

## **Wiseman Fall Update, Dec. 8, 2025:**

I was startled awake by a huge, crashing “boom” that shook the heavens and left my heart pounding. Turns out, it was the roar of thunder, accompanied by heavy rain. However, at first, it triggered fear in me, because in the context of the last two years of war we have been woken up many times – at all hours of night – whether by Israeli fighter-jet engines roaring over our house on the way to the northern borders nearby, or the many incoming-missile warning sirens during the Iran War.

Normally, the Feast of Tabernacles signals the beginning of the winter season here, with the “early rains”, promised for the Land “where the eyes of the Lord...are always upon it, from the beginning of the year to the end...” (Deut. 11:12). But 2025 has been a traumatic, most challenging year in **many respects**. It has been a year of loss, of testing - not only for the Wiseman family, but for the whole nation at war - a war which drags on in fits and starts, despite the touted peace deal! Even the physical Heavens have been shut, with the “Early rains”, expected in the beginning of October, finally began at the end of November. It has been Israel’s worst drought in many years, with the Sea of Galilee, Israel’s main source of water, sinking to unprecedented lows, forcing the National Water Authority to pump in large quantities of desalinated water!

Yet, in the midst of the trauma and grief, God is working. A couple of days ago two of Aviel’s army squad buddies came to visit the family. They had entered the combat unit around the same time, and spent many months with him in close quarters. I was privileged to listen as they described how our grandson, whom we had known as a bright, gifted, but solitude-loving introvert, blossomed during his service, using his exceptional technical creativity to improve aspects of harsh military locations they were in. He had become “the professor”, who rigged-up lights in pitch-dark places, to make them comfortable! It was a blessing to hear the lads freely share about their lives and aspirations. I listened, as Mordy, our son, as a grieving father, yet natural mentor, very eloquently shared what made us different as a Messianic family from other grieving families. He pointed out that because of our Faith and Hope, we were able to release bitterness and blame towards the army, regarding any failure - perceived or real - to protect our sons (& daughters) from unnecessary risks during combat, or faulty equipment. Mordy spoke about the need to forgive, release, and so move on, to enable us as grieving families not to wallow in our sorrow, but, despite the pain and loss, become a positive force of healing.

### **August: Faith-sharing Opportunities at an IDF vacation for grieving grandparents**

Back in August, we asked you to pray for our IDF-initiated, 3-day “vacation” on the Mediterranean coast with other grieving grandparents. Empathy is a **gift** - so they say - yet it can be heavy to carry! Having had a lifetime tendency to carry others’ pain, I was hesitant to go, lest I get inundated by the other grandparents’ grief, rendering me unable to reflect His comfort. Yet, the Lord was clear that this was His assignment. Thus, along with Aviel’s other grandma, Rose, and his aunt, Andrea, we made our way to the coast by a bus provided by the army. There were indeed refreshing aspects of this holiday: I enjoyed restful hours on the beach, closing my eyes and relaxing to the calming murmur of the waves. We were taken to an amazing musical, “Spanish Nights” that featured the history of North African Jewry. It had flamenco and beautiful songs in Ladino, a medieval version of Spanish spoken to this day by Jews who fled the Spanish inquisition.

We also had some significant opportunities to channel the Lord's comfort and Truth. During one of the generous meals provided, we listened to the heartbreak of a grandfather, who, upon hearing of his grandson's death, collapsed, spending several weeks in hospital, and was now in slow recovery, unable to move without a walker. Again, while participating in a small group therapeutic session with an army psychologist, we listened to a number of grieving grandmothers pour out their accounts of loss, often with deep sobs. We shared that as Messianic Jews, despite our sense of pain, loss, and sorrow, we have Hope and God's comfort.

As it turns out, these IDF initiatives to embrace bereaved families with restorative initiatives & activities, are financed by an American Jewish organization called "Friends of IDF." In my 78 years, I have discovered that being an extrovert/people-person can get one into embarrassing situations, but also leads to some unique, unexpected opportunities to sow seeds of the Gospel. One such blessed opportunity developed as a result of occasional brief chats, which a male, high-ranking officer at the event had initiated. We spoke in Hebrew, but having discovered that I was fluent in English, he had evidently decided that I was the right grandma to interview as representing the rest of the grandparents to Jewish American donors, mainly to show that their gifts were being put to the intended use. Thinking that we were going to talk to visiting donors, as well as sharing who we were as Messianics, I asked my husband, the apologist, to join me in this assignment.

First, we sat with a young female officer assigned to interview us. Chanan made it clear at the outset that we were Messianic Jews, and that the IDF might not want us as its representatives. Surprised, as we shared in Hebrew, I watched her write extensive notes concerning what it meant to be Jewish followers of Yeshua. She then shared **her** goals of becoming a lawyer in order to make a difference in Israeli politics. However far she reaches with her ambitions, it was a privilege to share the gospel with this potential Israeli leader.

In the end, it was probably more about Public Relations than anything else. After the interview I was asked to pose with the chief officer holding my hand in sympathy, and being told to look into his face! I was grateful for Chanan's arm on my shoulder as part of this unexpected pose - nothing inappropriate as the officer was just doing his duty for the FIDF donors. Thankfully, there was a surprising Kingdom reward to this awkward photo. The bearded young photographer said: "There is a special 'Energy' around you guys... uncondemning." This secular Israeli, was trying to describe in his New Age lingo what we trust was the "Fragrance" of Messiah.

Finally, as we piled our suitcases into the bus to return home, I had an unexpected chance to share the gospel with a delightful young soldier who looked after us on the long bus rides. It was another unexpected blessing.

Thank you dear intercessors for your prayers, to reflect Him & share "the Hope within us" at this unique event.

### **September: 1. Art Therapy as a way to process grief, 2. Serving at a young adults' Matzliach retreat in France**

September brought an unexpected opportunity to participate in an art-grief therapy workshop, initiated and led by two gifted, caring women of God -- Karin Grimberg, a German sister who has pioneered art therapy here, and Doris Levi, a therapist from France. Karin's studio is down the

coast, but she felt a workshop should be held in the Galilee. With an MA in counselling, and experience in various other therapy methods, I was drawn to this unfamiliar method. As a non-driver, I felt it was a gift from the Lord, who had brought the workshop from Karin's studio in the center of the country, right to my doorstep at our congregational building!

We also had a previous commitment to be part of a Matzliach apologetics workshop & retreat in the lower French Alps. Amazingly, the dates of the workshop fit perfectly between two weekly art therapy sessions, so that I could attend both! Thus, in mid-September we flew out to help with this *Matzliach* program (Hebrew: "successful," established to train the future generation of Israeli believers, to help them combat anti-biblical ideas that war with their faith). It was held in a lovely conference center run by Swiss believers -- a former flour mill converted into a spacious, well-kept inn. The workshop turned out to be both a refreshing time outside of war-engulfed Israel, as well as a satisfying opportunity to invest in the lives of some of the future leaders of the Body in Israel. Under the leadership of Dr. Akiva Cohen, Tony Sperandio, pastor of HaMaayan Cong., served again as the spiritual covering, while Chanan & I rounded out the staff. The students were a delightful group of bright, committed, believing young professionals, among them two young couples and three singles. As a bonus, Gilberte, a cherished, longtime Swiss friend and grieving widow, who had volunteered as a nurse for years in Israel, decided to drive five hours to be with us! It was a privilege to sit outside on the sunny deck and listen for hours as she poured out her heart, updating me on her life and children's situations.

The workshop featured morning sessions which began with worship, followed by in-depth explorations of various types of Psalms - thanksgiving, lament, penitence, wisdom, royalty and loyalty, and assured restoration. Led by Akiva, the overall guiding theme had three key aspects typical of the psalms: spiritual **orientation towards** God, our **disorientation** when disappointed and confused, and then, after testing, to gain a maturer **reorientation**. Thus, our minds were illuminated with Scriptural riches, our souls nourished and comforted. Afternoons were free to explore the beautiful countryside and visit the nearby, amazingly well-preserved medieval city of Sisteron. Chanan painted two watercolors of the beautiful natural landscapes. The six days were both rewarding and refreshing, a respite from the war still raging in Israel.

We flew back and arrived just in time for me to participate in what turned out to be the most significant part the therapy workshop. In the congregational courtyard, Doris stood beside me - a gentle presence - as I wrote my issues with a black marker on a balloon. Soberly, I listed my regrets: the loss of not having more time with my precious, oldest grandson Aviel, "my 57<sup>th</sup> birthday gift" (his birthday is two days before mine); for not being more persistent in knocking on his door, despite his introverted nature, to have more personal, satisfying exchanges. Then, under Doris' instruction, I let the balloon go, symbolizing my release of my regrets to the Lord, to watch it disappear in the sunset skies above Tiberias.

The Feast of Tabernacles in mid-October brought an opportunity for a long-standing family tradition: grandpa Chanan, assisted by Ethan, our other soldier grandson and his mom, set up the family Sukkah (tent/shelter) with various glittery decorations. Throughout the Feast we had a long string of visitors, to share a meal, or snack in our Sukkah, quite a few staying for hours, seeming reluctant to go home.

Which brings us to important prayer requests:

1. Canadian bank issues: For some reason, the bank locked our account without stating why or how to resolve the problem; even when there in the branches in Waterloo and Toronto, no one said anything. We are unable to talk by phone either, as the calls stop after 8 rings - without any message! Unless this is resolved soon, year-end tithes, taxes, and bills will be unpaid, besides no transfers to us in Israel.
2. Spiritual warfare: It seems we are facing enemy backlash for the unique times we had in sharing Yeshua with our people. Mordechai, a well-coordinated, athletic type, ran into a pole because he turned a corner while talking to a friend, and so got a serious black eye! Our other daughter-in-law, Rachel stumbled & fell on a walk with Nathaniel, so now recovering from a swelling on her head. A couple of days later, driving home from their group, a huge pick-up truck's wagon (on a hitch) flew by them too close & hit the driver's side hard. It's a miracle they were not hurt despite extensive damage to the car.
3. On the eve of Chanuka (Festival of Lights), my 78<sup>th</sup> birthday, we are invited to join other grieving IDF families in the Galilee to celebrate the first candle lighting, have dinner, & enjoy music. Pray for more fruitful encounters to share our Faith.

Have a blessed celebration of Messiah's birth and a new year of God's favor,

Allen & Nechama