



**FROM SARAH,
OUR SABRA ON THE
GROUND IN ISRAEL**

February 2025



Dear Friend,

Greetings from the Holy Land. While events in the Middle East have unfolded rapidly for the past few years, the latter part of 2024 brought significant changes, especially in countries that border Israel. In the December 2024 *Personal Letter*, I discussed the first portion of Zechariah chapter 9, noting how those Scriptures have unfolded in Israel’s war with Hezbollah in Lebanon. This month, I will examine Zechariah’s prophecies in the rest of the chapter and note how those apply to the situation here in Israel.

First, however, a word about Syria. December 2024 brought the surprising collapse of Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad’s regime at the hands of rebel forces led by Ahmad al-Sharaa. Israelis watched those events with both surprise and apprehension, since a new Sunni jihadist government in Syria would not be a positive development for Israel.



credit: Wikimedia Commons

Some Israelis feel that the fall of Assad’s regime, coupled with the influence of U.S. President Donald Trump, could spell a sizable shift in the future of the Middle East. Still, Turkey’s involvement in the Syrian revolution concerns most Israelis. In a future letter, I will address Turkey and other Arab (Sunni) jihadists who are operating in Jordan and Egypt and their aspirations for End-Times dominance in the Middle East.

Zechariah 9 Part 2

The second part of Zechariah chapter 9 addresses the defeat of Israel’s enemies in the southern coastal region, specifically in Gaza: *“Ashkelon will see it and fear; Gaza will writhe in agony, and Ekron too, for her hope will wither. Gaza will lose her king and Ashkelon will be deserted”* (Zech. 9:5).

On the first day of Sukkot 2024 — a year and 10 days after the horrific attack of October 7, 2023 — the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) broke the news: “We got him.” Yahya Sinwar — the terrorist who tormented Israel for years and who masterminded the October 7 assault — was dead. Sinwar had gained absolute power in Hamas and over the people of Gaza because of the atrocities in Israel. Amazingly, it was not special forces but a young soldier-in-training who shot and killed Gaza’s “king.”

(over please)

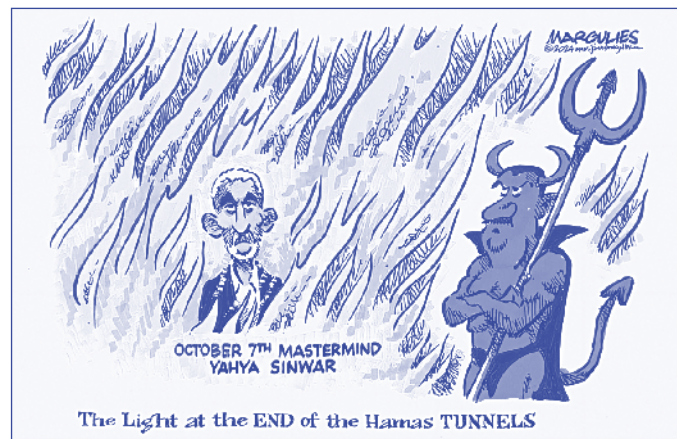
The region noted in Zechariah 9:5-6 has Jewish people living in it today. In Biblical times, however, the Philistines — Israel’s foremost enemy (but unrelated to today’s “Palestinians”) — occupied this area. Ashkelon, Gaza, Ashdod, and Ekron were the fortified cities of the Philistines. Ashkelon is the area just north of the Gaza Strip. After entering Gaza in November 2023 to fight Hamas, the IDF cleared the northern part of the Gaza Strip of its inhabitants, destroying most buildings in the fighting and leaving the area deserted.

We now know that Sinwar instigated the October 7 atrocities striving for two outcomes:

- To thwart any peace agreement between Israel and Saudi Arabia
- To prompt Iran’s other proxy organizations to join Hamas in an all-out Islamic war to annihilate Israel and usher in the Islamic End Times

Though Hezbollah and Houthi militia forces joined the war in October 2023, this war has actually toppled the Shia Axis of Evil (led by Iran) in the Middle East. Beyond mere survival, Israel has reminded others of its military power and prowess. And while the war temporarily halted any advances in the Abraham Accords, Israel’s leaders hope that President Trump — who brokered those Israeli-Arab agreements — will continue where he left off during his first term. Actually, strategic moves have already taken place behind the scenes to expand the Abraham Accords. Thus, both of Sinwar’s hopes are actually withering!

And as Zechariah’s prophecy confirms, the people of Ashkelon agonize, are afraid, and have no hope after witnessing what happened to Israel’s enemies in the North.



The Future for Gaza

Israeli leaders are planning for what they call “the day after” in Gaza — establishing a civilian, moderate-led governing force that will allow Israel to continue to clear Hamas terrorists from the area. Israel is working with the United Arab Emirates and Egypt on agreements to develop such a group to replace Hamas’s rule and aid in re-educating the people who support Hamas’s ideology that calls for the destruction of Israel.

While no one knows if that proposal will materialize, Zechariah’s prophecy addresses God’s perspective of Gaza’s future: *“A mongrel people will occupy Ashdod, and I will put an end to the pride of the Philistines. I will take the blood from their mouths, the forbidden food from between their teeth. Those who are left will belong to our God and become a clan in Judah, and Ekron will be like the Jebusites”* (Zech. 9:6-7).

God will end the Gazan people’s pride; He will also remove their hateful speech and thirst for blood. Apparently, not everyone who currently lives there will remain, but those who do will be like another tribe in Israel. Zechariah 9:7 foretells that these people *“will be like the Jebusites.”* The Israelites conquered the Jebusites (Josh. 15:63; Judg. 1:8, 21), yet those people lived in peace with and as servants to

the Israelites (1 Kings 9:20–21). King David overthrew the Jebusite stronghold of Jerusalem (2 Sam. 5:5–10) and later purchased land from a Jebusite as the site for the First Temple (2 Sam. 24:18–25).

Yemen

Hezbollah joined the fight against Israel following Hamas's October 2023 attack. Soon afterward, another proxy funded and trained by Iran — the Houthis in Yemen — began firing missiles and drones at Israel. Remarkably, part of Zechariah 9 also addresses the territory of Yemen: *"He will march in the storms of the south, and the LORD Almighty will shield them"* (Zech. 9:14b–15a). Though most English Bible versions refer to "the storms of the south," in Hebrew, the verse states clearly "the storms of Yemen." Thus, God is saying that He will walk in Yemen — He will dominate that land and protect "them" (Israel) from the people of that land.

Return of the Hostages

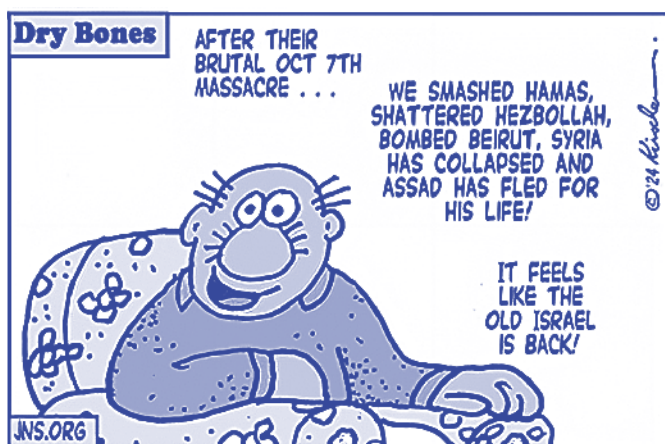
The hostage situation in Gaza — a heartbreaking and seemingly impossible situation for us — has generated much conflict in Israel. Some Israelis support an "all for all" deal — Hamas releasing all Israeli hostages in exchange for all (thousands) of the terrorists being freed from prisons in Israel and an agreement from both sides to end the war. These Israelis believe that if this deal doesn't happen, then some hostages may never be released.

Other Israelis, however, believe that any deal will allow Hamas the opportunity to restore its power and renew its prominence not only in Gaza but also in Arab nations throughout the Middle East. These people also believe that a deal with Hamas will encourage the terrorist organization to perpetrate another October 7.

Zechariah 9 includes the Lord's poignant promise — that our prisoners in waterless pits (dark tunnels) will return and that He will restore what was stolen from this nation: *"As for you, because of the blood of My covenant with you, I will free your prisoners from the waterless pit. Return to your fortress, you prisoners of hope; even now I announce that I will restore twice as much to you"* (Zech. 9:11–12).

Zechariah 9 Part 3

The third part of Zechariah 9 includes two prophecies about the coming of the Messiah and the Messianic Age. Initially, He rides on a humble colt, in the midst of joyful shouts: *"Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your King comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey"* (Zech. 9:9). Yeshua fulfilled this prophecy when He entered Jerusalem on the Sunday before His crucifixion (Matt. 21:1–11).



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In His Second Coming, Messiah arrives with the sound of the trumpet — marching, battling, and saving His people (Israel) who will sparkle in His Land *“like jewels in a crown.”* Note the powerful, awe-inspiring future God has for Israel: *“Then the LORD will appear over them; His arrow will flash like lightning. The Sovereign LORD will sound the trumpet; He will march in the storms of the south, and the Lord Almighty will shield them. They will destroy and overcome with slingstones. They will drink and roar as with wine; they will be full like a bowl used for sprinkling the corners of the altar. The LORD their God will save His people on that day as a shepherd saves his flock. They will sparkle in His land like jewels in a crown”* (Zech. 9:14-16).

All of Zechariah 9 gives us Believers* great hope and guidance about how to pray for Israel and the Middle East. Please join me in praying the words that Yeshua taught us: *“Your Kingdom come, Your will be done, on Earth as it is in Heaven”* (Matt. 6:10).



Thank you for continuing to stand with us.

Im tirdefu lada-at oto— “Press on to know HIM!” (Hosea 6:3 NLT),

Many blessings from Israel,

Sarah Liberman | *סרה ליברמן*
ENGLISH | HEBREW

Sarah Liberman

P.S. Thank you to everyone who writes to ZLM with comments, stories, and feedback on the *Personal Letter*. I love your responses and appreciate your upholding ZLM, both in your prayers and your financial gifts.

* “Believers” is short for “believers in Yeshua/Jesus as Messiah.”

Zola Tours: The New Normal

We often heard about “the new normal” during COVID as people adjusted to the realities of a global pandemic, which modified many of our preferred routines and activities. We at ZLM weren’t exempt — COVID abruptly brought a halt to nearly four decades of our uninterrupted tours to Israel, Jordan, and Greece. Though we experienced a brief open window as the pandemic subsided, the travel window slammed shut again after Hamas’s attack on Israel in October 2023.

Now, we eagerly await a time of peace and another new normal so we can again journey to the Holy Land with pilgrims. Of course, we continue to pray for the well-being of the land that we cherish. Please contact our tour manager, Sandra, to learn the current tour status. You can reach her at 214-696-9760, travel@levitt.com, or levitt.com/tours.

Fall Tour 2025 options

Deluxe — Israel Oct. 20–Oct. 30

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Tour prices are pending.

A Note from Caleb and Joshua Colson

It's amazing, but not surprising, how quickly the playing field has changed in the Middle East after Satan's attempt to destroy the Jews on October 7, 2023. Following the "Arab Spring" that began in 2010, we're now seeing the demise of dictators and terrorist regimes — with Bashar al-Assad toppled, Hezbollah crippled, Hamas nearly eradicated, and Iran nearing a revolution. These victories are evidence that God is passionately upholding His Word and covenant with Israel. Satan cannot uproot the Chosen People from the Promised Land.



Zechariah 8:2 declares: *"Thus says the LORD of hosts: I am zealous for Zion with great zeal; with great fervor I am zealous for her."* God's zeal continues even when the Jews turn toward other gods, or an enemy nation tries to steal the Israelites from God's hand. And what the enemy meant for evil, Father God turns around for good.

Syria's Assad was notoriously secular, even though he gave allowances to some orthodox Christian communities. His cruelty, desire for power, and love of money made him an ally of Iran's hardcore Shia leaders and a dangerous adversary for the free world. The rebel coalition that toppled Assad — Hayat Tahrir al-Sham — is a terrorist sect of Sunni Islam once allied with al-Qaeda. While this sect temporarily plays nice with Israel and the West, a malevolent Turkey secretly funds and directs it. Thus, we don't believe that this reprieve will last. Peace, peace, they will say when there is no peace (Jer. 6:14; 8:11).

Nevertheless, God is giving Arab nations one more chance to choose Yeshua. This is the recurring prayer of many Arab Christians in Israel, who also believe that the Jewish Messiah died for their sins. How can God judge the Islamic nations that hide behind an iron veil unless they have the opportunity to hear the truth? That need is why Believers should strike fast at this golden opportunity with a new Syrian Sunni government faking niceties and religious tolerance. We have a short time to spread the Gospel in Syria before their prophesied doom arrives.

The Oracle of Damascus in Isaiah chapter 17 reveals the ultimate end of Syria's rebellion against God. The prophet foretells the total destruction of Damascus in one night, leaving it forever uninhabited. This brings to mind the possibility of the "Sampson Option" — Israel initiating a last-ditch, preemptive nuclear retaliation in response to existential threats. For example, if Syria attempted to launch a nuclear warhead toward Israel, the Jews' last resort would be to strike first. Today, however, is not that day.

God is now pouring out His grace on Jews and Arabs alike, giving them another opportunity to choose truth and salvation through Yeshua. We expect nothing less, because God *"desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth"* (1 Tim. 2:4). First John 2:2 says it best: *"And He Himself [Yeshua] is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world."*

Sha'alu shalom Yerushalayim! — "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem!" (Psalm 122:6),

Joshua Colson & Caleb Colson

Joshua and Caleb

P.S. Please pray for people to have open ears and hearts as we travel to Israel to preach the Good News. Thank you for your committed support for our outreach.



Our Jewish Roots TV programs in February

David and Kirsten Hart

You may remember the phrase “New year, New you” related to weight loss and other New Year’s resolutions. In 2025, new is a reality on the OJR set. But don’t worry. While we have an updated look, the mission of our program remains the same.

As we continue developing new and exciting programming, we are grateful for your ongoing support of this ministry. Your contributions help us share God’s life-giving Gospel message with hungry souls around the world.

This month, we continue our new series, *Rebuilding the Ruined Cities*. Joshua and Caleb — the Bearded Bible Brothers™ — visit war-torn areas in the Holy Land, where they discuss God’s promise of hope, healing, and blessing amidst ruin and pain.



The Covenant (Part 1) — At the height of the Rafah campaign, the Bearded Bible Brothers travel to Moshav Pri Gan on the border of Egypt and Gaza. As they volunteer picking tomatoes with an international group of Believers for Leket Israel, they learn how October 7 affected the community.

The Covenant (Part 2) — Following the progress of Leket’s non-profit efforts throughout Israel, Joshua and Caleb teach on the Abrahamic Covenant — an eternal promise for a Land and a people that can never be broken by God or undone by the popular opinion of an anti-Semitic world. God blessed Abraham with prosperity wherever he went. These same blessings are attainable to God’s Chosen People today, and to those who bless Abraham’s ancestors.

The Conquest — After 400 years of Egyptian bondage, God delivered the Hebrews so they could return to the Land that He promised to their forefathers. But receiving their inheritance wasn’t a walk in the park. During a grueling hike through Tel Gezer, Joshua and Caleb consider the many claims that the Israelites had on the Promised Land through conquest, inheritance, purchase, and accord. The brothers also clarify Israel’s full boundaries according to God’s promise.

The Exile — While exploring the infamous Tel Lachish ruins, Joshua and Caleb recount the destruction of Judea and Samaria. For centuries, God had warned His people to repent from their idolatry and unfaithfulness to Him. Eventually, however, the people were taken captive and exiled from their Land. Yet through the Prophet Jeremiah, God declared the Israelites’ return after 70 years of captivity and also the coming of the Messiah.

Zola Levitt Ministries is ECFA approved and has Charity Navigator’s top rating of 4 stars, plus Ministry Watch’s Give With Confidence Score of 100.



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The Tabernacle, Part I God's instructions to Moses on Mount Sinai: *"And let them make Me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them"* (Exodus 25:8).

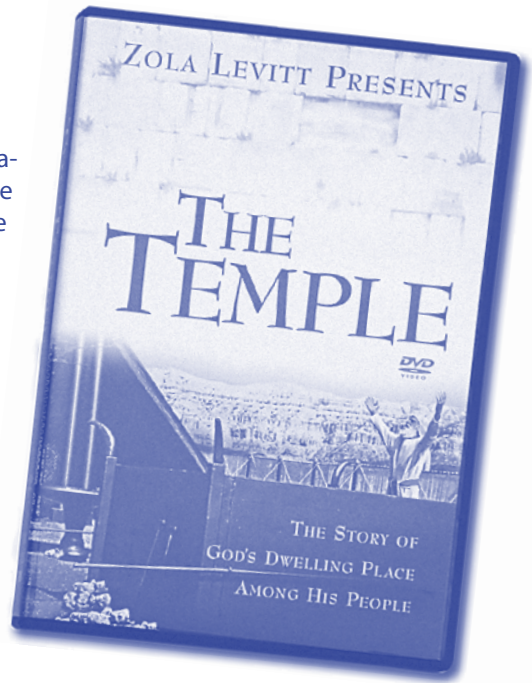
The Tabernacle, Part II During their journey through the wilderness, the Israelites carried the Tabernacle toward the Promised Land and finally placed it at Shiloh.

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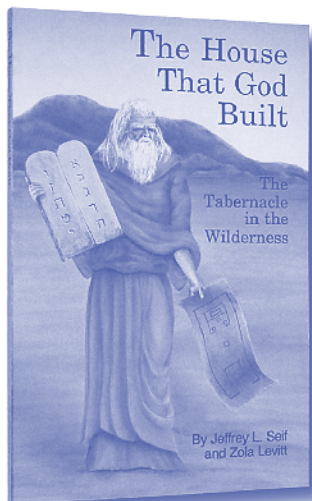
- NRB-TV, Fri. 7:30pm ET
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**SEE PAGE 7 FOR OUR
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Dear Sarah, (please check appropriate boxes)

Though Israel has endured a very difficult season, God will stand by His promise to turn around today's devastating situation (Zech. 9:12).

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