The Bible is full of incidents when people prayed and it changed things. Elijah prayed, and it didn't rain for three years. He prayed again, and it rained. He prayed for fire to come from heaven to consume the sacrifice in the challenge with the priests of Baal, and it did. Elisha prayed for the Shunammite widow's son, and he was raised from the dead.

Let's take this powerful tool of prayer, and allow the Holy Spirit to teach us how to use it for the sake of the Kingdom of God. The following prayer points may prove helpful.

Protection for Israel

Israel is a small nation, only the size of the state of New Jersey, with a mere eight million people. Before the "ceasefire," 67 Israelis (civilians and military) had lost their lives and many more had been wounded. What a painful blow to the people of Israel! Everyone knows someone who has died or been wounded. We all mourn for the two young ladies whose fiancés died in battle just weeks before their weddings. We mourn for the wives who gave birth to babies who will never know their daddies. Virtually all 18 to 21-year-olds are involved in the battle. When I look at them, my heart weeps for the youth of Israel, who are paying a heavy cost to provide protection for their families and nation.

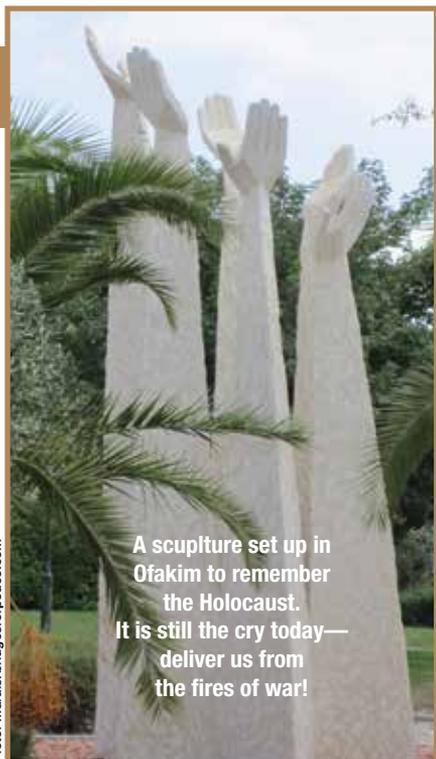
Call on the Lord to protect the children of Israel: *"I lift my eyes to the hills—where does my help come from? My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth. He will not let your foot slip—He who watches over you will not slumber: indeed, He who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep"* (Ps. 121:1–4, NIV).



Photos by Ashernet

Comfort

"Sing, O heavens! Be joyful, O earth! And break out in singing, O mountains! For the Lord has comforted His people, and will have mercy on His afflicted" (Isa. 49:13). Israel is filled with heartbroken people who mourn for their lost loved ones.



A sculpture set up in Ofakim to remember the Holocaust. It is still the cry today—deliver us from the fires of war!

Pieter Marais/bridgestorpeace.com

Funerals of those killed in the conflict have become a daily event. The attacks do not just target young soldiers but also reservists (over 80,000 were called up). Many of the dead are family men. Those who mourn include children, wives, fathers, mothers, grandmothers and grandfathers. Civilians are at risk from the constant rocket fire. No one is immune from the terror that can consume in a moment. Often wage earners are cut off in their prime, leaving their families vulnerable to financial woes. Those who lost parents or grandparents in the Holocaust and have grown up in homes shadowed by loss are now facing the loss of their own children to the fires of war. Pray for God to minister to their needs and to use us here in the Land when possible.

Trust in the Lord

Pray that the people of Israel will turn to God and put their trust in Him. Often I hear people say that Israel is mostly a secular state. I think it is important to define the terms. When I, as an American, hear the word “secular,” I think of people who have no real interest in God. There is an element in Israel who have no regard or interest in God, but I believe it is much smaller than many say. I find the people of Israel to be a spiritual people. Even those who define themselves as “not religious” often are people who believe in God.

We are praying that the people of Israel—from the smallest child to the soldier fighting to protect Israel, to the politician in power, to the old people sitting on park benches—will be filled with a desire to know their God.

“We wait in hope for the LORD; He is our help and our shield. In Him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in His holy name. May Your unfailing love rest upon us, O LORD, even as we put our hope in You” (Ps. 33:20–22, NIV).

“Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the Name of the LORD our God” (Ps. 20:7, NIV).

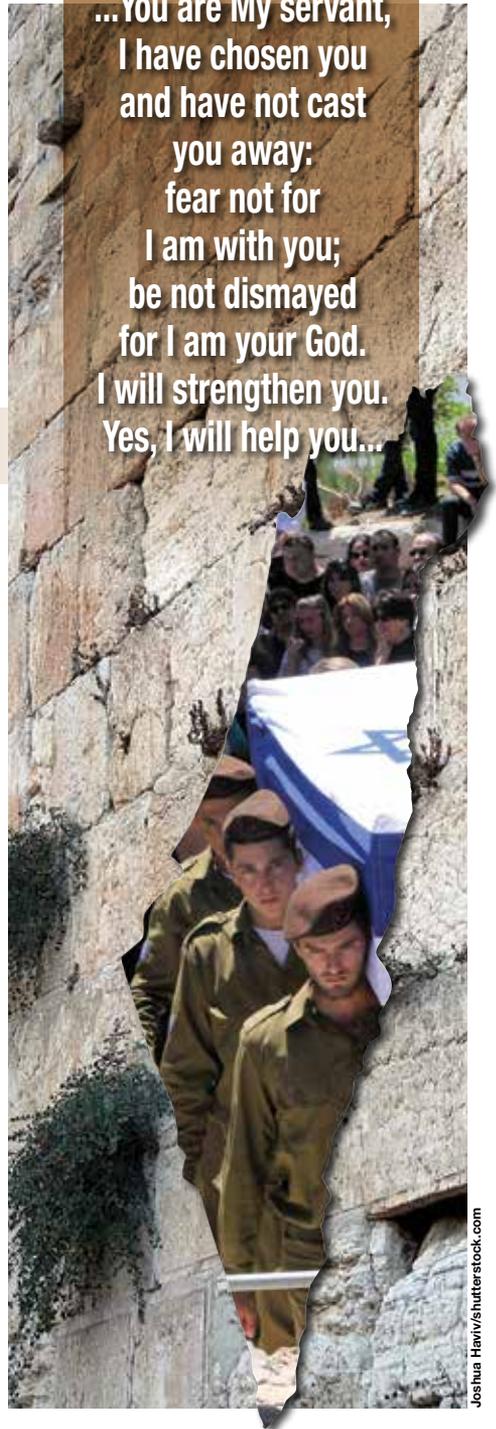
Just as God is fulfilling the Scriptures about the return of the Jewish people (Jer. 33:7–9), I know He will fulfill the rest as well. Let's pray the scriptural promises for Israel's salvation and redemption: *"I am bringing My righteousness near, it is not far away; and My salvation will not be delayed. I will grant salvation to Zion, My splendor to Israel"* (Isa. 46:13, NIV).

Deliverance

God has promised the Jewish people that He will be with them in their times of trouble. As we pray, we can remind the Lord of His promises and entreat Him to answer speedily.

"But you, Israel are My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the descendants of Abraham My friend. You whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called from its farthest regions, and said to you, 'You are My servant, I have chosen you and have not cast you away; fear not for I am with you; be not dismayed for I am your God. I will strengthen you. Yes, I will help you. I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.' Behold, all those who were incensed against you shall be ashamed and disgraced; they shall be as nothing, and those who strive with you shall perish. You shall seek them and not find them—those who contended with you. Those who war against you shall be as nothing, as a nonexistent thing. For I the LORD your God will hold your right hand, saying to you, 'Fear not, I will help you'" (Isa. 41:8–13).

**...You are My servant,
I have chosen you
and have not cast
you away:
fear not for
I am with you;
be not dismayed
for I am your God.
I will strengthen you.
Yes, I will help you...**



From this Scripture, we pray that the people will remember their God, who has been faithful to them in times past. We pray that they will not walk in fear, but instead will be strong and courageous. We pray that their enemies, who are really the enemies of God and His ways, will be put to shame. We pray that God will reach down with His righteous right arm and help the people of Israel in their times of distress.

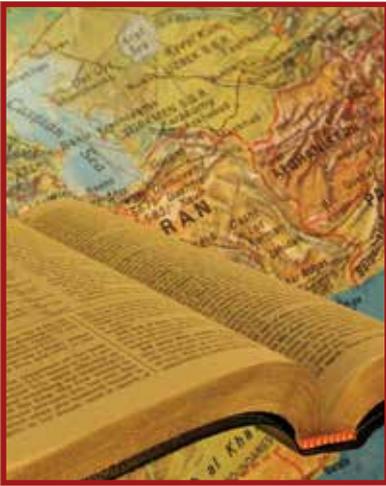
Divine Intervention

In every war that Israel has fought, stories come out about miraculous protection and divine intervention, which cannot be explained by natural reasoning. We have been praying for His intervention to bring about His purposes in the midst of these difficult times.

We know that the struggles with Hamas are just birth pangs for the battles to come. There may be a cessation of violence for a time, but further wars will come. Ezekiel 38 and 39 speak of a coming conflict with Gog of the land of Magog (identified by most biblical scholars as Russia and her confederates). Ezekiel 38:5 identifies some of Magog's allies. The first one mentioned is Persia, which is modern-day Iran.

Today Iran is rattling its sword, figuratively and literally. They are funding Hamas and providing weapons. Iran's Grand Ayatollah has made it very clear that he wants to see the destruction of Israel, the United States, and all of Western democratic society, in his desire to see the supremacy of Islam. But, as I read of God's plan to deal with the war, I lift my eyes to heaven and put my trust in the Lord God of Israel.

God says: *"For in My jealousy and in the fire of My wrath I have spoken, 'Surely in that day there shall be a great earthquake in the land of Israel, so that the fish of the sea, the birds of the heavens, the beasts of the field, all creeping things that creep on the earth, and all men who are on the face of the earth shall shake at My presence. The mountains shall be thrown down, the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground. I will call for a sword against Gog throughout all My mountains,' says the LORD God... And I will bring him to judgment with pestilence and bloodshed; I will rain down on him, on his troops, and on the many peoples who are with him, flooding rain, great hailstones, fire and brimstone. Thus I will magnify Myself and sanctify Myself, and I will be known in the eyes of many nations. Then they shall know that I am the Lord"* (Ezek. 38:19–21a, 22–23).



Miracle stories are being circulated and encourage us all. One such story was heard on Israeli radio from one of the rabbis that was part of it. In May, a group of rabbis responsible for producing *matzah* (unleavened bread) for Passover were searching for crops that were suitable for a second year's worth of *matzot* (plural) as the biblical *shmitah* is coming (seven-year crop cycle which prohibits growing crops while the land rests). The best crop is one that has the latest rainfall. The best crop this year happened to be on a farm on the border with Gaza, so they went to the border with Gaza and after being warned and interrogated by soldiers on the border, they harvested the wheat. At the end of July there was a Hamas planned massacre of the inhabitants of a *kibbutz* (small Israeli community) near the border. The 13 terrorists were caught. Do you know why? When they emerged from the Israeli side of their tunnel, there was no cover! The tunnel opened in the middle of the wheat field that had been harvested.

There is no doubt in our minds that Israel will see divine intervention now and in the future. This doesn't mean that they will avoid all trouble. As the Ezeziel passage shows, tumultuous days are prophesied for the future. Pray with us that Israel will see God's hand at work and put their trust in Him.

The IDF on the wheat fields next to Gaza



Photo by Ashernet

Economic Infrastructure

Ben Gurion airport



Jorge Lascar/wikipedia.org

The conflict with Hamas is wreaking havoc on Israel's economy. Tourism, a financial mainstay, is always one of the first areas affected during war and terror. We have seen airlines suspend flights to Ben Gurion Airport after a rocket from Gaza landed a few miles from the tarmac. Hotels are sparsely occupied as tourists receiving rocket fire have been interrupted.

Some of the southern towns have become ghost towns as the residents have fled to the north, staying with friends, family and total strangers willing to provide them with a safe haven. So far this conflict has cost Israel US \$4.3 billion. Families who have fled the area are experiencing a lack of income since they have had to take an unplanned break.



Bridges for Peace delivers food to the people in Sederot, Netivot, Ofakim, Beersheva.

The fierce anger of the Lord will not turn back until He has performed and until He has accomplished the intent of His heart; in the latter days you will understand this. At that time, declares the Lord, I will be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be My people.

Jer. 30:24, 31:1

Pray with us that God will bring in a miracle of provision. Many Christians around the world are sending contributions to Bridges for Peace and other organizations to help meet the needs.

“You will arise and have mercy on Zion; for the time to favor her, yes, the set time, has come...For the LORD shall build up Zion; He shall appear in His glory. He shall regard the prayer of the destitute, and shall not despise their prayer” (Ps. 102:13, 16–17).

Raise Up Intercessors

We rejoice that God has raised up so many believers who are interceding for Israel. Pray that many more will feel the call for end-time intercession. Pray that God will implant His love for Israel in His Church.

Jeremiah chapter 31 is a great chapter, telling of God’s plan for Israel in the last days. The chapter starts with the statement, “*At that time...*” Well, when I see something like that, I look up previous verses to see what it is referring to. Remember, when the Bible was written, it didn’t have the chapter breaks that we use today. So, I read the last verse

of chapter 30. It ends with the statement, *“in the latter days you will understand this.”* Hebrew for “latter days” is *b’acharit ha’yamim* (בְּאַחֲרִית הַיָּמִים) and literally means “in the very last days.” So, I understand that this passage is written about the end times.

I encourage you to read the whole chapter, but let’s look at verse seven: *“For thus says the LORD, ‘Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations; proclaim, give praise and say, “Oh LORD, save Your people, the remnant of Israel””* (Jer. 31:7, NASB). I believe this is directed at you and me, Gentile believers. In the Scripture, when you see the name “Jacob,” it either refers to the man Jacob, the son of Isaac, or it refers to the Jewish people. Nowhere in the Scripture does it refer to the “adopted sons of Abraham,” i.e. the Church.



That the Nations Will Know God

War is never our choice for conflict resolution. People are killed, often innocent bystanders. It is one of the tragic facts of history in every war. In this conflict, Hamas has deliberately used their own people as human shields, causing a high civilian casualty rate. We pray that God will protect the innocents on all sides. Even though we hate war, we also recognize that it is not God’s plan that evil triumph.

There is a conflict between God and Satan, which has been ongoing since the time of the fall of Lucifer. That conflict has often centered on the Jewish people and Israel, since God chose to reveal Himself to the world through this people. Satan is resolved to destroy God and His plans, but he will not win. God will be victorious. Eventually Satan will be overthrown forever. While some details of the future are predestined and written down in the Book, many of the details of how we will get there, what our conditions will be, the safety of God’s people, etc, are variable. They will be determined by our actions and prayer.

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As the conflict with Hamas in Gaza, rioters in Samaria and Judea (West Bank), and subsequent conflicts play out, the world will see and recognize God, as He becomes involved in the affairs of Israel in the end times. *“When I have brought them back from the peoples and gathered them out of their enemies’ lands, and I am hallowed in them in the sight of many nations, then they shall know that I am the LORD their God, who sent them into captivity among the nations, but also brought them back to their own land, and left none of them captive any longer. And I will not hide My face from them anymore; for I shall have poured out My Spirit on the house of Israel,” says the Lord God*” (Ezek. 39:27–29).

Blessings from Israel,
By Rebecca J. Brimmer
International President and CEO



they shall never hold
their peace day or night.
You who make mention of the LORD,
do not keep silent

and give Him no rest
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Scripture is taken from the New King James Version, unless otherwise noted.

Bridges for Peace: Christians supporting Israel and building relationships between Christians and Jews in Israel and around the world.



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