

GROWING IN GOD PODCAST



GIG250 – Israel Solidarity Trip

Hello everyone, and welcome to this time of *Growing In God*, the podcast that is looking to bring us more into maturity in the things that God has for us in these days. We are going to be talking today about a solidarity tour to Israel which is being sponsored by Hargrave Ministries. One of the things that I hope happens with this podcast is that we can have donors reaching to our website and donating to Hargrave Ministries, to help us cover the costs of this solidarity tour, or trip. You might ask, “What is an Israel solidarity trip?” What we are doing, and what many groups are doing during this time, is traveling to Israel to be a blessing to the country, to the people of Israel during this time of war that has been going on for three years now; and we look to just be a blessing. We know that in Isaiah 40 verse 1 it says, “‘Comfort, O comfort My people,’ says your God.” This is a great part of our motivation in going to Israel, to be a source of blessing and comfort, of backing and encouragement to the people of Israel; to let them know that Christians are standing with them, are praying for them, believing with them, to see all of the prophecies from the Scriptures fulfilled over the land of Israel.

You may ask, “What benefit do you get out of this?” I would point to Genesis the twelfth chapter, verses 1-3. It says,

Now the Lord said to Abram, “Go forth from your country, and from your relatives and from your father’s house, to the land which I will show you; and I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and so you shall be a blessing; and I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.”

I think this is still one of the greatest prophecies over Israel, the Jewish people specifically as well as those living in Israel, and about the land of Israel, the nation of Israel itself; that they would be a blessing, and that in them all of the families of the earth will be blessed. This is something that maybe seems kind of far away to those living through these days in Israel. Many of the Jewish people can easily lose sight of this tremendous promise that God gave to their father Abraham, that all of the nations, all of the peoples of the earth, will be blessed by the existence of the Jewish people, the state of Israel. And so, part of this solidarity trip is to be a reminder that great prophecies and promises in the Hebrew Scriptures exist and are yet to see a fulfillment over Israel, over the children of Israel, in our day. We go as Christians believing to be a force of faith to say, “We believe. We hold to the Word that God has spoken, and we know that not one Word God has spoken will fall to the ground. Every Word will have its fulfillment.” We want to go and respeak the prophecies from the Word of God over Israel and the people of Israel, the children of Israel, the Jewish people. We want to encourage them that they are not alone.

It is a day when they can feel very alone, when the nations are drawing up against them and trying to isolate them; there is a tremendous resurgence of anti-Semitism within the world today. So, it would be easy for them to have a negative feeling and picture about all that is transpiring. It is very difficult, and their history through thousands of years has been very difficult. We just celebrated Holocaust Remembrance Day, and so much of the time in the history of the Jewish people has been lived under

pogroms, and persecutions, and anti-Semitism, and just pure hate. And now we know that the nations that surround them, many of them are committed, and in their founding documents have committed themselves, to the complete destruction of the Jewish people and of the land of Israel.

So we want to go and show our support. We want to go and be a voice that says there are many, many Christians in the United States of America, and there are many Christians around the world; we will have representation from Brazil with us on this trip to be a voice to say that Brazil and many in Brazil love and bless the nation of Israel. We want to be an encouragement; and beyond just an encouragement, we want to do things that will be a blessing to them, to bless God's people. As Isaiah says, "Comfort, O comfort My people." And we should be a voice of love and care.

I think one of the realities we must face as Christians is that we have a history that is not one of comforting the Jewish people, or of being a strength to the land of Israel; but instead, we have been a source of pain and part of the persecutions that they have faced. And so, we want to say we have learned in Yeshua, we have learned in our reading of the Hebrew Scriptures and our studying further, that Christianity must be free from anti-Semitism and the roots of it. And we come now as a voice of comfort as we believe God has commanded us to do in these words from Isaiah. We want to have not just a voice of encouragement, but we want to have actions that follow our words. So on this trip we will be visiting many places, going to different sites, with the idea of not being on tour in Israel as sightseers, coming for our own benefit and encouragement and education, but we are coming to be hands and feet that are helping the Jewish people and helping Israel at this time.

I will give you some of the things that we will be doing, just a real short connection with some of the places we will be visiting. And again, I really do ask that if this reaches your heart, that you go to our website at hargraveministries.org and donate to Hargrave Ministries. I know that on our website we have many donations that we make to Israel and to nonprofit organizations within Israel. We support eight organizations every month; we send support to all eight of them, and we continue to do that. That is our tithe, it is our heart as Hargrave Ministries to support these organizations that are so vital in helping Israel on a day-to-day basis. But what I am requesting that you do is help support Hargrave Ministries specifically during these moments, because there is a lot of financial need that we have in making this tour happen. We have our airfare, we have our living situation, food, and we also plan on making donations and being a financial impact.

One of the things you realize about Israel is that it is a nation with an economy greatly made up of tourism. Since the events of Covid, and since the events of October 7th that took place in 2023, tourism really has been almost non-existent in Israel. This is very difficult for the people and the economy; and then you add to that the fact that workers from all areas of life have been called up to the war effort that they are facing since October 7th, and you realize that it is difficult to have an economy that is normal, or booming, or just meeting the basic needs of the people. So many who work in all areas, whether it is bus drivers, or those stocking shelves in the supermarkets, working in the hotels, doing all of the things that are necessary in a society, many of those individuals are brought up because the IDF, the army of Israel, is basically a volunteer army; people serve in it as reservists after their normal service following their graduation from high school. Both men and women serve in the military, and then they serve as reservists; and so, they are called up to come back. This has been very, very difficult on the economy of Israel and just the function of Israel as a society. So, we want to help in every way that we can. You know, just going into a restaurant and eating, and paying your bill and tipping the serving staff,

is a huge thing to these people who really have not had the normal life of tourism and visitors that Israel is used to.

We will be visiting several different places. First of all, we are going to be visiting United Hatzalah, which is a network of more than 8,000 volunteers who work in emergency medical services to Israel. They have a drive to have a response time of less than three minutes on a daily basis; most of the time, they are at areas of need within 90 seconds of the need, whether that is something of traffic accidents, or pregnancy, or any other medical emergency. However, since October 7th they have been very key in helping people, not only on October 7th and being there at the front lines in Gaza, but also throughout this whole time for people who are wounded by incoming missiles or other aspects of the battle that has taken place. So we are going to United Hatzalah. We want to encourage them. We have been donating to them during this time, and we want to be a strength and a blessing to them, to let them know how much we appreciate the work that they are doing to save lives in Israel.

We will be going also to the area of Sderot. This by some is called the bomb shelter capital of the world. It actually sits less than a mile from the Gaza border, and at its closest point it is 2,700 feet from the border itself. Thus, when Code Red from rocket alarms goes off in this area, it means that you have basically a few seconds to reach a bomb shelter before it would land, because it is coming such a short distance. They figure that often twenty seconds is what people have.

On October 7th, Hamas gunmen attacked Sderot and they engaged in firefights with the Israeli police and the civilians in the streets of this city. There were about eighteen members of the Israeli police who were killed during the attack on October 7th, and the fighting continued. Finally, they had to destroy the police station, because the terrorists had invaded the police station and that was the only way to make sure that everyone was dealt with early on. There were at least twenty civilians that were killed as they were waiting at bus stops, or walking down the street, or driving in their cars in the city. 90% of the residents eventually were evacuated during the days after the massacre. So, we will be visiting Sderot, and again, trying to be an encouragement to the population there, and being an assistance in any way that we can.

We will also be going to Shiloh Israel Children's Fund in Shilo, or Shiloh, as some pronounce it. This, of course, we support on a monthly basis, all the work that David Rubin started there and has done for many years. But since October 7th and the massacres that took place, there are thousands, thousands of children throughout Israel who have become victims of the terror, and have been deprived of enjoying their childhood and growing up in a normal atmosphere. And so, new programs have had to be developed, and treatments have had to be developed, and much help has had to come in. So we want to go and support these people and their work with the children of Israel, to see that the traumas that have been thrust upon them can be ministered to, and that there is emotional as well as physical healing. This is a big area of our heart, and always is. We look forward to visiting Shilo and being a blessing to the children, feeding them the sense of love that there are nations and peoples out there, outside of Israel, that are sending love and care and concern towards them, and they are not living in a world where all the nations are nations of hate or anti-Semitism towards them and their families.

We will be going to Tel Shilo and visiting there, since we will be in the city of Shilo. There is much happening there in the architectural digs that have been taking place, so we want to visit and encourage that to be ongoing. As you know, the city of Shilo was a central place in the history of the Jewish people during the period between the capturing of the Land and the building of the Temple in Jerusalem, thousands of years ago in the days of Joshua at the dividing of the Land. Tel Shilo is where the spiritual

life of the Jewish people was centered. The Tabernacle existed there for 369 years before it was moved to Jerusalem. So, this is a key area, and it is partially key because it is this Judean area that, of course, is flagged as the West Bank by many; and it is said that this is an area that has been occupied by Israel. The truth is, yes, it has been occupied going back to the days of Joshua. It is part of the lands that God gave to Israel. And we stand on the Land and remember the promises that God has given Israel about the Land and their life there.

We are also going to visit Leket, which is the National Food Bank of Israel. It is a registered nonprofit-based charity. It is the leading food rescue organization within Israel, serving some 330,000 needy people on a weekly basis. They have created an amazing ability to network, to go in and gather agricultural products or excess foods from different areas, and to create meals and distribute meals to needy people. And while we are at Leket, we will probably just be packing boxes of food that will be eventually distributed to needy organizations. This is a key organization in Israel. They have over 200 nonprofit organizations that partner with them as a nonprofit to distribute foods and take care of the needy.

We will be going to Yad Vashem to pay our respects there. Yad Vashem is Israel's official memorial to the victims of the Holocaust. It is dedicated to preserving the memory of the Jews who were murdered, and it echoes the stories of the survivors. We want to go there and pay our respects, and to be a part of what Yad Vashem stands for, which is the cry, "Never again." That cry is so important today, because as I stated earlier, we see so much resurgence of anti-Semitism throughout the world, and we must see that ended. I believe one of the greatest ways to end anti-Semitism is through education; Yad Vashem exists as a pillar of education for all the nations to end anti-Semitism. And so, we want to bless them, be a part of them, and stand with them.

We also plan to visit Hebrōn, or Hebron. Of course, Hebron is the city that is mentioned in the Bible as the home of Abraham. We will be visiting the architectural site of the city of Abraham, as well as the burial place of the Patriarchs while we are there, which is in Hebron. It is a place where several generations of the family of Abraham have been buried. It is also a place where King David for a time established the capital of the Israeli state, before that capital was moved to Jerusalem. Today it is a very contested area. Hebron is a holy place both to Muslims as well as the Jewish people, due to its association with Abraham. Today the city of Hebron has a population of about 500 Jews and over 200,000 Palestinians. The Jewish settlement of Kiriath Arba has a population of about 8,000. It is a separate city immediately adjacent to Hebron, and we know that it is mentioned in the Bible.

Right now, we see that Hebron is very divided. It is part of the divide of the two sectors. One is called H1, the other is called H2. H1 is entirely Palestinian and includes about 80% of the city's residents, while H2 contains all of the Jewish residents and the remainder of some Arabs that are in that area; so there is a mixture of the two populations together. H1 is fully under Palestinian control, which is called in Israel Area A, while H2 is under full Israeli control. When you go to Hebron, you really get the picture of this divided society, where you have the different areas that are alphabetically designated to Area A, Area C. Area A, for instance; Jews cannot enter that area at all at any time, and it is under Palestinian control. You go into these areas and you see, you feel the tension, you see the divide that exists between the populations and the people there.

One thing that we do when we go to Hebron is pray; and I think we will be doing that again on this trip especially, praying that God bring an end to this conflict. We talk about praying for the peace of Jerusalem, but that is really symbolic to say that we must pray for the peace of Israel. We want to see

the end of these conflicts. We want to see the end, honestly, of the demonic spiritual forces. We know that in Christianity, we are taught that our battle is not against flesh and blood, but it is against the principalities and the powers that exist in the world of spirit, and that our weapons are mighty to the tearing down of those strongholds. I believe that peace is going to be dependent upon our intercession and our enabling to bring an end to the spirit world that is generating the division, the hate, the war.

When we look at the history of Hebron, for instance, if we go back to Joshua the fifteenth chapter, it says in verse 13, "Now he gave to Caleb the son of Jephunneh a portion among the sons of Judah, according to the command of the Lord to Joshua, namely, Kiriath-arba." So here is the city that still exists today that is right in this area of Hebron, that is the center of the contention that exists and takes place; and it is this Kiriath-arba that was given to Caleb. It goes on to say, "namely, Kiriath-arba, Arba being the father of Anak (that is, Hebron)." So these names come back up to us in the Scriptures.

Verse 14 says, "Caleb drove out from there the three sons of Anak: Sheshai and Ahiman and Talmi, the children of Anak." So we see this again, spiritual forces, because these were the giants. When we go to Deuteronomy the ninth chapter, in verses 1-2 it says, "'Hear, O Israel! You are crossing over the Jordan today to go in to dispossess nations greater and mightier than you, great cities fortified to heaven, a people great and tall, the sons of the Anakim, whom you know and of whom you have heard it said, 'Who can stand before the sons of Anak?'" Here we are in Deuteronomy and we are seeing that these were the sons of the giants, the Nephilim that existed during that day. So when we talk about spiritual forces, we see that those spiritual forces pop up again and again until they are dealt with, even in the Scriptures. We see that in the New Testament, in the book of Revelation, where the spiritual forces that existed come back again. So, we want to see the destruction of these spiritual causes, roots, that bring about what is taking place on a natural level.

This is what we realize in Revelation with Jezebel. In the book of 1 Kings she was the enemy that was coming against Israel, coming against the prophet Elijah; and yet, even though it seems like she was killed on a natural level, we see again the spirit being addressed in the book of Revelation. So we must realize that part of what we are doing as we go is that we are believing to have the authority and the enabling by the grace of God in the Spirit to bring down these spiritual forces of wickedness that are at the root cause of what we see transpiring. Yes, when we look on a natural level, it is very difficult to watch and observe the war and the destruction that is taking place. But let's not forget that our fight is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities and powers, the spiritual forces of wickedness in heavenly places. That must be brought to an end if we are going to see things on a natural level change.

So we will be praying, and I ask you to pray with us and to be with us in faith as we go. Again, we definitely need your financial support to cover the cost of this. But as much as we need financial support, we need the spiritual support that will allow us to be God's instruments in the land of Israel to end the spiritual forces and see established the Kingdom of God there. We know the great prayer we have been taught is, "Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." And the greatest answer to the conflicts that we see is the emergence and the establishment of the Kingdom of Yeshua, of Jesus, in this earth. So be praying with us, be standing with us as we go.

We will be visiting many other areas. I will not name them all here, hopefully we will be taking videos and posting them on Instagram during our trip. Then we will segue from the trip of solidarity into being part of the Jerusalem Prayer Breakfast that begins on May 28th and goes through May 29th, and we look for great things to transpire there.

There is much happening, and all I can do is ask you, please, pray for us, stand with us; and if you can find it in your heart and your ability, help support this trip of solidarity with Hargrave Ministries to the land of Israel.

Thank you so much, and God bless.