



New believers are being baptized in Ukraine!

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February 2023

# How God Subverts the Evils of War

## AN UPDATE ON UKRAINE

by David Brickner, Executive Director

**A**s I write, rocket attacks have again left Kyiv's inhabitants without heat, electricity, or water. Our 19 Jews for Jesus Ukrainian missionary families are refugees, both inside and outside of their country. I don't know what the situation will be when this reaches you—but February marks one year since the start of this war. It weighs heavily on my mind, but it also has reaffirmed my confidence in how God works.

When I flew to western Ukraine two months into the war, snow was falling, the wind was whipping, and sirens were wailing, alerting us to Russian drones overhead. I later reported what our veteran mission leader Tolik said as he recounted the horrors of war, but it bears repeating: "It is a bad time for Ukraine, but a good time for the gospel."

I'm reminded that many of God's most profound promises come to us in times of war. Take the promise of Messiah's birth in Bethlehem in Micah 5:2. Notice the context: "Now gather yourself in troops, O daughter of troops; he has laid siege against us;

they will strike the judge of Israel with a rod on the cheek" (Micah 5:1).

You'll find the back story for this announcement of Messiah's birth in 2 Kings 18. Jerusalem was surrounded and under attack by the mighty Assyrian army under King Sennacherib, who wrote, "As for him [Hezekiah] I confined him inside the city Jerusalem, his royal city, like a bird in a cage."

To smite Hezekiah on the cheek was a great insult not only to Israel but to their God. I'm reminded that God's triumph often comes to us wrapped in humiliation.

In fact, Hezekiah's humiliation foreshadowed the humiliation of the promised Messiah, starting with his birth. This passage announces—salvation will come from backwater Bethlehem, which was considered "too little to be among the clans of Judah." Isaiah predicted the humiliation of Messiah's death: "I gave My back to those who struck Me, and My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard; I did not hide My face from shame and spitting" (Isaiah 50:6).

**God continues to invade the hell of war in unexpected ways. I am thankful for partners like you who are helping us extend the gospel, God's stairway to heaven, for all who believe.**

Jesus, the rightful King, not only of Israel but of the universe, fulfilled both passages (Matthew 2:5–6; 26:67; 27:30; and Luke 2:4, 15).

A spiritual war has been raging since the dawn of time, and all of us have been caught up in it in one way or another. Whether we are in a literal war zone or dealing with the painful realities of our everyday lives, Jesus went before us. He experienced all the anguish we do, and much more.

“For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4:15–16). This is the basis for you and for me to trust, “casting all your care on Him, for He cares for you” (1 Peter 5:7).

And most often that divine care comes to us in unlikely ways and places.

God invites us to lay down our struggles and anxieties at Yeshua's feet. Everything you have endured or you might experience, Messiah has endured. He came from the most unlikely of places and won the war for our spiritual freedom in the most unlikely way. His gospel shines a powerful light that can pierce any darkness. That certainly includes the darkness of the war in Ukraine.

During the first 10 months of 2021 (before the war),

Tolik had seen 19 Jewish people receive Jesus, which is a wonderful result in the field of Jewish evangelism. But during the same amount of time during the war, he saw over 100 Jewish people come to faith. Over and over, our staff's small acts of support for others opened up big opportunities to share the gospel.

God continues to invade the hell of war in unexpected ways. I am thankful for partners like you who are helping us extend the gospel, God's stairway to heaven, for all who believe. May you be encouraged by what God can do during whatever battles you and your loved ones might be facing in this season in Australia, New Zealand, or wherever you are reading this journal. Shalom.

## prayer prompts

**You can help us move mountains!**

Please pray with us for:

- Beverly as she continues to adjust to life without her husband Michael, until they are reunited in glory
- Michael's family and friends, that the gospel seeds that were sown at his funeral will take root in their hearts
- God's intervention to protect the people of Ukraine
- spiritual growth for the new believers in Ukraine, and that many more Jews and Gentiles there will come to faith
- God's blessing on our upcoming Yovel (Jubilee) outreaches



# You Helped Unite Michael and Beverly in Jesus

by Tuvya Zaretsky

**M**ichael and Beverly's love was radical back in 1961, when only 6 percent of Jewish people intermarried. And when Beverly found a living relationship with the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob through the Messiah Jesus, Michael—who was raised in traditional Judaism—developed a deep respect for her Christian convictions. He was even curious enough about her faith to attend church every so often.

In 1999, while visiting New York City, the couple “happened” to walk by the Jews for Jesus office and our window display caught their attention. Beverly requested information to share with Michael, and they received our publications for seekers over the next 20 years. Michael began to see how it might be possible to be Jewish and believe in Jesus.

Two years ago Michael was diagnosed with terminal cancer. When a Christian chaplain visited him in the hospital, Michael found himself seriously considering the gospel. Once home, he finally wanted to meet with a Jewish believer in Jesus. I had the privilege of

visiting Michael, and he got straight to the point: “What is salvation, and why should it matter to me?”

We had a deep conversation, and I left Michael with some information. We kept in touch, and I prayed with him and for him.

In December 2021, after Beverly's nightly routine of making Michael comfortable, he told her matter-of-factly, “I've had an epiphany: I believe in Jesus as my Lord and Savior.” He and Beverly got to experience seven months of shared faith in Jesus before Michael passed into His presence forever.

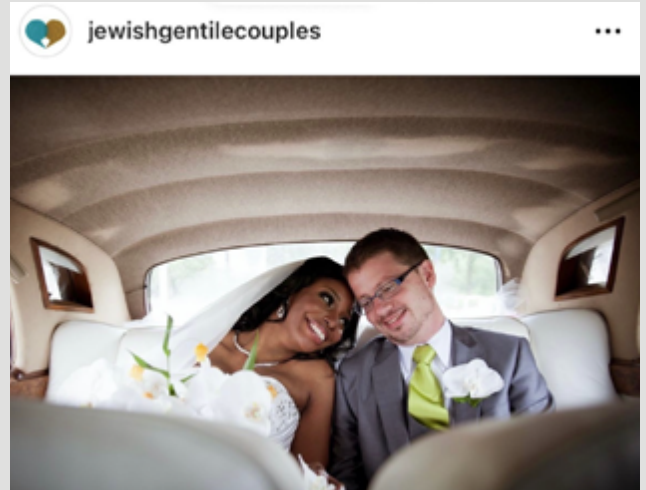
Beverly called me shortly after Michael died last year, and asked if I would help officiate at his memorial service. She wanted his friends and family to know what God had done for her dear husband. I was grateful for the opportunity to share with them the answer that I'd been able to give Michael: that salvation is not just a what; it is a Who, and in Him is eternal life (John 17:3).

**In December 2021, after Beverly’s nightly routine of making Michael comfortable, he told her matter-of-factly, “I’ve had an epiphany: I believe in Jesus as my Lord and Savior.” He and Beverly got to experience seven months of shared faith in Jesus before Michael passed into His presence forever.**

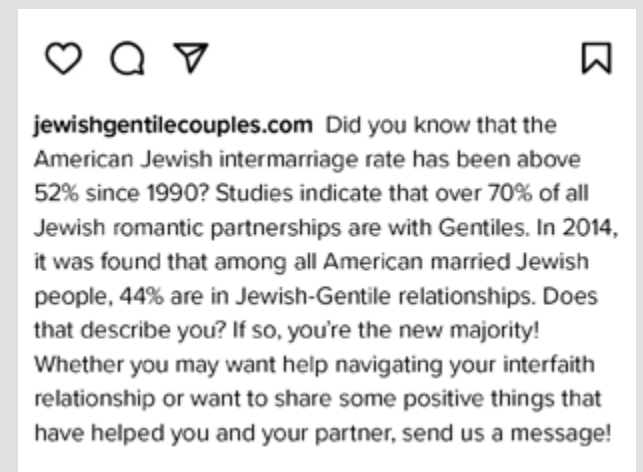
The rate of Jewish intermarriage has increased dramatically since Michael and Beverly were married. According to Pew Research May 2021, almost half of all American Jews are now intermarried. Several of our staff now specialize in reaching out to these couples. Later this year, in addition to our usual work with this group, we will be having a “capstone” outreach as part of the Jews for Jesus Jubilee, proclaiming liberty to 22 of our key audiences.

Thank you so much for partnering with us to help Jewish people like Michael find their forever life in Jesus. Please be praying for the many Jewish-Gentile couples whose search for spiritual harmony is opening doors for them to talk about the Jewish Messiah—and pray especially for our upcoming outreach to them.

If you or someone you know is interested in our resources for Jewish-Gentile couples, We have a special website, and I’ve also developed a book to train others to help Jewish-Gentile couples understand and communicate with each other about spiritual matters. Please order from our online Australia shop at <https://bit.ly/jewgentilebook>



Every week Jewish-Gentile couples reach out to us for support through our websites as well as social media posts like this one.



Michael and Beverly



# We are looking for 90 in 90... is your church among them?

**B**eginning 20 days before Easter we are entering into the most intense spiritual battle in our efforts to reach Jewish people in Australia and New Zealand, ever.

We are looking for churches and congregations who believe in our cause to join us for one day in prayer (and fasting) during the 90 days until end of June 2023 when this battle for the souls of Jewish people will take place in this region.

Each church will be asked to take ONE day, and we will trust God together that our shared resources will fill in the blanks for your people, to pray with

specificity and with clarity, with the energy of God's salvation army and to help us broadcast the Good News.

We expect Jewish people to come to faith in Yeshua and to join us in making Jewish disciples.

If you can help, please notify us at the email of our Church Engagement officer, Miss Katie Lee on her email at the office [Katie.lee@jewsforjesus.org.au](mailto:Katie.lee@jewsforjesus.org.au)

Thanks so much!

## ADDRESS INFORMATION

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# Messianic Resources

FEATURES RESOURCES FOR YOUR LEARNING, CELEBRATING AND GROWTH

## GIFTS FOR YOUR HOLIDAY SHARING:

### He said, then she said:

#### Helping Jewish-Gentile Couples find Spiritual Harmony

How do you explain to a Jewish-Gentile couple that Yeshua can bring them spiritual harmony, when one or both don't yet know our Messiah? Tuvia Zaretsky has written this engaging and highly-readable workbook to help you do just that.

**COST: \$24**



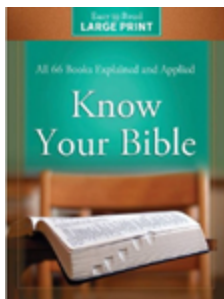
### Feast of Passover DVD

Discover how the feasts of the Bible can enrich your worship of Jesus. Dr Sam Nadler is your guide through the Passover feast. Perfect for small groups, Bible studies, or personal use. The biblical and historical background. Explanations of each part of the meal. 35 minutes long. Includes downloadable PDF Leader Guide and Participant Guide.

**COST: \$23**



### Know Your Bible



A concise, easy-to-understand guide to God's Word-giving you a helpful and memorable overview of all 66 books. It's a fantastic resource for individuals and ministries! (96 pages)

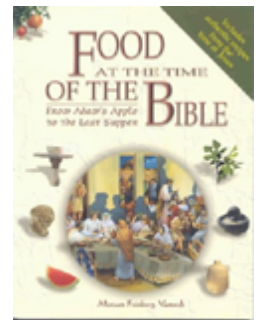
**COST: \$6**

### Food at the Time of the Bible

#### Written by Miriam Feinberg Vamosh from Israel.

Take a fresh look at food through the eyes of Scripture. Discover the symbolic meanings behind the biblical menu items such as pomegranates and figs and "milk and honey." Try the food of the bible for yourself with easy recipes that date back to Bible days.

**COST: \$29**



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