

GROWING IN GOD

PODCAST



GIG144 – My Faith for Israel

Hello and welcome to the podcast today. I am going to take this opportunity to talk to you about several things that are transpiring with Hargrave Ministries and with me during the upcoming weeks that we have just before us. But first of all, I would like to say that I hope you are checking out our website at hargraveministries.org. We have been putting in a lot of time, making changes and trying to upgrade it and upgrade its function in many ways; so I would encourage you to go there and see what is happening.

I am planning a trip to Israel very shortly, and it will be both me and Bruce Larson, who is one of the ministries and directors with Hargrave Ministries. He works quite a bit with what we do in Israel, and I am glad that we are going to have the opportunity to go on this trip together. We are looking for a great deal to happen. It actually was initiated because of the upcoming Jerusalem Prayer Breakfast, of which I have the privilege of being one of the founders, going back several years with Shlomo Hizak and my involvement with him and Knesset members who started and formed the Jerusalem Prayer Breakfast. It has been going for many years now, and it is doing a tremendous work to help nations pass laws that are favorable to Israel, trade with Israel, and come into better relationships with Israel to fight antisemitism, as well as many other things along those lines.

This will be one of the first times I have been able to go to Israel in several years, because of Covid and other events that have been transpiring with Israel; and I am looking forward very much to this opportunity. While we are there in Israel, we will also be visiting each of the eight nonprofit organizations that we partner with in Israel, and I will just remind you really quickly about the names of these organizations and what they do.

First, we have the **AMI-Jerusalem Center for Biblical Studies & Research**. It was started by Shlomo Hizak, and we have been connected with the AMI Center for very many years. We have used it to train pastors and ministries, teaching about antisemitism, and creating relationships between Jews and Christians – which is something that is very much on my heart to see continue to happen, even with the passing of Shlomo. Also, we will be visiting the **Shiloh Israel Children's Fund** school. They are in Shilo, or Shiloh, and this is always something that is very dear to our hearts. This school works with, and the fund works with, children who are traumatized by terrorist attacks and other events that happen, especially in the area of Shiloh. We are looking forward to the visit with them.

On each of these visits, hopefully, we will have a time to not only tour the facilities once again, but to interview someone and get these interviews onto our website, so that all of you can participate with us and get to know these organizations a little bit better. They are wonderful, wonderful organizations.

The next one is the **IDF Widows and Orphans Organization**. This is the organization that works with those who have fallen in battle, or in other events there in Israel, as security forces and as the Israeli Defense Forces. When someone dies in the service of their country, this organization steps in to help the family; and they do a tremendous job. They have a tremendous heart to make sure that these families do not feel like they are forgotten or abandoned, or the sacrifice of their loved one has been forgotten.

Next, we will be visiting **Yad Eliezer**. Yad Eliezer is a tremendous organization that distributes food and many other products that are needed by families in Israel. We have to remember that there are so many people who are moving to Israel from other nations to flee from persecution and antisemitism; and to transition into a life in the land of Israel is not always easy to do. Some people do not have the language; they do not have job skills that they need. Yad Eliezer is a phenomenal organization that is there to help people transition, set up their new life in Israel, and provide what they need to do so.

Also, we have the **International Christian Embassy Jerusalem**. Within the Embassy we support two programs that they are involved in; one is the **Aliyah program**. As you know, Aliyah means “to go up.” This is a program that brings Jews back to Israel out of the nations. It helps Jews to do the paperwork and everything that they need to do in order to be confirmed, and it also provides the transportation, many times, of jets that are necessary to bring groups of Jewish people. One of the focuses lately has been Ethiopia; and now, of course, we have Ukraine that we are working with. This program brings the Jewish people back to Israel from where they have been living to settle in the land.

With the International Christian Embassy of Jerusalem, there is also the **Haifa Home for Holocaust Survivors**. This is, again, a tremendous work, where homes and apartments have been built, or bought and refurbished, so that Holocaust survivors that need a place to live, need assistance in their living, can find the help and the care that they need. Also, any Holocaust survivors from the area, even if they are not living at the facility, are welcome to come and participate in the activities that are held at this facility. Whether it is celebrating Passover, or one of the other biblical feasts, or other events for special occasions that are celebrated, it gives a sense of home and family to many of these survivors who lost their families in the Holocaust. This is a tremendous work, and we are privileged to be involved with it, as we are with all of these organizations.

Another one is the **City of David Foundation**. The City of David Foundation right now is in a major process of unearthing the City of David, which was the original Jerusalem during the time of David. The Pool of Siloam has been found, and is now in the process of being unearthed. It will not be too long before you are able to visit Israel and go to the pool of Siloam, and see where the Jews, as they were coming up to Jerusalem to the feasts, would wash, and then go on the roadway up to the Temple Mount to sacrifice and celebrate the feasts. They do a tremendous work, and what they have uncovered has been amazing, finding actual parts of pottery with names of biblical figures on it, proving times and places. This is just a great organization, and they do a wonderful job. And when you are in Jerusalem, they provide tremendous tours of everything that they are digging up. We hope to have a great tour when we go there as well, and to have some type of an interview with one of the archeologists, or with the head of the City of David Foundation. He is a tremendous man that was one of the first let down into the cistern that they found, which was probably where Jeremiah was thrown into the pit when the king was not too happy with what he was proclaiming. So there is much to be seen, much to be discovered. Many of the pages of the Scriptures and the prophecies of the Bible are being confirmed by what is being found and done in the City of David, by the City of David Foundation.

The last, but not least, is the **Jewish National Fund**. In that fund we support the **Keren Kayemeth Lelsrael** fund. One of the things that they are doing is creating the Gospel Trail from Bethlehem into the Sea of Galilee, where people can literally walk the trail where the disciples probably walked, and Jesus Himself probably walked. It is replanting trees, making areas for camping, for hiking, so that people can go and have a really tremendous experience seeing where many of these events happened. Galilee is such a wonderful area, and so, we will be going there. They just communicated with us and said that

they heard we are coming; and while we are there, they are wanting to establish a plaque in this Gospel Trail area, honoring Hargrave Ministries and those that support Hargrave Ministries for all that we have done and the funds that have been given to plant the trees and to establish this. We are very much looking forward to that. Hopefully, we will get some good pictures and video and be able to put it on the website when we return. So be looking forward to that.

I wanted to include you in all of this. Please be in prayer for us. This is, I know, a very challenging time as I am recording this podcast. Of course, it is probably a month or more ahead of when the podcast will go live, but there is a lot transpiring at the moment in Israel, and I want you to be praying for Israel. I want you to be praying for our trip, for Bruce and me, and for these organizations; and for Israel in general. Be praying for the government and the people of Israel. There are tremendous times of protests that are taking place, as I am speaking this recording now, but I want you to keep your faith. One of the things that for me has been a tremendous drive in the purpose of Hargrave Ministries is to support the people of Israel, to support the land of Israel, and all that God is doing in that.

While we are talking about it, I just want to make a couple comments that I think are really important. Because again, if you are following the news right now, there are protests over judicial reform that are taking place, and I could spend a lot of time talking about it. I have been following it very carefully with those who are in Israel and have an understanding of what is going on. But what is transpiring is very important. We see that there are attacks that are coming against Israel from Gaza, from Lebanon, and even from Syria right now, which has not happened in a long time; so there is much taking place. We know that just recently there was a law that was presented to the Knesset to be passed which would forbid Christian witness within Israel. Thankfully, I think that has been stopped; but I know that it shook many people when it was presented. Many Christians who are supporters of Israel were very shaken by that event and these other events that are taking place, because they seem to really impact what we have faith for and faith to see regarding Israel and the Jewish people.

I want to just take a moment and talk to you about my reasons for backing Israel. My reasons are biblical. I am not looking at the current events and looking for current events to be the answer that Israel needs. I am looking at what God has said He would do and what would happen in the last days concerning Israel; and because it is God's Word, it will happen. I know this is on a very serious note, but it is a deep concern to me, personally. One of the examples is Martin Luther. Martin Luther back in 1523 was promoting kindness to the Jewish people, to Israel, recognizing that Christ was born of the Jews; and because of that, there was a kindness and a faith that should be had and exercised towards Israel and the Jewish people. He was looking to see people converted, the Jewish people converted to Christianity; and for a while, he made real effort towards being favorable to the Jewish people. But when the Jews refused to convert, or failed to convert, in his eyes, he became very bitter; his bitterness grew quite a bit, until he really was one of the great persecutors and anti-Semites that would come out. And as we know, he was tremendously influential in Germany; and what he wrote and what he spoke in Germany to the German people developed a lot of the antisemitism that took place in Germany. Of course, we know what transpired during the thirties and forties with the Nazis and with the Holocaust; much of what Hitler did and spoke was actually from the words of Martin Luther. And so, it concerns me, because right now we have a lot of Christian backing for Israel and the Jewish people. And I think that we should be very careful to understand, in our own hearts individually, why we are backing Israel, and what our faith is towards Israel and the Jewish people.

I do not think that we, especially as gentile Christians, are there and involved with Israel to try to convert them. I feel like the scriptural admonition to us as gentile Christians is to “Comfort, O comfort My people,” as Isaiah 40:1 says. We need to recognize that they do have a history that turns them off to conversion; and what they need to see from Christians is first a true picture of Christ and His love for Israel, His love for them, His love for the world. That is the first step that they need to see in developing a relationship with gentile Christians. And I caution us all, that as we have a faith for Israel and for what God is doing with the Jewish people, that we not have the roots of antisemitism that Martin Luther had. In other words, if you are trying to bless them simply because you are trying to convert them, that, I believe, is a wrong motivation; and I think you need to take that to the Lord and pray over it, extensively. You need to be blessing them, praying for them, ministering to them because of a pure love of Christ in your heart for them, and direction from the Lord that this is what you are to do. Because, if it is based on conversion, you may find yourself going the way of Martin Luther; and if they do not line up to what you feel they should be doing, then your love can turn to bitterness.

As I said, there are a lot of things happening right now. I have heard a lot of Christians becoming fearful, questioning their support for Israel, and it is surrounding political events and natural level events that are transpiring. I do not think your support for Israel should be based on natural level events or political events. Judicial reform will work itself out. The laws that will or will not be passed about freedom of religion, those things are in the realm of politics. We should be backing Israel, praying for Israel, believing for Israel because of a revelation from the Lord.

I want to read a little bit of Scripture to us, because I think it points to the fact that God is doing something in Israel with the Jewish people; and it is not based on their politics, on how they are getting along right now, or on what events are transpiring on a natural level. This is what God is saying He is doing and is going to do, and that should be the basis of our relationship with Israel. Jeremiah 32:36-37 says, “Now therefore thus says the Lord God of Israel concerning this city,” He is speaking to Jerusalem, “Concerning this city of which you say, “It is given into the hand of the king of Babylon by sword, by famine and by pestilence.” Behold, I will gather them out of all the lands to which I have driven them in My anger, in My wrath and in great indignation; and I will bring them back to this place and make them dwell in safety.” Now we know that Israel violated God in their relationship, and God was angry with them and He sent them off into the Diaspora; and there are many still living in the Diaspora. But that was between them and God. That was God’s wrath, His indignation, His discipline of His people. We go on in verse 38. It says, “They shall be My people, and I will be their God.” Remember what He said in verse 37 – He said, “I will bring them back to this place,” talking about Jerusalem and Israel, “and I will make them dwell in safety.” At some point we will see Shalom in Jerusalem and in Israel.

Verses 39-40, “And I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me always, for their own good and for the good of their children after them. I will make an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; and I will put the fear of Me in their hearts so that they will not turn away from Me.” God is going to do these things. “An everlasting covenant” – God’s covenant with Israel and the Jewish people is everlasting. He will not turn away from doing good to them, and He is going to give them one heart and they will not turn away from Him.

Trust this. This is why we support Israel and the Jewish people, because we know by the Word of God what God is doing and will do in these last days. He says in verse 41, “I will rejoice over them to do them good and will faithfully plant them in this land with all My heart and with all My soul.” Think about that. What is God doing right now with all of His heart and all of His soul? He is bringing them back from the

Diaspora, from the nations, and He is planting them once again in the land of promise. And He is going to give them a new heart, a new soul, a new spirit, all of this, and they will serve Him with all of their heart – because He is going to do it in a way that glorifies Himself. God will glorify Himself in Israel. He will glorify Himself in the Jewish people.

Verses 42-44: “For thus says the Lord, “Just as I brought all this great disaster on this people, so I am going to bring on them all the good that I am promising them. Fields will be bought in this land of which you say, ‘It is a desolation, without man or beast; it is given into the hand of the Chaldeans.’ Men will buy fields for money, sign and seal deeds, and call in witnesses in the land of Benjamin, in the environs of Jerusalem.”” See, God has these promises. God is going to do this.

In Ezekiel 36, starting at verse 22, it says, “Therefore say to the house of Israel, “Thus says the Lord God, ‘It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for My holy name, which you have profaned among the nations.’”” So God is going to vindicate His holiness, He is going to vindicate His great name, by what He does in the last days with Israel. And for me, I want us to be there. I want the body of Christ to be there ministering love, showing them Christ. We do not even have to open our mouth to talk about Christ. We can show them the example of who we know Christ is, knowing His love, knowing His grace, knowing His fantastic promises; because He has promised them wonderful things, and He said He will not relent from fulfilling that great Word. So remember: when you think about Israel and what you do for Israel, why do you do it? You do it for the same reason He does it – for His name’s sake. And we know that He is doing it with all of His heart. God Himself is bringing them back to the land, and He is blessing them, settling them with all of His heart. We, likewise, should be a part of everything that is ministering to Israel and the Jewish people that brings them back into the land and settles them there with all of our heart and all of our faith. So I encourage you, pray over this, be praying for us in this trip, and God bless you in it. I thank you, and we will speak to you again soon. Amen.