

## HOW DOES YESHUA FEEL ABOUT ISRAEL?

**AND DOES IT  
CONCERN ME?**



**I**srael often becomes a geopolitical argument or a matter of detached theological controversy. To avoid these I believe it is vital to connect with the Lord's HEART regarding this topic.

**The first priority is to receive Yeshua's heart and then live through His heart regarding perspectives concerning Israel.**

I remember praying at the Western Wall in Jerusalem. Suddenly tears

swelled up in my eyes. I looked at the Orthodox men around me, dressed in traditional Chasidic garb. I couldn't contain a deep sorrow for the lostness of this people. They cannot see the Salvation that is theirs.

I live with the daily awareness of beginning to personally know Israel's Messiah myself, and the daily awareness of Israel's very evident NEED for Messiah. He has revealed Himself to us, yet we live in the midst of people blinded to His surpassing

love and sin-conquering power. The only way to carry this tension is to connect with the heart of the Lord Himself.

**This connection between Yeshua and Israel is woven throughout God's word.**

Before Yeshua was born His mother, Miriam, received this declaration of her son's purpose in Israel.

**“You will conceive in your womb and bring forth a son, and shall call**

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# “FOLLOW ME”

The Golan Heights provided a stunning backdrop for the Katzir (*Harvest*) National Youth Conference held a few weeks ago during Chanukah 2017. In August, during the previous Katzir event, the youth (ages 14-18) experienced a profound and gracious move of God's Spirit, leading 24 of them to publicly declare their heart's desire to turn to God in repentance and to embrace Yeshua as their Savior, Lord, and Messiah.

Knowing that an initial declaration of faith must be followed by a walk of devoted discipleship, we took as our theme Yeshua's enduring invitation, "Follow me." The morning Scripture readings, messages from impassioned speakers, and deep times of worship all worked together to bring the young people to a clear understanding of what it means to follow Yeshua with our entire lives.

We watched them respond in extensive times of prayer in the presence of God, after hearing His word unpacked. In fact, many young men and women lingered after an evening meeting was over, allowing the Spirit to wash over them. This renewal and cleansing is especially significant for high schoolers. Added to the normal doubts and identity struggles of adolescence, peer pressure pushes hard against any genuine faith in God in the secular environment of most Israeli public schools. But active belief in Yeshua as Israel's Messiah is "beyond the pale." Their peers have zero understanding that you can be



Jewish and affirm Jesus as our King Redeemer. So, when they arrive at a Katzir gathering there is intense need for encouragement and re-energizing of their spiritual life.

These photos provide a dim reflection of the joy and reinvigoration we were privileged to witness.



EITAN SHISHKOFF



# MINISTERING TO NEW IMMIGRANTS

Jewish people are returning home from different countries and different cultures. Despite the efforts of the Israeli government to assist in the transition, these new immigrants (*olim chadashim*) are facing a new culture and many harsh challenges. As a result, they find themselves on the outskirts of Israeli society, not yet having found a “home” in their homeland.

As a congregation we understand that spiritual support and a sense of family and belonging are important to people, in addition to having their physical needs met. That is why one of the priority areas at “Return to Zion - Shavei Zion” Ministry is serving the new immigrants. We believe that the return of the Jewish people to the land of Israel is not only a fulfillment of prophecy (Ezekiel 20:34, Isaiah 11:11-12, Isaiah 43:5-6,21), but also an opportunity to reveal to these people the light and love of Yeshua the Messiah.

In recent years, a large, new wave of immigrants has begun to arrive in our country. People are fleeing armed conflicts, anti-Semitism and difficult conditions in Russia, Ukraine, France and elsewhere. Therefore we have decided to consolidate this part of our ministry into a separate



At the Garden Tomb



Shabbat celebration meal



Meeting new immigrants

branch, expand our staff, and allocate additional resources for serving new immigrants.

The aid we have been able to recently extend to new immigrants has included distribution of blankets, new kitchenware and food packages to over a hundred families. Our Haifa humanitarian warehouse is open several days a week.

One of the new directions of this ministry is offering lessons in Biblical Hebrew on a regular basis. This endeavor both responds to the desire of new olim to learn Hebrew and enables them to study the Bible in depth. From February to October 2017, we organized six educational trips, the purpose of which was to introduce them to the Promised Land, and to help develop a sense of belonging in this country and connection with biblical history. During these outings, while visiting the sites of events described in the Bible, we talk about our calling as a nation to serve the Lord.

For example, we took a group of new immigrants to visit Gilgal, the place where the people of Israel renewed their covenant with God before entering the Promised Land (Joshua 5). This reminds us that, even today, new immigrants returning to the land, should also renew their covenant with God.

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His name Jesus (Yeshua). He will be great and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end” (Luke 1:31-33).

Then, she made the following declaration to her relative, Elizabeth. **“He has helped His servant Israel, in remembrance of His mercy, as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed forever”** (Luke 1:54,55). What Miriam heard and declared was echoed by Zacharias, Bethlehem shepherds, and devout intercessors in Jerusalem, Simeon and Anna.

These descriptions of the mission of Messiah regarding Israel are followed by Yeshua’s own declaration of His purpose in the Nazareth synagogue. **“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord”** (Luke 4:18,19). He is quoting Isaiah 61:1-2 to which verse three adds **“to console all who mourn in Zion.”** The entire context of Yeshua’s announcement from Isaiah 61 is that He is the Healer and Liberator, the Redeemer of Israel. That’s why those who heard Him tried immediately afterward to throw Him off the cliff!

Yeshua said that He came for the lost sheep of the House of Israel (Matthew 10:6; 15:24). He agonized over Jerusalem. **“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her. How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a**

**hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you were not willing”** (Luke 13:34). My personal view of the father waiting for and embracing his lost son in Luke 15 is a similar and even more compelling image. In Luke 19:41 our Lord **“saw the city (of Jerusalem) and wept over it.”** The intercessory tears of Yeshua are of enduring effectiveness. His heart is no less broken over Jerusalem and Israel now than 2000 years ago—perhaps more.

### Our Privileged Role is to join Him as Weeping Priests

The prophet Joel implores us to **“Turn to Me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning”** (Joel 2:12). He addresses the priests (which we all are, according to 1Peter 2:9), seeing the desperate need of Israel for revival. **“Let the priests, who minister to the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar. Let them say ‘Spare your people, O Lord, and do not give your heritage to reproach’** (Joel 2:17). The promises that follow (vv.18-19) should surely motivate us. **“The Lord will be zealous for His land, and pity His people...”** He will send **“grain and new wine and oil.”** Joel next announces God’s ultimate plan to send the early and latter rain. Here, then is our way of joining Yeshua in His broken-hearted intercession for Israel. In seeking His heart and entering His longing, we become companions to Moses, Jeremiah, Nehemiah, and Paul the Apostle. What a stunning privilege, opportunity, and responsibility. May we be faithful to the end and see Zion’s deliverance!

EITAN SHISHKOFF



Humanitarian Aid

For the New Year of 2018, we have set new goals for ourselves. We want to place a bigger emphasis on attracting young immigrant families. We are planning to offer seminars on topics that are relevant to young people: meetings with family counselors, legal experts and business coaches.

The strategic goal of all these projects is to awaken spiritual thirst among these fledgling Israelis. We are also inviting them to an “Aleph (Alpha) Course,” with the aim to share the Good News, thereby allowing them to restore their relationship with the Lord.

We invite you to pray for this work of reaching out to “Olim” and to help finance the educational and humanitarian projects of “Return to Zion Ministry” as you are led.

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