

November 2024

Dear Friend of Israel,

In Chapter 13 of the Book of Judges, we read about the conception and birth of the famed warrior Samson. A mysterious “man of God” reveals to Samson’s unnamed mother that she will conceive a son who will save the Children of Israel from the Philistines. Ecstatic over the news after being introduced to the “man of God” by his wife, Samson’s father Manoah offers the “man of God” a goat for a festive meal. Declining, the “man of God” instructs Manoah to instead offer the goat up to God. Upon doing so, Manoah discovers that the “man of God,” who ascends to Heaven amidst the flames on the altar is in fact an angel of God. Overwhelmed and in a state of extreme trepidation, Manoah fears that he and his wife will soon die because of their Divine encounter. Manoah’s wife wisely reassures him explaining, ***“If the Lord had meant to kill us, He would not have accepted a burnt offering and grain offering from our hands, nor shown us all these things, and would not have told us of this matter.”*** (Judges 13:23).

This brief but profoundly significant story from the Bible serves as a reminder for us all that sometimes, incidents which we perceive to be frightening can be opportunities for us to acquire deeper understandings of God. During such events, God intends not to harm or scare us but rather to uplift us and introduce us to new perspectives of Him and on life.

Over the past year, we have experienced a series of very intimidating episodes. Countless missiles and drones have been launched at us from every direction, and yet miraculously, most of the projectiles have caused little to no harm or damage. Sadly, a drone launched by Hezbollah during the short stint between Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) and Sukkot (Feast of Tabernacles) marked an exception when it slammed into an IDF base near the coastal city of Binyamina, injuring over 70 soldiers and killing five.

The drone attack on the IDF base near Binyamina was a stark reminder of just how fragile life is. At the same time, God somewhat appeared to be sending us all a subtle message telling us that ***“I am still with you.”*** If we truly reflect on **the sheer number of attacks that Israel has endured—more than 13,000 missiles from Gaza, 14,000 from Lebanon, 400 from Iran, 180 from Yemen and 60 from Syria—we can only be humbled by the comparatively minimal damage that Israel has sustained overall.** The most recent tragedy at the IDF base near Binyamina, while extremely heartbreaking, revealed the devastation that Israel could have faced in every other drone attack. All too often, we overlook the large number of miracles that occurred for the People of Israel over the last year. And when we were directly faced with the reality of a single drone landing in its target at the worst possible time, **we were reminded of the vast extent to which God has protected the People of Israel over the past year.**

As Samson’s mother understood, even in the scariest and darkest of times, **God grants us all a glimpse of His mercy and power to help elevate our understanding and recognition that He is always watching over us.** As we celebrated the Sukkot holiday, we left our homes and moved into a temporary “shelter” outside, acknowledging that our protection and refuge comes from God alone and that in Him alone do we ultimately place all our trust. I wish you and all of us a happy and fulfilling Jewish New Year!

Shalom,

Shmuel Junger
Director
Christian Friends of Israeli Communities

P.S. We have included our latest Heartland Story report from the community of Naaran. Your donations have helped children in Naaran thrive and grow. Thank you for standing so boldly with Israel.