

ADVENTURES



*with the*  
**KING**

*By Esther Kerson*

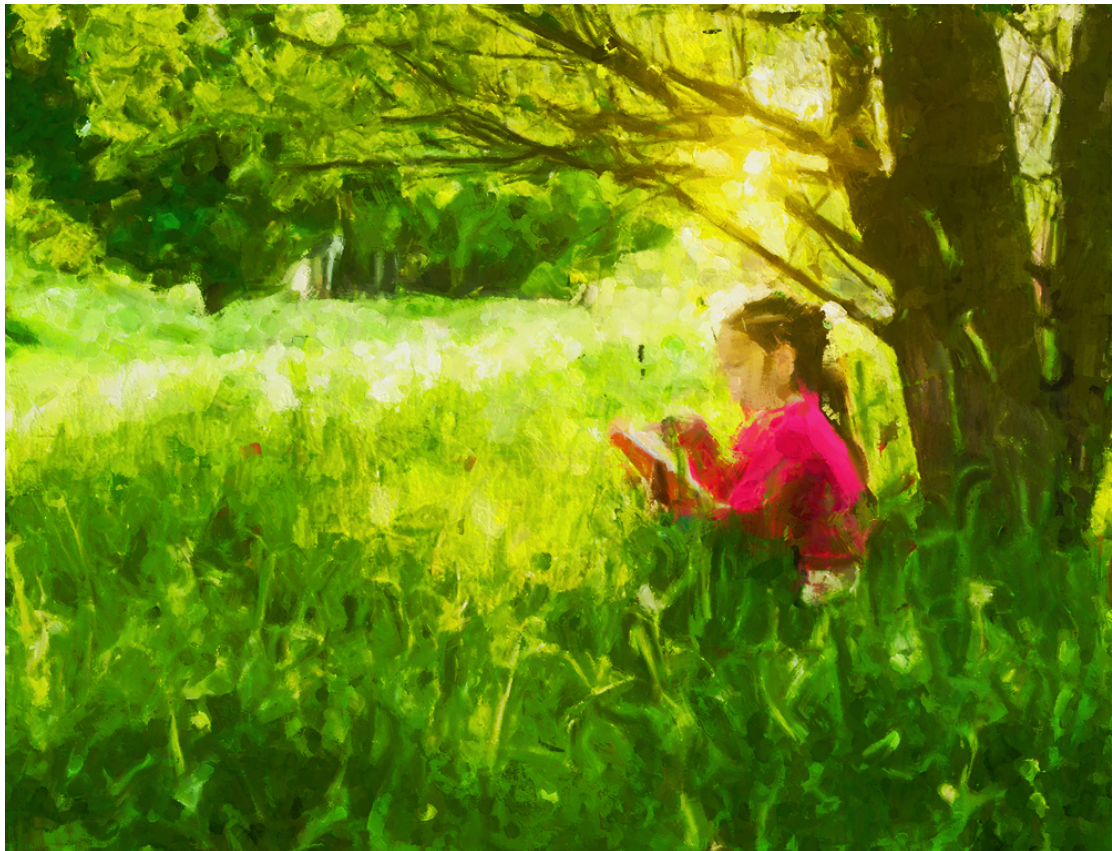




## *Adventures with the King*

### *Introduction*

It all began with a childhood garden. It was in our backyard in a rural area of Grafton, Massachusetts. To me, it was a place of great wonder, with something magical happening almost every day with the beginning of spring—all the way through to the end of summer—until the maple trees began to turn their glorious colours and the growing season would be over.



It amazed me to see the things that popped up from the ground, or hung on vines, or dangled from trees. I invariably marvelled at the tastes and the colours and the textures and just the incredibly different way that each thing *looked*. When the things poked through the ground, you couldn't always tell what the actual fruit or vegetable would *look* like when you pulled it up. Who would imagine that when you pulled on a feathery green top it would become a skinny, pointy-bottomed orange carrot? I can still remember the fresh smell as a tomato is picked from the vine or the joy of sitting with an overflowing bowl of pea pods. It was such fun to open them up and to see the tiny peas lined up all in a row; the taste of fresh peas from the pod is still one of my favourite treats!

With the simple faith of a child, I couldn't imagine how God had thought of so many marvellous things. The list that caused my small heart to swell with joy and wonder was endless. The colour of red cherries, for example—how did He ever create

such a deep, rich and beautiful colour? Or the marvel of raspberries and blackberries and strawberries and Maine blueberries, just waiting there to be picked and eaten until your face and hands turned red or black from the juice. And the giants like fields of huge orange pumpkins or watermelons (which I had seen in pictures). Leafy lettuces, dirty potatoes, peppers in red or green or dark green, skinny or fat, the beautiful green leaves of celery followed by their spindly ribs, apples and pears; the list was endless, each thing a discovery in taste and beauty that always made me smile.

It was also amazing to me that every single morning, without fail, we would awaken to a singing world filled with the music of the birds. And the goofy rooster always helped me to know that God knew how to laugh.

Dogs. They also helped me to know that God was real. It was such a gift as a child to live in a family that loved dogs and that had them totally as pets. For true dog lovers, no explanation is needed. Dogs love so wholeheartedly, forgive so totally, welcome so enthusiastically, and teach the true meaning of friendship, loyalty and love. I've always been immensely grateful that God invented dogs, and have happily had them as friends all of my life.

Having grown up on the Atlantic coast, the sea was another way that I sensed the majesty and the awesomeness of the Lord. I have always adored the sea and somehow always felt closer to God when I was there. My childhood list could go on forever—lilies of the valley, the smell of lilacs, the aroma of cinnamon, animals and the sounds that they make, the changing seasons, syrup from the maple trees—my delight was never-ending. The sense of wonder that I experienced as a child has stayed with me even until now, more than six decades later.

Growing up, I remember being disillusioned by life as it was presented to me in New England. People had goals—get an education, have a career, get married—but it all seemed empty to me. Having glimpsed the glory of God through the wondrous things of His creation, every fiber of my being cried out for more meaning to life. And then, in 1975, I came to know Yeshua as the Messiah, which meant that through His Atonement on that Passover eve in Jerusalem so very long ago, we could finally have a deep and a real relationship with the Lord—for Yeshua's gift to us of His life meant that the sin that had separated us from God could be forgiven. And we could come to know Him in an amazing new way.

Coming from a Jewish background, the Bible is our history. Because of this, I understood that people in the Bible that were used by God were simply people! There was no question in the Scriptures as to whether or not God could speak, as the Bible says, over and over again, umpteen times, "The Lord said..." or "God spoke..." It was clear throughout the Bible *that the Lord communicated with His people*. The Biblical stories let us know whether or not the people that He chose to speak to *obeyed* Him or they didn't! But there was never any question that He was able to communicate with His people! So in 1975 when the Lord began to speak to me within my heart, it was as natural as breathing for me to understand that it was Him and to *want* to be obedient. It was as though my whole life had been earnestly waiting for that moment; for I understood at once that a friendship with the King was what my soul had been yearning for since those childhood days of wonder.

The day after the Lord commissioned me to write this book entitled "Adventures with the King," I went to a local fellowship here in Jerusalem and heard a song that I have always loved. It was the second verse of that song—which I had never heard before—that seemed to summarize so perfectly what this book is to be about:

*"As the deer pants for the water,*

*so my soul longs after You.  
You alone are my heart's desire  
and I long to worship You.  
You alone are my strength, my shield,  
to You alone may my spirit yield.*

*You're my friend and You are my brother  
even though You are a King.  
I love You more than any other  
so much more than anything.*

*I want you more than gold and silver,  
only You can satisfy.  
You alone are the real joy-giver  
and the apple of my eye."*

Since childhood, I instinctively knew that God was awesome and holy, that He dwelt in the highest Heaven and that He was worthy of honour and praise. What touched me so deeply after receiving forgiveness for sin through Yeshua's atonement was how *close* our relationship with Him could now become. Being no longer separated from the holiness of God by sin, we could enter into a real friendship with Him knowing that He loved us as His own children. The depth of His caring and the level of His concern for our daily lives have continued to amaze me even after more than 40 years of service by His side.

None of us can ever be *worthy* of the greatness of the love that He is, but that doesn't stop Him from loving us! None of us could ever imagine the *depth* of His love, either. He gives us teeny droplets of His love, fitted perfectly for our human hearts, and we often feel overwhelmed by that very love. But no human heart could ever withstand the enormity and the breadth and the depth and the limitless measure *of the love that He is*, nor can our human minds with their limitations ever completely comprehend it.

It was way back in 1975 when I came to know the Lord, having made the amazing discovery that 'Christianity' was not a religion, but a real relationship and friendship with the Lord Himself; that Yeshua (Jesus) was actually the Messiah that God had promised to the Jewish people so many centuries ago; and that as a Jewish person, I did not become part of another 'religion', because it was all Jewish anyway! Then I learned the equally astonishing news that God actually loved the Jewish people; that it was a miracle of His grace alone that we had survived as a people at all after hundreds of years of dispersion across the face of the globe; and that it was by His hand that we had become a nation again after 2000 years. In 1976, at His direction, I moved to Israel and in 1977 He called me to serve Him full time. In the years that followed, I have had many adventures in His service and experienced His faithfulness and the greatness of His love for people countless times and in countless ways. Some of those adventures I would like to share with you through the pages of this book.

This book has no chapters—just adventures! Each adventure is different, but all of them have one thing in common—they were orchestrated by the King. May the Lord let you know, as you read it, the greatness—and the tenderness—of His love—for you...

*Dedication*



*This book is dedicated with love to*

***Marcia LaBonte***

*In honour of her valued friendship for more than  
fifty years;*

*In thankfulness for her wise counsel  
and many rescues;*

*And for her willingness to stand with me  
through it all...*





## *Blessings of Obedience*

On King George Street in Jerusalem there was one department store—the only one in the city. It was called the Hamisphere. The basement had a grocery store, and then there were three floors selling a variety of items with a furniture department and a restaurant on the top floor. The store was there when I first lived on the same street in 1977 and was a big part of city life. (As of 2012, it has a new location on Jaffa Road). Public phone booths were located in the square in front of the store, as in those days almost nobody had a telephone. There was a really apropos “Dry Bones” cartoon with a picture of Methuselah being interviewed. “Tell me, Methuselah, you’re hundreds of years old. What is it that keeps you going?” and he dryly responds, “I’m still waiting for my telephone...” which should give you some idea of just how drastic the phone situation was then. Also, in those days no one had air conditioning and everyone had very poor heating for the cold windy winters. So the Hamisphere was always a good place to cool off in the summer and to warm up on a blistery winter’s day.

Late one morning, very unexpectedly, the Lord directed me to go to the Hamisphere and to have lunch in the restaurant on the top floor. As I didn’t have much money that day, it felt a bit extravagant. But since whatever money I *did* have belonged to Him anyway—and since I always wanted to be in His will, I trudged off to the top floor of the Hamisphere. It wasn’t a very *good* restaurant, so I wasn’t particularly enthralled with the instructions, but I ordered a sandwich and a coke. I tried to sit there as long as possible, since the Lord had clearly sent me there and as yet nothing had happened. But eventually I was afraid that they were going to begin to charge me *rent*, so I reluctantly asked for the bill and prepared to leave.

And then it happened. The unexpected moment for which the King is so famous. When I stepped into the furniture department adjoining the restaurant, I knew that I knew the woman sitting on the mattress and the man standing next to her, but I couldn’t for the life of me remember *how* I knew them. When you meet someone completely out of context from where you actually *know* them, it isn’t always easy to place who they are. But finally, with total amazement, I realized that I was face to face with family from Connecticut—Eleanor and Aaron! My Uncle Paul’s sister and her husband!

What a joyful reunion we had! They had very much wanted to meet me on their holiday in Israel, but couldn’t imagine how it would be possible since I didn’t have a telephone. They were so touched and amazed when I told them that the Lord had clearly directed me to go there at that exact time! They came over a few days later to my apartment for dinner, and returned home to family in Connecticut declaring that their having met me so unexpectedly was the highlight of their trip! I was so grateful to the Lord that He had helped me *not* to focus on a shortage of funds but instead to simply use the money that I *did* have to do what He had asked me to do!



Quite a few years later, another amazing family experience occurred, again clearly orchestrated by His hand. It was a family reunion on my mother’s side of the family, the Goldman clan, to celebrate the bar mitzvah of one of my cousin’s sons. It was seldom that the whole family got together, as they were scattered across the US, so

it was to be an 'event'. The celebration was to be held at the Sheraton Hotel in Silver Spring, Maryland following the bar mitzvah itself at the synagogue. I had booked a room at the hotel a day earlier to try to get over jet lag at least a little, as I was the relative who would be travelling the farthest. Therefore, I had booked a ticket to Maryland that would get me there on Thursday evening. Friday would be when relatives would begin to arrive and all of the bar mitzvah events were scheduled for Saturday, with a final Sunday brunch before we all scattered once again. And so I arrived at JFK airport in New York City to await my connecting flight to Maryland.

When I packed my suitcase in Israel, the weather was hot, so I 'cleverly' packed my winter coat, scarf and gloves in the suitcase, deciding that would eliminate the need to lug them around until I would claim my luggage at BWI airport in Maryland.

After arrival in New York, I went to check into my connecting flight, only to discover that it was delayed. We waited and waited and waited, and then were informed at 10:30 that night that the flight had actually been cancelled. The airline staff asked us to line up to book alternative flights, and so I joined a long and weary queue. I enjoyed talking with the couple behind me in the line and the young man in front of me. We were in line long enough to share entire life histories if we had wanted to! When I finally reached the reservations desk, I was informed that I had arrived for the beginning of a massive snowstorm (that was to paralyze air traffic on the East Coast for days). The exhausted airline employee informed me that no connecting flight would be available before Saturday night at 9:00 pm.

"But I travelled all the way from Israel to attend a family bar mitzvah celebration, and I'm going to miss the whole thing!" I exclaimed, feeling totally jet lagged and close to tears. But alas, there was nothing that could be done to obtain an earlier flight. I prayed as hard as I could for a miracle.

By then I was quite hungry, but by the time I was finished being processed after the long line, all of the airport restaurants had closed. All of them! So I purchased a mineral water to drink and a couple of candy bars.

Someone announced that blankets and pillows would be given out in the next terminal, so I took the coatless walk there—it was freezing!—and saw hordes of stranded people everywhere. When I collected my blanket, someone told me that Gate 15 was still empty and that would therefore be a good place to sleep. When I arrived at the gate, I understood why it was empty—it was COLD! But then I noticed the young man who had been in front of me in the queue talking with the airline representative at the desk at Gate 15, of all places. (We discovered while talking in the line that he also was planning to travel to BWI). "Listen," he told me, "I just found out that there is a 3:30 a.m. train leaving from Penn Station that stops at BWI. The trains are still running. It will arrive at BWI at 6:30 a.m."

It was amazing news, and I recognized the Lord's hand in getting me to the second terminal and to Gate 15 just in the nick of time to meet almost the only person I knew in the airport! It was clear that the 3:30 train *was the only possibility I had to get to the bar mitzvah in time*. But of course, I would have to retrieve my suitcase first, which had been checked in hours earlier. I asked the clerk at the desk what I should do. She suggested that I get permission from the security guard to leave the restricted area and to be allowed re-entry in case my suitcase was not available for pick-up, and to then proceed to the 'lost and found' office in the arrivals section of the terminal to request the release of my luggage.

It was 11:30 p.m. when I arrived at the office to be informed that they were due to close for the night at midnight. I explained to the woman behind the desk my



dilemma. It turned out that she was Jewish and had visited Israel and had loved it very much.

“Let’s see what we can do,” she informed me, and promptly phoned down to the baggage handlers. After investigating, they notified her that the luggage for my flight was still at the gate of the original departure and so my suitcase could easily be located. But they had a rule that no checked-in luggage could be released individually.



However, they already had a request to retrieve a suitcase from my flight as a passenger urgently needed medication that was packed inside.

“Please, please try to find the other suitcase as well,” the clerk implored whoever was on the other side of the phone. “Please.” And so we waited to see what would happen.

At exactly 4 minutes before midnight, her phone rang. “They found your suitcases!” she happily told me and the man waiting to retrieve his medication. “Go to



belt number 6 and they will send your suitcases right up!” I thanked her profusely and dashed off to belt number 6. As soon as the suitcase arrived, I opened it immediately to retrieve my coat, gloves and scarf and headed out into the blistery cold night to wait for the bus to Penn Station.

Everything had happened so quickly that there hadn’t been a minute to think until I was safely ensconced on the bus as it sped its way through the darkened New York streets. It was only then that I realized that it was a good thing that the restaurants had been closed—or I would have ‘eaten’ money needed now for this unexpected journey by bus and rail! Partly because of exhaustion and partly because of delight in remembering again that God knows all things, I had a good laugh about it. When I left Israel for this journey, I had \$120.00. The bus ticket cost \$18.00 and the train ticket would cost \$85.00 and the snacks had cost \$12.00. That left me with the grand sum of \$5.00! That also meant that I would not have enough money to take a taxicab from the airport to the hotel in Silver Spring. But since I have travelled extensively with the Lord, I had a total peace about it all, knowing that something somehow would work out—although I couldn’t quite imagine what that ‘something’ would be!

When I finally boarded the train at 3:30 a.m., I pulled my suitcase in front of the seat next to me, took off my coat, turned it into a pillow and immediately fell asleep. Suddenly I was awakened by the conductor asking to see my ticket, which I sleepily handed over to him.

“I’m sorry, but this is a ticket for coach and you’re in a first class car,” he informed me. He then suggested that the simplest thing for me to do would be to get off the train when it stopped at the next station, walk back four cars and then board again. So the pillow turned into a coat, I once again put on the gloves and scarf and at the next stop battled snow and a cold wind, found a seat on the coach car and soon after settling in fell asleep at once. By then it was 11:00 a.m. in Israel, which meant that I had been awake for the second night in a row. (The first night of wakefulness had been on the overnight flight from Israel to New York). After a few minutes, the conductor again woke me up. “Lady,” he rasped, “you can’t leave your suitcase in front of the seat next to you. Somebody will need to sit there.” So I dragged it off to the rear of the car, returned to my place and fell asleep once more in less than a second.

The next thing I knew we had arrived at BWI, only to discover after disembarking that the airport train station was quite a distance from the terminal. The good news was that a shuttle bus would pick us up and deliver us there; the bad news was that we would have to wait on the open platform in an icy cold wind for the 20 minutes that it would take until the next shuttle was due to arrive.

After having travelled all night long, I found myself at last at the airport terminal when hours earlier it had all looked so impossible. But since I didn’t have the money to get to the hotel, it might as well have been on the moon! After warming up enough to dial, I tried phoning my sister Goldie collect. She would soon be on her way to the bar mitzvah celebration, and hopefully she could think of some way to get me to the hotel. (She was the only family member who knew that I had planned to arrive at the hotel the night before everybody else to try to get some rest). But when I reached her, there was nothing that she could do since Goldie and her husband Dave were *already* en route to Maryland. “Do me a favour then,” I asked her. “Call Marcia and give her the number of this public phone and I’ll wait for her call. And I’ll hope to see you soon!” I said laughingly, not quite understanding how I could find humour in the stupid situation in which I found myself.

After a short wait, the phone thankfully rang with Marcia at the other end. Of course, she didn’t have a clue how they could help, since they live in Pennsylvania and

I was stranded in Maryland! After she commented to her husband that I was stuck at BWI airport in need of \$20.00, I could hear him saying something in the background. The Lord's amazing 'rescue plan' was about to be revealed, one that would astonish quite a few people before the end of the day!

"You're not going to believe this," she said. "At this very minute, Dan is in BWI airport. We'll try to reach him by cell phone, and will call you back soon..." she said hastily and hung up the phone. Dan is their son, and I've been friends with Marcia and her family since 1967!

The phone rang again. "Dan is in the airport right now! He already went through security, but he'll come out again and will meet you in section B of the terminal in 10 minutes. He definitely can help you with the \$20.00."

When Dan arrived, we had a wonderful reunion. And then he explained, "I'm here at the airport with the university volleyball team that I coach. We have an 'away' game, and we almost always leave from the Harrisburg airport in Pennsylvania. However, the parents of one of the students asked if we could depart this time from BWI instead—so here we are! When Marcia called, I said to the students, 'Wow, you're not going to believe this! Our family's best friend from Israel is downstairs at this very minute!' and I dashed off to meet you..."

We were both flabbergasted by the perfection of God's timing and by the fabulous way that He had orchestrated our meeting. Dan handed me the rescue money and returned to his gate just in time for his plane's departure! The story isn't quite over, but before I continue, I want to insert a comment about 'living by faith.' Probably most people would not leave on an international trip with only \$120.00. But that was the exact amount that the Lord had provided, and therefore, since I trust Him for everything, it seemed reasonable to me. The important point is this: If I had travelled to the States with *more* money, I would have arrived at BWI, taken a taxi to the hotel, *and never would have known that Dan was in the airport* and I would have completely missed the magnificent connection that the Lord had pre-arranged. And I also would have missed the lesson that there is nothing to fear, the Lord always has a way to help us in every situation. And sometimes His ways are really fun!

When I arrived at the hotel at last, I checked in and slept for a few hours until Goldie phoned later that afternoon to announce that they had just arrived as well. We had a wonderful reunion and talked our heads off until it was time to get ready for an Italian restaurant dinner planned for the immediate family. Since I live so very far away, it was truly a gift from the Father's hand that I could be there together with everyone again! During the course of the meal, I shared with them my overnight ordeal and its surprising ending with my meeting with Dan. It was special to be able to give a testimony of God's faithfulness to my Jewish family! But there was more to the story than even I knew!

As my cousin John explained, "Last night, due to the severity of the storm, a good part of Silver Spring had no electricity—including us! And it was FREEZING! So we called the hotel on the off-chance that they would have a room available for the night so that we could at least be warm!"

"Yes," they told him, "we have a 'no show'—other than that, we are fully booked."

While I was battling through the night to arrive at the hotel, my cousin and his family had the use of my room—never imagining that *I* had been the one to reserve it!

The next day other family members arrived, and I was pressed each time to re-tell the story of my rescue at BWI. I shared it four times altogether! And family also told again the Hamisphere story from long ago. The bar mitzvah and the celebration

that followed marked a joyous occasion and I was happy to have been there. And blessed as well to remember that when the Lord is truly in charge of our lives—He is *truly* in charge of our lives!



One day at home in Jerusalem, I needed to buy a few groceries. I usually shop at a small grocery store in the German Colony because it is easy to wheel the grocery cart to the curb and take a taxi home! (I live on the top of a steep hill, so normally take taxis home!) However, this particular day the Lord told me to shop instead at the grocery store underneath the Hamisphere department store on King George Street. Since I trust the Lord daily for guidance and direction, I obeyed Him! As I began to enter the store—out walked a friend of mine, David, who lived in France! It was definitely a reunion orchestrated by the loving hand of the Lord! David had prayed to see me while he was visiting Israel but had no contact information! He was with a tour group, but right then he had an hour free, so we went out for coffee and had fun catching up!



On another day I was travelling by bus from Jerusalem to the northern city of Kiryat Shmonah to visit close friends of mine. It was a three hour journey. A woman was sitting next to me, and after a while I strongly felt from the Lord to ask her if she was a Jewish believer in Yeshua. But since I am a hermit-at-heart and never like talking to people if I don't have to—I ignored His instruction! A while later I glanced over at her and noticed that she was reading an article about Christianity which didn't look interesting to me at all. So I continued in disobedience.

After 1½ hours of travel, the bus stopped at a gas station for a ten minute break. When I returned to my seat, I was determined to do what the Lord had asked me to do and speak with her! So, as soon as she sat down again and the bus started, I said to her, "Are you a Jewish Believer in Yeshua?"

She was flabbergasted! "How did you know *that*?" she asked me. I smiled and pointed up and we introduced one another. Then she said, "What a minute, I know who you are. Didn't you write a big book?"

It turns out that Shulamit lives with her husband in New Zealand, the other end of the *earth*, and was in Israel for a short time visiting her family on a kibbutz near the village of Rosh Pina. So it was truly the Lord's hand that brought us together, and that little step of obedience opened a wonderful door of friendship. Whenever Shulamit and her husband Paul are in Israel they stay overnight with me and we have lovely fellowship together! Plus—Shulamit's best friend in New Zealand, Linda Cook, is also *my* best friend in New Zealand! When Shulamit returned home, she really had fun telling Linda how we met that day on the bus!



### *The Book*

*As you read this testimony, pay close attention  
to the way in which the Lord orchestrated the circumstances  
over a period of years to fulfill His purpose—that  
'a book will be written...'*



In 1974, the year before I actually came to know Yeshua as the Messiah and came to know Him in a personal way, I had received a prophecy which astonished me in many ways. As a part of it, the woman told me, "So much will happen to you that one day a book will be written that will draw many people closer to the Lord..." The only test of whether or not a prophecy is truly from God is this: If it is from Him, *He fulfills it...*

At that time I was a divorced mother with two small sons, two hamsters, a guinea pig and an English Setter named Hawkins. Her statement sounded so ridiculous that I literally laughed in her face, saying, "Oh, *right*, it would make fascinating reading!" To which she responded, "Don't worry, dear...the Lord loves you very much..."

When I finally did come to know the Lord in a real way, He challenged me to trust Him totally. And when I agreed to serve Him, things *did* begin to happen in my life. One day He dealt directly with the book prophecy, letting me know that He truly did want me to begin working on the very book that the woman had mentioned in 1975! My first reaction was total disbelief. I told Him promptly, "But I have a Master's Degree in Social Work. I'm not a writer!"

He answered me at once. "It is not your ability as a writer that I'm looking for," He told me clearly, "*but My anointing*. If you will agree to *write* the book, *I will anoint it with My love...*"

It was in 1977 that He commissioned me to begin work on the book and by then He had also called me to a total life of faith. This grand adventure in life began when He led me to the following Scripture, which seemed like such a beautiful statement of faith:

*"Then He said to His disciples, 'Therefore I say to you, Do not worry about your life, what you will eat; nor about the body, what you will put on. Life is more than food, and the body is more than clothing.*

*Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap, which have neither storehouse nor barn; and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds?*

*And which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?*

*If you then are not able to do the least, why are you anxious for the rest?*

*Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.*

*If then God so clothes the grass, which today is in the field, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven: how much more will He clothe you, O you of little faith?*

*And do not seek what you should eat, or what you should drink, nor have an anxious mind. For all these things the nations of the world seek after, and your Father knows that you need these things. But rather seek ye first the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you."*

*Luke 12: 22-31*

Imagine my surprise when the Lord let me know that it wasn't just something 'beautiful' to read—but that He meant for there to be a literal fulfillment of those very principles in my life from that time forward!

The Lord helped me to understand that it meant being available for His purposes in my daily life and trusting Him for all things including financial support. Therefore, when He let me know that He would anoint with His love the book that He was commissioning me to write, I couldn't imagine for a minute how it would therefore be possible to *sell* the book. How in the world could you ever put a price on God's love? How could I imagine making a *profit* on the love of *God*? As I pondered this issue, He again answered at once. He said, "If you are willing to give the book away as a gift, *I will provide the money for the book to be printed and distributed...*" And so I prepared myself to begin work on a book!

At the time I was living in a tiny apartment on King George Street in the centre of Jerusalem. A neighbour across the street named Irene kindly agreed to loan me her typewriter, long before the days of computers! It was a clunky old black contraption with keys that only worked if you pounded on them really hard. On the very first day on the very first page, I hammered out the following Scripture:

*"Freely you have received,  
freely give..."*  
*Matthew 10:8*

Under no circumstances  
is this book to be sold...

After much prayer and debate, I knew that the title of the book that the Lord was commissioning me to write should be "I Am My Beloved's" from Song of Solomon, and I typed that in as well. And thus the work of the book had commenced.

A friend, Ruth Baker (later to become Derek Prince's second wife some time after the death of his first wife, Lydia, who wrote "Appointment in Jerusalem") agreed to come over every morning for a cup of coffee to read what I had written the day before and to offer corrections and suggestions. It was a small beginning to a project that was to last for almost ten years! Many of the things that the Lord wanted included in the book hadn't even *happened* yet! So not only did I have to write the book—I had to live it first!

Whenever I was home in Jerusalem I worked on the book on and off for a number of years. One day, however, the Lord began to orchestrate the amazing chain of events that would eventually result in the initial publishing of the book!

It actually all started in Moscow in 1982. After three weeks behind the Iron Curtain I was scheduled to leave the USSR by train en route to Athens, Greece. On my last morning in Moscow, Intourist summoned me to their office and informed me that I needed to pay an additional amount for my hotel accommodation. After I handed them the amount in question, I had very, very little money left for the remainder of the journey.

Paid for in the States before my departure to Eastern Europe, I had what was called a 'soft' train reservation from Moscow to Bucharest, Romania. But because my funds were now almost depleted, I had to pay for a 'hard' train from Romania through Bulgaria to Greece.

The 'soft' train was a delight. I had a sleeping berth, there was a dining car, and attendants in each car gave complimentary cups of Russian chai from an elaborate samovar. And the views of passing countryside were breathtaking.

Wondering vaguely what a 'hard' train would be like, I finally boarded it at the massive train station in Bucharest. Since Bulgaria was a very closed communist country at that time, I would have to remain on board the train until we passed through Bulgaria

and arrived at last in Greece. With almost the last of my money, I purchased bread and cheese for the three days that the journey would take. After boarding the train, I found myself in a compartment with hard wooden seats, packed together with eight other people—and a crate of chickens!

Happy to disembark at last in Athens, I found myself in a real dilemma. There was money waiting for me in Israel, but I didn't know how to access it! The money that I had to unexpectedly pay to Intourist in Moscow took my travel-back-to-Israel funds, so basically I was stranded in Greece!

After three sleepless nights on the noisy train I checked into a small hotel—planning to pay for it when my Israeli money arrived—and slept soundly, so happy to be on a *bed* and not still sitting up on a hard wooden bench with rowdy travel companions!

Early the next morning I proceeded to the Post Office to phone friends in Israel. I needed help to get the money sent to me! However, in those days, almost no one I knew in Israel even *had* a telephone, and the one person that did was not answering. So I sat in a little park and prayed! At once the Lord impressed upon me to phone Marcia in the States.

"But Lord!" I countered, "Marcia lives in Pennsylvania and my money is in Israel! Israel is *close* to Greece—America is very far away!" Of course, since He *created* the world, I guess He knew that already, but I was too overtired to be diplomatic. "And besides, Marcia is always willing to help in the end—but in the beginning she is usually grouchy!" I was practically pouting.

"Call Marcia," was His only reply. So I trooped back to the Post Office and placed a collect call to Pennsylvania. As the Lord knew she would, Marcia answered and accepted the call.

"Hi Marcia," I said wearily. "I'm stranded in Athens and when I prayed, the Lord told me to phone you. I need funds to return to Israel and to pay for accommodation here until the money arrives. There is money in Israel to re-pay anything that can be sent, but I can't access it from here!"

"You're stranded in *Athens*?" was Marcia's incredulous reply. "And *I'm* supposed to do something about it?" We put it in the Lord's hands and agreed that I should phone her in another three hours.

Three hours later, when I reached Marcia again, she said, very matter-of-factly, "Write down this address. When you get there, speak to Nellie. They have agreed to allow us to use their Greek bank account to enable money to be wired, and they will advance you some cash in the meanwhile..." Long before the days of Western Union money transfers or credit cards, direct transfer to a bank account was the only means for money to be transferred internationally. It was my turn to be astonished! "How did that happen?" I asked her, to which she replied, "I'll tell you about it some day!" and hung up the phone.

When I arrived at the address that she had given me, I found myself at the Greek branch of an organization called "The American Mission to the Greeks." Nellie gave me a cordial welcome. In the course of our conversation I mentioned that the help was needed to enable me to return home to Israel. She said, "Are you *Jewish*?" and then excused herself to make a phone call.

A few minutes later, it was confirmed. "My father was a pastor, and all of our lives my sister Sophia and I have been taught to love and to honour the Jewish people. I've just consulted with my sister by phone, and in these days that you need to be in Athens awaiting the financial transfer, *we want to welcome you to be our guest in our home...*" The Mission then forwarded the money needed to pay for my night in the



small hotel and to retrieve my luggage, and at the end of Nellie's workday we drove to their home.

I've travelled extensively throughout the world, but I don't think I ever received such a warm welcome as I received that day in Athens. Nellie and her dear sister treated my like *royalty*. It was hard to imagine that I was still the same person that had arrived tired and bedraggled just the day before! They were both so kind and so hospitable, and we spent lovely evenings sharing together, eating delicious home cooked meals and praying! When the bank transfer finally arrived, we had become firm friends and I was so amazed at God's hand in bringing us together.

By the way, Marcia did finally explain to me what had happened that day when I had phoned her for help and ended up at the American Mission! Marcia and her family lived in a farmhouse in the Pennsylvania countryside, and following my phone call she began to drive the 15 miles that would take her to town. She wasn't at all sure what she was supposed to *do* exactly, but nevertheless set off in the direction of Shippensburg. For some reason, as she was driving, she suddenly began to sneeze. She sneezed so many times that she needed to use a bathroom, and pulled into a friend's driveway en route to town. "Hope you don't mind!" she exclaimed as the door opened. "I urgently need your bathroom!"

The friend afterward invited her for a cup of coffee, and when Marcia sat down at the table, she said, "Good grief! I just got a phone call from a friend of mine. She's stuck in Athens and needs help getting back to Israel! I can't imagine for the life of me what *I'm* supposed to do about it!"

"Marcia—you're not going to believe this!" her friend exclaimed. "Just yesterday in the mail I received information from an organization called 'American Mission to the Greeks'!" She ran to get it, and they discovered that it was based in Georgia. The rest is history! When they phoned the ministry, the staff was glad to help and informed the Greek branch to expect my visit!

Late in May in 1982, I was delighted when Nellie and Sophia invited me as their guests to visit together the island of Patmos! It is located in the northern Dodecanese and is reached by a ten hour ferry ride from the Greek port of Piraeus. Since I adore the sea, having grown up on the Atlantic coast of New England, I knew that every bit of the trip would be incredible. And I wasn't wrong! I fell in love with the tiny island, not imagining that it would soon become a special part of my life.

Some months later, while back at home in Jerusalem, I received a telephone call from a journalist. He asked if I was interested in purchasing his typewriter, an IBM Selectric II with a variety of font balls. He explained that he was leaving the country and that it was too bulky to take with him. An electric typewriter seemed like a dream, but alas, I did not have the money that he was requesting to enable me to purchase it. A few days before his departure, he asked if he could drop it off at my apartment. "You can use it until I sell it," he offered. And then, the day before he left, he came by to say, "The Lord let me know that I am to give you the typewriter as a gift. I know that your book will be a blessing, and so I'm happy to be a part of it!"

In addition to the wonderful gift of the typewriter, he also gave me the rules that journalists live by! He explained, "You have to set a goal for each day—normally it is six hours of typing, but the Lord will show you what to do. If you do less than the six hours, you need to make up the time the following day. But if you type *more* than six hours on a given day, you cannot deduct the time the day after." It was an important discipline. At home in Jerusalem the Lord let me know that I was to type at least two hours every day, and so the work began in earnest. That 'journalist discipline' was just what I needed!

Since I was used to an old, black metal typewriter that only worked if you forcefully klunked the keys, I typed in the same way when I started using the new electric typewriter that had amazingly arrived in my home! Until finally the Lord said to me, “You only need to *gently* press the keys!”

“Wow, what a difference!” I laughingly told Him.

Towards the spring of 1983, I received a surprising instruction from the Lord—that I was to spend six weeks on the island of Patmos to work intensively on the book! A couple by the name of Sid and Betsy offered to accompany me on the journey. (I had met Sid and Betsy in 1977 when they were in Israel on a tour, and they had remained special friends ever since—like spiritual parents!) Since I had to bring along the heavy electric typewriter plus many books and items as reference for inclusion in the book, it was wonderful news to have help for the journey. On the island together we found a perfect little studio apartment for me to use with its own private garden. It had windows on three sides, and from one of the windows I could see the tiny Church of the Apocalypse (that according to tradition covered the cave where John received the revelations so many centuries ago). Sid and Betsy also stayed for a few days to pray with me plus we had fun discovering the island together! Patmos is too small for an airport and is only 15 miles in length! I was so grateful for their help, and sadly watched their departing ferry as it disappeared around the bend en route to Piraeus.

The Lord’s rules for the island work were explicit. I was to type six hours a day, in any configuration of time that I wanted. I was to cook breakfast at home each morning, but other than that, I was to eat in local restaurants—quite inexpensive in those days! The Lord explained that cooking takes a great deal of time and effort—shopping, preparing the food, washing dishes etc.—and that He wanted my main effort to be work on the book. He also told me to take my dirty clothing to the local Laundromat instead of washing them by hand and hanging them outside. (The couple who owned the Laundromat became special friends!) And so it seemed that some weeks of intensive writing were to begin! Since there were no telephones and in the beginning I didn’t know anyone on the island, the time there was a total gift to my hermit’s heart! I couldn’t imagine weeks alone with the Lord in the peacefulness and serenity of this little island! Surrounded by the sea that I always love! For me it was a true gift from heaven!

Since the Lord sent me to the island in the early spring—when the island was still wonderfully quiet before the hordes of summer tourists arrived—I started to get to know many people who lived on the island as it was such a small place. One day, towards the end of my time there, I visited my favourite little restaurant on Hora, the charming village on the top of the island near an imposing monastery. One of the owners welcomed me warmly and sat down for a chat. Since she and her husband had lived in the States, she knew English very well. At one point, she ‘happened’ to mention, “By the way, there is a man on this island from Germany who loves Israel very much. You should contact him!” and she then proceeded to direct me to the house that he and his wife owned and visited for a few weeks each year. “They’re on the island now!” she added.

‘Happened’ is in parentheses *for this was the great moment that the Lord had planned a long time ago*. Her suggestion to contact him was not an accident at all but an amazing moment of time orchestrated by our Master Planner. As you will see!

Since part of the gift of weeks alone on the island to write had to do with no contacts with people—except for casual contacts with the islanders—her suggestion to get in touch with someone new did not make me happy at all. As a matter of fact, I dismissed it totally and decided that I would *not* make the contact! Imagine my

astonishment later that day when I sat down to type and the Lord said to me, clearly and forcefully, “I want you to write a letter to him, and when you send it, spend a day in prayer and fasting...” The instruction to pray and to fast helped me to know that whether I understood it or not, *to the Lord this was to be a very important connection*. So still feeling surprised, I dutifully typed him a letter introducing myself, letting him know how to contact me, and telling that I was interested in meeting him if possible, ending the letter by saying, “Since I’m a Jewish Believer in Jesus from Jerusalem and I understand through the owner of Patmion House Restaurant that you love Israel, it would be special to talk to you!” I walked down to the port to post it, and that evening began the time of fasting and prayer.

Two days later, a woman rode up to my little apartment on a bicycle and introduced herself. “My name is Friede Springer. My husband Axel and I received your letter, and would like to invite you to visit us tomorrow, Saturday morning, at 11:00 a.m.,” she informed me.

When I arrived the next morning, actually on time, Axel was pacing restlessly! He later explained that in his scheme of things, if someone was not ten minutes *early*, he already considered them to be late! As we were walking towards a few chairs set up under a tree in a lovely garden, he asked if I had ever heard of him.

“No,” I told him.

“Are you *sure* you’ve never heard of me?” he asked, somewhat incredulously.

It was totally God’s wisdom that I had never heard of him, so that I could simply be myself!

We sat in the shade under the tree and talked for more than two hours. When it was time for me to leave, he said, “It was a very enjoyable conversation! Friede and I would like to welcome you to come again tomorrow at the same time!” So I made plans to do exactly that.

The day before, I had finished the work on the portion of the book that I had come on the island to complete. That meant that I had five days off to enjoy Patmos before having to leave for Israel! A third of the book was ready, typed with corrections, and the pages were neatly stacked. That evening the Lord instructed me to bring the book with me on my visit the next day and to give them the chance to read it if they were interested. So the next morning I told them about the book and offered to leave the completed portion with them to read. “I’ll need to have it back by Wednesday afternoon, as on Wednesday night I’m leaving on the ferry to Piraeus,” I told them. Once again, we all had a lovely visit together.

As I enjoyed my five days of work-free holiday on the island, I wondered what they would think of the book since no one else in the world had ever read it before! And *then* I started wondering when they were going to return it—since by late afternoon on Wednesday they still had it! Finally, just before 5:00 pm, Friede returned the manuscript at last.

“Words can’t describe how much your book has meant to us,” she told me. “Even though important calls were coming through from Berlin, Axel and I only wanted to read your book!” We both laughed and I agreed to let them read the next segment the following year when we would all return to Patmos!

Back in Jerusalem, I found out at last some information about Axel Springer! It turns out that, on the little island of Patmos in the northern Dodecanese, *I had met the biggest publisher in Europe...*

In the normal course of events, there was no way that I would ever have been able to meet him. It was still during the communist times, when Berlin was a divided city, and Axel was both outspoken against communist rule and in support of Israel.



Because he was so famous he was normally surrounded by bodyguards. Patmos was the only place in the world where he could go and have a private holiday. No one except for his closest aides knew where he was and on that tiny island Axel and Friede could have a blessed time of quiet and rest. The *Lord*, of course, knew that they visited there, and began arranging for our meeting way back on the day when I was stranded in Athens and felt to phone Marcia in the States to ask for help.

When I returned to the island the next year to continue to work on my book, towards the end of my visit Axel and Friede arrived on the island. I went to meet their helicopter, and was deeply touched by the warm welcome that I received from Axel. He had really understood my book in a way that few people ever have and he had also felt the Father's love as he had read it.

Most mornings during their time on the island I was invited to go out with them on their yacht. We had wonderful conversations together and at 11:00 a.m. we would watch for the EL AL plane that would fly overhead en-route to Israel. Then I would join them for lunch before returning to my little apartment to continue work on the book.

On the day of our first lunch together, we were sitting at the table on their open veranda in the bright Greek sunshine. Friede set a lovely meal before us. I looked down and began to eat, and in the shortest time I looked up again to discover that Axel's plate was empty. I jokingly said, "Where is your food?" as I teasingly looked under the table and around the area to try to discover how it had disappeared. He laughed and confessed. "I admit it! I eat like a vacuum cleaner!"

In the many hours that we spoke together, Axel shared many things. He expressed how as a very young man he had been horrified by what the Germans had perpetrated against the world and especially against the Jewish people in World War II. He had said to his parents, "When this war is over, I'm going to open the biggest newspaper publishing house in the country that will tell and print the truth."

His father said to his mother, "The boy's crazy."

But the mother—who had a glimpse of Axel's genius—replied, "Yes, but with Axel you never really know." When he actually *did* open the biggest publishing empire—not just in Germany, but the biggest in all of Europe—he never hired a single person with any kind of a Nazi past and people had to sign a pledge which, among other things, asked them to agree to support Israel.

He told how he had purposefully built his huge publishing house next to the Berlin wall with huge letters with his name on the top of the building so that his name could be seen from the other side of the wall. He was outspokenly and fearlessly critical of the communist regimes and told that in East Germany, just over the dividing wall, they had missiles pointed at the building with his name on them!

He hated the way people treated him in Germany because he was so wealthy and famous and influential. "People always say what they thought that they were *expected* to say. No one is really honest. When I was designing the executive floor of the building, there was a huge room that was designated as my office. When I asked people what they thought of an office so large, they would all acquiesce, insisting that it was perfect for a 'man of my stature'. I asked a Jewish friend, who is now my assistant publisher, and he said, "It's perfect if you're Mussolini!" His honesty was so refreshing, and he agreed with me that the large room should be a reception room and that my private office should be much smaller."

He also laughingly told me that whenever meetings in Berlin would get tediously boring, he would simply spend the time in prayer!

Axel was intense, restless, impatient, brilliant and larger-than-life. He had the ear of many influential people on earth. He was deeply religious, could spot hypocrisy in a minute and abhorred it. It was amazing to me that I could count him as a friend.

Axel had read the portion of my book the year before that had told the story of how, while on the island, I had run out of both food and money, and that when my dear landlord had discovered my situation he raced home and returned with enough money to truly help! Therefore, the day after they arrived on the island, there was a knock on the door early one morning and two huge bags of groceries were delivered. When I walked out to the car to again say thank you, I noticed a couple sitting on their front stoop in the little apartment complex where I stayed. We had spoken together the day before when I had learned that they were from Germany.

After the car had driven off, I walked over to them, not being able to resist the chance to have a little fun. "If I tell you something, will you promise to keep it absolutely confidential? You have to promise that you won't tell anyone what I'm going to tell you." They promised, and so I asked, "Did you notice that someone brought groceries to my house a few minutes ago?"

"Yes," they replied, "the delivery man!"

"Well, I know that you're from Germany, so here's another question for you. Have you ever heard of Axel Springer?"

"Of *course* we have!! He's famous!" they both exclaimed. "Does the man who delivered groceries work for him or something?"

"Not exactly! The man who just delivered the groceries *was* Axel Springer!"

They were flabbergasted and impressed beyond belief! I explained to them that Axel's presence on the island had to be kept totally secret. "Normally, wherever else he is in the world, he is surrounded by bodyguards, for he has many enemies in the communist and in the Muslim world!" They agreed that the secret would be safe with them.

In the many hours that Axel and I spoke together, either on the yacht or sitting in the garden under the shelter of the trees, he told some amazing things. He shared about his friendships with world leaders and especially with American presidents, telling of one president in particular whom he considered to be extremely wise and counted him as a very close friend. To me it was a surprising choice, but he later sent me many things that the President had sent him and letters as well; and I came to understand his profound respect for this man.

And Queen Elizabeth when in Germany paid a visit to *Axel* at his home!

When Axel and Friede were later in Jerusalem for a week, I was invited to have breakfast with them on the veranda of their apartment overlooking the beauty of the city walls. As Axel loved to say, "It is wonderful to have this view of the city—*without* having to see the Dome of the Rock!" which was not a part of their view from King David Street!

At least once a week he would send me articles or letters or pictures from Berlin that he thought I might be interested in. I loved it when one of his envelopes would arrive!

While on a speaking tour in Germany, I had an appointment for the first time to speak at a church in Berlin. I would be travelling with my oldest son Joe, a teenager at the time, and with Jenny and Wolfgang, close friends. (Wolfgang was my translator at all the German meetings over a number of years and also translated my main book, *I Am My Beloved's*, into German).

Sadly, Axel and Friede were out of the country at the time, but they treated us as their guests to a stay in a lovely Berlin hotel. Waiting for me in my room when we

arrived was a big bouquet of flowers from the two of them for my birthday, which was the following day.

The next morning we went to see 'Checkpoint Charlie' at the Berlin Wall, the crossing point into East Berlin. Just for fun I thought that I would go into the bottom floor of Axel's huge publishing house next to the wall. I went up to the woman sitting behind the reception desk. I wanted to see if in the normal course of events, I would ever have been able to meet Axel without the Lord's orchestration! So I said to the woman, "Excuse me. I was wondering if it would be possible to meet Axel Springer?"

She actually gasped and almost sputtered as she said emphatically, "OF COURSE NOT!"

I walked back outside with the biggest grin on my face. She had no idea, of course, that the following morning Axel's personal driver and bodyguard was going to pick us up at our hotel and give us a special tour of Berlin. It turned out to be a special tour indeed! And then we were brought into the building by a special door and taken right up to the executive suite where a private luncheon had been arranged by Axel for the four of us with the top two executives of the Springer firm. A table was beautifully set with a white table cloth and it was a very elegant affair. It was a moment to be remembered forever by us all. The Lord has a wonderful sense of humour, remembering the appalled response (12 floors below) to my inquiry the day before about the possibility of meeting Axel!

As I explained in the beginning of this section, the Lord had told me that He would provide the money for the book to be printed and distributed if I would be willing to give the book away as a gift. I started work on the book in 1977 and actually completed the book in the summer of 1985. And in all that time, no money arrived at all. However, three days after I had typed the final word, I received a telephone call from Berlin. It was incredible news—Axel Springer wanted to publish 2000 copies of my book in English and 2000 copies of my book in German. As he stated, "I want to give 1000 books away as personal Christmas gifts." The money to begin printing the books had arrived at last! Not only had the Lord found an incredible way for it to happen—beginning with my phone call to Marcia while stranded in Athens—He provided me with a treasured friendship as well!

It was an amazing moment when the books began at last to roll off the presses. I loved every aspect of the printing process and was amazed to finally hold a completed book in my hands! I had asked Axel if I could put 'published by Axel Springer' in the book even though, at the Lord's instructions, the books had to be printed in Jerusalem. He replied, "I would be honoured to have my name on your book." Even though Axel was a powerful figure on the world scene, he had such a beautiful humility as well. I remember as well one afternoon on the island when he asked if I would pray for him—and he knelt while I prayed.

It was only the very first edition of my book printed in 1985 that bears the inscription "Published by Axel Springer". The Jewish man who was his closest associate was horrified to see Axel's name on my book. He had a great disdain for me because even though I'm Jewish I believe in Yeshua. And Axel's attorneys informed him emphatically that he could not legally have his name on a book, since he was a newspaper publisher and not a book publisher.

Shortly after the first editions were ready in German and English, and 1000 books were shipped to Axel for Christmas distribution, I returned to the USSR for my fifth visit. (All of my Soviet adventures are included in my first book, "I Am My Beloved's").

At the end of three weeks in the USSR I arrived at last in Helsinki to be greeted as always by my Finnish friend, Marike. It was then that I heard of the sad event that had happened while I was inaccessible to news behind the Iron Curtain —Axel Springer had died. I can't describe it exactly, but the world felt like a very empty place.

I would have loved to have seen the welcome that he received in heaven! It was a blessing to have been friends with such a special man, if only for a season.

Following his unexpected death, the following article appeared in the Jerusalem Post:

*“One of Europe’s most influential press lords, Axel Springer was a man of conscience who believed that it was God’s will that Germans should stand loyally by Israel’s side, and he put his belief into practice in word and deed. His death on Sunday, at the age of 73, robs Israel of one of its staunchest friends.*

*In speeches, articles and meetings with important personalities, Springer often castigated those who ‘followed the dictates of oil instead of the dictates of conscience’. He assailed Germany’s plans to sell tanks to Saudi Arabia. He also upheld Israel’s principle of settlement within the administered areas. His voice will be sorely missed today when large arms sales are being offered to Israel’s enemies.*

*As a man who practiced what he preached, Springer was one of the most generous contributors to Israeli causes and organizations. He built the Israel Museum’s library, was a benefactor of Hadassah, the Weizmann Institute, Ramat Gan’s National Park and numerous other worthy institutions. He always showed special consideration for the beautifying of Jerusalem.*

*In 1976 Springer was given an honorary doctorate from the Hebrew University. While it was only one of the many honours bestowed upon him by Israel, he cherished this distinction more than any other.*

*In 1981 Springer opened the Ben-Gurion Research Institute at Sde Boker, another important and symbolic achievement. To him it was a fitting tribute to his meetings with B-G and the fulfillment of biblical prophecy, that from the barren desert, which represents the threat of hunger, Israel is finding ways and means to benefit mankind.*

*Springer was not shy of using his considerable prestige in the political arena on Israel’s behalf.*

*In 1984 Springer received the honorary title of ‘Trustee of Jerusalem’ from his great friend, Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kollek. He had also been honoured with a Gold Medal from the Daily Newspapers Publishers Association here.*

*His media empire, which was pro-Israel throughout, included among others Bild Zeitung, Europe’s largest mass-circulation paper, and Constanze, plus two important Berlin newspapers, B.Z. and Berliner Morgenblatt. Springer also owned the famous Ullstein Verlag and Propäen publishing houses.*

*Springer publications fully supported Israel’s application for associate status in the European Common Market. The publisher steadfastly made known his concern for Europe’s total failure to consider Israel’s search for security, and he criticized Europe’s appeasement of the Arab states, as he believed that both trends were shortsighted and dangerous. In his enterprises, Springer carefully screened all employees to exclude former Nazis and anti-Semites.*

*Springer was the son of a small publisher. He was born in 1912 in Altona, today part of Hamburg. He began his career in a print shop and then worked as the producer of a modest radio commentary. He took over the newspaper Die Welt from the Allied occupation authorities and made it into one of Germany's most influential journals. It was one of the few started after the occupation that survived. Springer's publishing enterprises became synonymous with success.*

*During his first visit to Israel in the early '60s Springer was deeply affected by the state of divided Jerusalem, in which he saw a parallel to the division of Berlin. The reunification of Jerusalem in 1967 was to him a hopeful sign and the fulfillment of prophecy. It was an interesting coincidence, he told his friend and guide Teddy Kollek, that the Springer building was situated next to the Berlin Wall on Jerusalemerstrasse (Jerusalem Street).*

*Springer's generous contributions towards the beautification and development of the Holy City were an extension of his deep belief in biblical prophecies concerning the rebuilding of Jerusalem and its benefit for all mankind. His Christian heritage and his upbringing (particularly the influence of his mother) fostered respect for freedom and total rejection of National Socialism. Springer's contributions to Jerusalem include, in addition to major projects and parks in various parts of the city, equipment for hospitals, books for municipal libraries, basketball courts, support for municipal projects and many other social welfare activities.*

*Yet in 1966, when the West German press magnate offered the Israel Museum a donation of \$1 million, many voices advocated the rejection of the unusually large contribution. It was said that no German should be allowed to enter into the cultural life or institutions.*

*However, the donation for Israel Museum's Library was accepted and throughout the years Springer won both the respect and the admiration of many of his former critics.*

*He was attracted by Israel's tenacity, and he learned to admire the Jewish people's devotion to its roots and traditions.*

*Springer owned a flat in Jerusalem and took every opportunity to come here and breathe our air, to share our problems and difficulties. All Israel and in particular Jerusalemites will sorely miss this true friend."*

*Alexander Zvielli*

Axel once showed me a touching picture of his son when he was a little boy walking down a dirt road—holding hands with David Ben Gurion.

What I've written is a small tribute to a great man...And also a tribute to the King who orchestrated it all.

Friede and I remained friends for a number of years. Since Greece is so close to Israel, and I had come to know and love many of the residents of Patmos, it became a part of my life. There were many times when I travelled there with friends and family and we all adored it! Whenever Friede and I were on the island at the same time, once again I would join her on the yacht and we would as before watch for the 11:00 a.m. flight en route to our beloved Israel. Then we would have lunch together—often at one of the small family-owned restaurants that dot the island.

One summer she invited Marike and me to use their lovely island home for a two week holiday. It was a charming home and the two of us loved sitting on the veranda each evening watching the ships and boats slip by on their way to or from the



port. Since the house was on a bluff, we had a perfect view of the turquoise water below. It was such a delightful time!

In their charming house they had a picture that I adored—of John and Peter running to the tomb after it had been reported that Yeshua was alive!

Friede also visited me in Jerusalem. But then, after a time, she sold their house on the island as well as the yacht, and eventually we lost touch with one another.

All of the year's since Axel's death Friede has been faithful to his vision for the publishing house, and it is still one of the few news agencies in the world that reports fairly on Israel.

Since that beginning of 4000 books paid for by Axel way back in 1985, I have by now been able to give away 52,000 actual books in English, German, Dutch, Hebrew and Russian. And many thousands more have been freely downloaded on the Internet in English, German, Dutch, Spanish, Finnish, Russian and Hebrew ([www.estherkorson.com](http://www.estherkorson.com)) and on Kindle in English for \$.99.

The most amazing part of this testimony is how carefully and brilliantly the Lord orchestrated the whole process over a number of years, beginning in Moscow all the way through to the publication of my books. If our lives are *truly* in His hands, then He is able to fulfill *His* plans and *His* purposes—to the glory of His Name!



### *A Few Lessons in Pride*

Over the years that I've served the Lord—*truly* served Him—what has delighted me the most is His creativity in dealing with the deepest parts of who we are and the ways that He chooses to enable us to become more like Him as we walk by His side. He knows us so well and knows how to surprise us in His interventions in our lives!

Because I'm an optimistic person, smile a lot and love to laugh, I don't often complain or feel sorry for myself. However, the few times that it has happened He usually handled it with His inimitable sense of humour. Because for *me*, as He knows so well, the best way to get me to stop focusing on myself and my problems is to get me to laugh—even if I don't really want to!

The first time I remember this happening was way back in 1977. I was taking care of three children for a few days while their parents took a much needed holiday. On one of our excursions, I took them to the Biblical Zoo. (In those days it was a small complex near the entrance to Jerusalem). On that particular day due to difficulties in my life at the time, I didn't feel much like serving the Lord, and I told Him so!

The children and I were standing outside of the monkey compound watching their antics when one of the larger monkeys threw a yogurt container—and it landed on my head! It made the children laugh so hard they could hardly stand up! A few minutes later the zookeeper came up to me and said, in all seriousness, "Thank you so much for entertaining the monkeys for me! It enabled me to clean their compound so easily!" I had to laugh in spite of myself, for the message was clear: If I was tired of serving the Lord, I could always get a job entertaining monkeys!

Some years later, when I was once again in my "I want to quit" mode, the Lord said, unexpectedly, "No problem! There's a job waiting for you in Jerusalem!" I was

dumbfounded for a moment, and then I remembered. “Oh, yes,” I said to myself, unable to suppress a giggle, “entertaining monkeys in the Biblical Zoo...”



There was another day when the spiritual battle was especially severe and I was such a grouch that I was deeply, noticeably and purposely frowning. At the time I was in the middle of a huge demonstration in downtown Jerusalem on behalf of Soviet Jewry in the days before they were freed. I could feel that my attitude was not at all pleasing to the Lord, but I was so grouchy by then that I didn't care. The next morning, when I purchased a copy of the Jerusalem Post, they featured the march on their front page. There was a large photograph and guess who was front and centre? Me, with my ridiculous frown clearly showing for all the world to see! It would have made sense if I was at the *front* of the march—but I was in the *middle* of hundreds of people! Once again I had to laugh in spite of myself.



Quite a few years later, I was getting ready to leave my apartment in Jerusalem and once again, I was a grouch. I presented to the Lord a whole list of complaints and grievances, feeling justified, which always happens when we allow ourselves to wallow in self-pity. I angrily gathered up my things and stomped outside to wait for a taxi. While standing there, I began to notice ravens beginning to fly from every direction and each one of them was heading to the huge tree above me. At least thirty of them settled in the tree, and as if on cue from a Conductor, at the same moment they began to caw. Ravens have a very loud, raspy cry, and when you have a large number together, it sounds just like a huge, raucous and complaining chorus. It was hysterical, and I had to repent, as the Lord's demonstration of how annoying my torrent of complaints sounded to *His* ears made me laugh really hard!



There were a number of years when I travelled extensively for the Lord all over the world. Each trip was an adventure of faith and I would always return home knowing in an even deeper way the greatness of His love for people, wherever they might be across the face of the earth.

One time He let me know that I was to embark on a 'round the world trip' and in obedience to Him, as a part of it, I wrote to the one person that I knew in New Zealand, the nation at the opposite end of the world from Israel! As I explained to him in the letter, “The Lord has let me know that He wants me to spend five weeks in New Zealand. I'm available for any doors that the Lord might open as long as once a week I have a day alone with the Lord to enable me to rest and to pray...” A few weeks later an answer arrived welcoming me for the five week period of time in New Zealand!

Since this round-the-world trip brought me first from Europe to the U.S., I headed 'down under' via the West Coast with instructions from the Lord to spend three days of rest in Honolulu on the way. Since I adore the sea, the days in Hawaii were truly a gift. Only one thing bothered me. I had been given 'three days of rest'—but—I wasn't *tired*! It made me very leery of what could possibly be awaiting me in New Zealand! (I always jokingly tell people, “If God gives you some days to rest and you

are NOT tired—do not—I repeat—do NOT go to the next place! Don't even get out of bed!)

When I finally did arrive at my destination, my hosts did not have the courage to even *show* me the schedule until the second day! Confirming my worst suspicions, they had arranged one, two or three meetings every single day for four weeks. One Sunday there were actually *five* meetings! And that did not include newspaper, radio and television interviews or travel from place to place almost daily! With great dismay I noticed only *one* day off at the end of a month (if I live that long, I thought to myself) followed by the Women's Aglow National Convention (where I was scheduled to speak three nights in a row and on the fourth night attend the closing banquet).

Before I tell the purpose of this story—how the Lord dealt once again with my pride—I have to add a bit first. When I left Israel for this trip to 'the uttermost parts of the world', it was the middle of summer. Summertime in Israel is invariably hot with bright sunny skies and no inclement weather of any kind. I knew that I would soon be at the opposite end of the earth in the middle of their *winter*, but I didn't have any winter dress shoes! To be sure, winter shoes of any sort were not to be found in the heat of a Jerusalem summer!

"No problem," I thought to myself, "I'll simply purchase winter dress shoes when I arrive in Auckland!" Or so I thought. However, it seems that New Zealand women have short, wide feet—and my feet are long and narrow. I went to four stores in search of shoes. In one store, when I walked in the owner looked at my feet and shook his head as his way of saying, "Nope, nothing in your size here!"

Unlike most people, I absolutely hate to shop. (I've often jokingly said that when I was arrested by the KGB—story to follow later in the book—in 1985, if they had threatened me with shopping—I would have told them everything!) So by the time I arrived at the *fifth* shoe store, I was ready to purchase *anything* that would fit my long, narrow feet!

Amazingly enough, the fifth store had one pair of dressy winter shoes that fit my feet, and so I purchased them. They were lovely to look at and they did indeed fit perfectly. The only problem was that the heels were very spiky and high—and I have enough trouble keeping my balance with shoes that are flat! But I simply couldn't bear the thought of shopping for another minute so I rationalized by telling myself, "I'll only wear them at meetings where I don't have to walk far—and while I'm speaking, I'll hold on to the podiums or pulpits for balance!"

Now, you have to imagine that by the end of a month, with such a grueling schedule and only one day off for rest, by the time I arrived at Christchurch in the South Island for the conference, I was tired beyond belief. And, quite irrationally, to be sure, I was determined that night to speak with the dignity befitting a national convention speaker. To be honest, I wasn't even their first choice as a speaker! But when their first choice cancelled, they invited me instead. But other people got away with being dignified, I rationalized, and in my funny mood I was unwavering. I could tell that my 'arrogant attitude' was not at all pleasing to the Lord, but I simply didn't care!

So that first night, wearing my new dressy high-heeled winter shoes, I—the 'important convention speaker'—was called up to the front to speak. Since it was a very high podium, they had provided a little platform to stand on. Peering out over the top of the podium, after a short prayer, I began to speak in a very dignified manner indeed. I have to insert at this point that the convention was being taped.

After about ten minutes into my 'dignified' message, all of a sudden there was a whooshing sound (picked up very clearly by the tape recorder, I might add), caused

by the sound of the heels of my shoes. They had bored two holes into the little wooden platform upon which I was standing, and I sunk three inches in front of everybody.

In a second I knew that the Lord was dealing with my ‘dignity’, and I started to really laugh. Finally, I sputtered, “That’s what I get for trying to be dignified”—but it came out—“that’s what I get for trying to be mignified!” which made me laugh even harder.

Even though I laughed, because it was truly funny, I was mad at the Lord and on the second night of the conference, I was more determined than ever to be dignified! That night I didn’t stand on a platform—they had traded podiums—and I did not have on my high heeled shoes. And I began the meeting in an even *more* dignified manner than before. (Embarrassingly, you can hear the ‘dignity’ on the tape!)

After a brief prayer, I told the group of 500 women gathered there, “Tonight I am going to speak about obedience.” From behind a pulpit or podium you can really see everything, and as I was looking out at the audience, all of a sudden almost every single woman in the hall began to rummage in her bag. I had no idea what was happening! Since almost all of my experience as a Believer has been in a Jewish way, I had no idea that they were thinking that I was going to give some kind of lesson—and they were getting out paper and pens! But since I didn’t have a clue as to what was really going on, and it was so distracting, I finally just said to them, “What are you all doing!?! ”

When they explained it to me, I knew that the Lord had done it again, and once again I could only laugh. “When I told you that I was going to speak about obedience, all of a sudden you all started rummaging around in your bags. I thought you were getting ready to leave!” And we all laughed together.

By the third night of the conference, I had properly repented for my ridiculous attitude, and I did not try in any way to be ‘dignified’. I began that evening by telling them a story. “One day I met someone named Anne from New Zealand who was visiting Jerusalem. We became friends and in the course of our conversation some time later I asked, “What is your favourite pastime in New Zealand?”

“I love to walk round the bush,” she answered unhesitantly.

“You love to walk around the *bush*?” I asked her incredulously.

“Yes!”

“But—you don’t do it for long, do you?”

“Sometimes for DAYS,” she answered defensively.

“Wow,” I thought to myself, ‘they must be *desperate* for things to do down there!’

By now I have learned that the ‘bush’ is like a rain forest—but to an American—a bush is a small shrub! So I pictured Anne walking around and around it in small circles! They laughed really hard. By the way, the person who was responsible for filling the orders for cassette tapes (this was long before the days of computers) was really angry because so many people had ordered them and at the end of the conference she had to work all night to fill the orders!

As I’ve learned in my walk with the King—*expect the unexpected*. We never know what a day will bring, and that is part of the adventure! And sometimes, part of the fun as well!



*Homes*

When I first moved to Israel in 1976, life here was a lot simpler than it is now. It was still a very young country, at least in its modern version. Life was uncomplicated and unsophisticated. Working hours in general were from 8:00 am until 1:00 pm and from 4:00 pm until 7:00 pm. Families ate their main meal together in the early afternoon and then had a time of rest. The rest hour was sacrosanct! It was understood by all that you did *not* visit people during the afternoon, nor did you phone—although that was simple, since most people did not even *have* telephones!

As the Bezek phone infrastructure was relatively new, it took forever to receive a private phone. Many street corners had outdoor phones that used tokens for calls within the country. It was possible to make long distant phone calls at the main post office. You placed an order for the call, and when it was processed, you were told which private phone booth to enter to receive the call.

In those days, almost no one had an oven and everyone cooked on small gas burners. There was an innovative contraption called a ‘wonder pot’ that fit over one of the burners, and with this pot it was possible to even bake a cake! There were a number of ‘wonder pot’ cookbooks that were available with all kinds of inventive recipes.

Central heating was unheard of and almost no private homes had air conditioning. People used either kerosene heaters or two-coil electric heaters that warmed one side of you while the other side froze! As I shared previously, there was one department store in Jerusalem called the Hamisphere that had both heating *and* air conditioning, and so people went there in the winter to warm up and in the summer to cool off!

Israel had already invented their remarkable drip irrigation system and therefore the desert was producing a wide variety of fruits and vegetables, as was the rest of the country. Even with little rain and almost no natural resources, everything grew beautifully and tasted amazing. It was a true sign of the Father’s hand on His re-gathered nation. We had by then already planted 250 million trees which totally transformed the landscape.

There were only two types of bread in those days—a shiny white oblong loaf for daily use and a rectangular challah for Shabbat on Fridays. Most people carried food home in hard plastic handheld containers as it was long before the days of plastic bags in the grocery stores!

The busses were old and creaky and of course not air conditioned or heated as they are today! The windows opened widely and people smoked on the bus. There was a train that wound its way through the Jerusalem hills from the train station near Hebron Road en route to Tel Aviv. It took even longer than a bus, but it was a beautiful trip! Again, you could open the windows and stick your head out to see the view! And there was a rustic dining car where sandwiches and hot and cold drinks and snacks could be purchased!

My Finnish friend Marike’s father, whom I met on numerous occasions, was the head of the Finnish railway, a complex system that in those days had train routes not just throughout Western Europe, but to the Iron Curtain countries as well. He told us how one day he was sitting next to the Israeli railway executive at an international railroad conference. Our railway was so little at that time that our executive laughingly apologized, saying that Israel’s diminutive rail system could in no way compare with the complexity of Finland’s! Marike’s father had a deep faith and a great love for Israel that could not be contained, which I’m sure made the Israeli representative not mind so much at all at the small size of the railroad that he managed!

It’s hard to imagine, but the main highway between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, Route 1, was only two lanes—one in each direction! The centre of Jerusalem had no



pedestrian malls, just streets, and of course the light rail on Jaffa Road wouldn't exist for decades!

In those earlier days, the Arab and Jewish populations got along relatively well. Most Jewish people had Arab friends and vice versa. Bethlehem was open then, and Israelis loved to go there especially on Shabbat when everything in Jerusalem was closed. There were various shops that Israelis frequented regularly and the restaurants in Bethlehem had Hebrew menus. I had purchased my furniture there from a bamboo and rattan store called "Lucy's Bamboo." It was a small shop and furniture was stacked to the ceilings, but it was good quality and lovely!

It was during this season that a new adventure was about to begin. It was a small window of time where such a thing would be possible. A few years later, after the First and the Second Intifadas, it never would be possible again.



This very unexpected adventure began early one morning in 1984 during my daily Bible reading. Suddenly the Lord seemed to underline one line in the many verses that I read that day: *"I will move you to a large place..."*

I had no idea in the world what it meant, but in my heart of hearts I knew that I had heard from Him. It wasn't to remain a mystery for long! That evening I was attending a prayer meeting in Jerusalem—the city that I have had the privilege to call 'home' for more than 40 years now—when suddenly the Lord prompted me to give the \$100 that I had with me to an Arab named Ibrahim who was sitting in front of me. It was all the money that I had, but I learned long ago in my walk of faith that the finances that I receive belong to the Lord and that they're not always for me! So I tapped Ibrahim on the shoulder and when he turned around, handed him the money in obedience to the Lord.

Since he knew many people at the meeting, it's possible that I wouldn't have talked with him at all afterwards. But because I had given him the money, he came up to me at once and said, "Thank you for your wonderful gift. My wife wanted me to bring medicine home for one of our sons as well as some food, and I didn't have the money to purchase the items. I was worrying about it the very minute that you handed me the gift!" We smiled together. And then he said, much to my surprise, "Do you know anyone who wants to rent a large house?" The Lord reminded me at once of the Scripture He had given me that morning, and so I answered with a startled look on my face, "Well, um—maybe me!"

And that is how the adventure began. The next day I arranged to pick Ibrahim up with my car near the Old City and then we drove together up to the Mt. of Olives. Just before arriving at the Three Arches Hotel and the magnificent view of the Old City, he told me to take a sharp turn to the left. We ended up on a narrow road walled in on both sides. And it wasn't a one-way road! After the wall, I drove a little further, and then, next to the little church of Bethpage, we climbed a steep, steep hill that felt almost perpendicular! When it leveled out, at the very top of the hill sat a house of immense proportions.

Ibrahim explained that it was owned by his uncle. The uncle had built it for his son before the 1967 war—when the Mt. of Olives (including Bethpage and Bethany) were part of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. But after the war, when the Lord returned Judea and Samaria and the Old City to the Jewish people once again, the son was in Kuwait and unable to return. "So," Ibrahim told me, "the house is for rent."

After I parked the car next to the house, we ascended a grand, sweeping staircase up to the main level. Inside was a large hallway with another sweeping staircase leading to the bedrooms upstairs. The rooms were huge, with high ceilings and beautiful marble floors. On the main floor were four rooms, two bathrooms, and a kitchen; and on the top floor were two bedrooms and a bathroom, with a large central room. And on the other side was a huge master bedroom suite with its own bathroom and balcony, with a glass-enclosed balcony in the front. Because it was so high, the view was magnificent. It was possible to see all the way down to the Dead Sea with the mountains of Jordan on the other side!

Up on the rooftop was a huge water cistern and an even more amazing view of the entire panorama of Jerusalem spreading out over the hills! Since I grew up in very large houses, the size of it didn't faze me at all. But what *did* faze me was the fact that it was in an entirely Arab area! Nonetheless, I strongly sensed from the Lord that He truly wanted me to rent that humongous house

Everything in me balked at the idea! "I'm Jewish!" I reminded Him. "And if I live in a totally Arab section of Jerusalem, it will feel like I'm in exile in my own country!" However, my life belongs to the Lord in every sense and I knew in the depths of my heart that no matter what—I *did not want to be out of His will*. I also knew that if it truly *was* His will for me to live in an Arab area with my two teenage sons and with our dog, *He would protect us*. Of that I was certain! So I arranged a meeting with Ibrahim and his uncle to see if he would rent the house to me and I put it in the Lord's hands!

His uncle, as it turned out, was a very wise, kind man—actually the spiritual leader of the family, as everyone came to him for advice. On that first day, we had a wonderful talk together and in the end, he agreed to let us rent his son's house. I met with him many times after that and always enjoyed our discussions together!

And so—we moved to the house in Bethpage on the backside of the Mt. of Olives! From the bottom of the steep driveway, next to the little church, was a narrow path that led to Bethany. How Biblical sounding is *that*?

Because the house is on the highest hill in Jerusalem, most local Believers feel it is the location where Yeshua ascended to heaven—and the place where He will return in the not-too-distant future. Shortly after we moved in, the Lord gave me a name for the house—"Beit Tzipiot HaSheva"—"The House of Awaiting the Return."

Many wonderful, amazing things happened during the three years that we lived there. First of all, it was the time when the first editions of my book, "I Am My Beloved's", rolled off the press, and it was in that house that the distribution began.

When former Prisoner of Zion Victor Brailovsky and his family arrived at last from Moscow, they spent a week with me there. (It was the miraculous time when the Soviet Jews were allowed to leave the former Soviet Union and they came to Israel in droves—more than a million all together! How amazing is *that*?) I knew the Brailovsky family from my visits to their home in Moscow during the years that I travelled to the former USSR. During their visit we sat around the table talking and eating practically the entire time! While they were with me, they were invited as special guests to the International Christian Embassy's (ICEJ) Feast of Tabernacle's celebration where they were welcomed to Israel by visiting speaker Prime Minister Shamir and by the thousands of Christian lovers of Israel at the conference who had prayed for the release of the Soviet Jews!

There is a huge balcony at the top of the sweeping staircase next to the entrance to the main part of the house. When we first moved there, I peered over the edge and

looked down on the huge yard below. “What a perfect place for an audience, just like the Pope!” I said jokingly.

A while later, I had a dinner party at the house, attended by Friede Springer, Dola and Max Whitman (Dola was the youngest daughter of Eliezer Ben Yehuda who modernized the Hebrew language), Jan Willem van der Hoeven, and other friends. I showed Jan Willem the fun balcony and mentioned my joke about how it was a good place for an “audience”.

Jan Willem, one of the founders of ICEJ, at that time was their Spokesman. “I have a great idea!” he said. “Since this house is located at Bethpage, the actual place where Yeshua began His descent on Palm Sunday, why don’t we start our Praise March at your house? And you can give the pilgrims a message from this balcony!” Oh, no! The Lord’s sense of humour in action again!

On the day of the march, I stood on the balcony and watched the procession of buses lumbering up the steep hill in front of the house. In the end 3,000 people were standing in the yard! And from the round ‘audience’ balcony above them, Jan Willem and I each gave a message to the people below before they descended the Mt. of Olives!

From the very beginning, I felt to reach out to the neighbours. I would wave to everyone as we drove by, and in the evenings we would sit outside on the patio next to the kitchen door. And eventually, they opened their hearts to us. We became close friends with all of our neighbours, especially with the family next door. The mother and I had no language in common—she spoke no English or Hebrew and my Arabic was rudimentary at best. But we spoke with our hearts and truly loved one another. I also had a wonderful friendship with their children, as did my two sons. We spent lots of time together and really received an invaluable insight into the Arab culture. There was an Arab Christian family behind our house, and every once in a while a jolly priest would come to visit. We loved being invited, because he would drink scotch-on-the-rocks and invariably had us in stitches.

The neighbours knew that we were Jewish, but that we also believed in Jesus. So they wondered what we would do for Christmas! As a Jewish Believer, I never celebrated Christmas as it is celebrated in the Gentile world. My favourite thing to do was to simply read the miracle of His birth in the Scriptures! But during those three years on the Mt of Olives, we hosted a Christmas party every year! Ibrahim always got us a huge Christmas tree from the Russian monastery nearby, and we decorated the house and invited friends and all of the neighbours! And each time, around 65 of the neighbours came! It was always a festive and fun evening, with lots of good food and Christmas carols. And they brought lovely gifts, like a Passover plate, etc. It was quite amazing!

During our three year sojourn there, my father came to visit from the States to attend my son Joe’s high school graduation. He was horrified to discover that we lived as a Jewish family in a primarily Muslim area, and it made him really angry. But guess what happened? Their love for us—and for him—won him over, and he was deeply touched by it all.



At the end of three years, we moved back to the Jewish section of Jerusalem. It was 1987 and the First Intifada had just begun. The neighbours (including the men) cried and begged us to stay, promising to protect us. It was heartfelt and very touching. I said to them then, “We know that we would be safe with you, and I love you all. But our families in the States are really worried, and it is for their sake that we have to

leave.” I truly didn’t want to hurt their feelings! But I also did not want to be living in an Arab neighbourhood when Jewish people were being randomly killed! Plus, my oldest son Joe was about to join the Israeli army, so we truly *had* to leave. But the three of us agree even now, many years later, that it had been a very special time. And we are still friends with our old neighbours until this day! As a matter of fact, as I’m writing this now (on the 20<sup>th</sup> of June, 2019), one of the daughters from the house-next-door phoned me to invite me to visit the entire family—more than thirty years after we left that amazing house on the Mt. of Olives!

At the same time that we lived on the Mt. of Olives, there was an American Christian living in a small house not too far away. When I told him that we were leaving to move back to the Jewish section of Jerusalem, he expressed his strong desire to rent the big house after we left. Since I knew the owner very well, I went to speak with him on his behalf and was able to convince him to let the American Christian rent the house. The Lord had me claim that house for the Lord’s Kingdom when He moved us there—and it has been used by the Lord ever since! The person who rented the house was none other than Tom Hess; and the huge house has become a House of Prayer where people come from many nations to intercede for Israel and to await—on that very spot—the Lord’s return. By now it has been a part of Tom and his wife Kate’s ministry for more than thirty years. On the rooftop, which used to house the old water cistern, he built a beautiful prayer room with a glass dome that is open to the sky in anticipation of Yeshua’s return! So my obedience in moving to such an unexpected place has resulted in blessings even until now.

When Mike and Joe and I first moved in, the kitchen was a big empty room with an old-fashioned sink and a built-in raggedy-looking cupboard. After we had lived there for a time, the Lord provided the money and instructed me to install a full kitchen. It was beautiful with walnut cupboards and marble countertops and totally transformed the room. I was so shocked when shortly after the kitchen was completed—we had to move out! But of course, it has been used by Christians ever since and it still looks beautiful even after more than thirty years! So the Lord had me install it for the furtherance of His ministry there.



In this section on ‘homes’, I’m going to fast-forward to the summer of 2012. At that time I was living in a little house in the village of Ein Kerem in Jerusalem, the charming neighbourhood that my sons and I have always loved the most. The house was a small one, the last house on the top of the ridge. It was surrounded by a fence and was not at all visible from the road. It had an amazing view of forests and the gold-turreted Russian Orthodox Church across the valley. It had a charming tree house and in the far corner a huge wooden chair swing under the pines. Most amazing of all was the quietness and the sense of God’s love that was there. I adored it!

At that time, I was planning to renew my lease for another year, and I was truly happy about it. But God’s ways are not our ways and we can never know what He has in store. I have a wonderful group of prayer partners, caring people who have covered me and my family in prayer for many years. I always write them detailed letters of events that happen, as it is my feeling that their prayers are truly a part of it all. So to explain what happened next, I’m going to quote from the letter that I sent to them:

“Dear Partners in Prayer,

You may remember that in my last update I shared the happy news that the landlord of my beloved house in Ein Kerem had agreed to let me rent it for another year. I totally loved that little place—the beauty of the nature, the breathtaking views, the peacefulness, the gardens, and the total privacy. So I happily shared that news with you including pictures! The news also made me feel secure and safe, knowing that I would be living there for yet another year. However, a few days after I dispatched the last of the letters, the Lord said to me one morning, “But *I* can still tell you to move!” Well, I certainly had not thought of *that* possibility, and at first I thought it was just His sense of humour. But then His strong and clear confirmation came *that it was indeed His will for me to move*, and that I needed to notify the landlord at once that I would not be renewing the lease for another year. *He then let me know that I would be heading for the wilderness.*

His confirmations began almost at once. By e-mail the very next day a friend felt to send me the following:

*Vineyard of God*  
“You are God’s garden and vineyard and field under  
cultivation...”  
1 Corinthians 3:9

“Moved by the Hand of God”  
Acts 17:26 “...and He determined the times set for them,  
and the exact places where they  
should live...”

*“Have you ever thought that you would be living where you are living today? Wherever in the world you are, either from continent, city or community, it is no accident at all, but determined by the move of the hand of God. The exact time and how long you will be there, too. Sometimes one lives in one place for a short time, sometimes longer but God determines exactly even to the very day how long it will be and where you will be next. He has already picked out the street address.*

*Live with this confidence: that He knows your comings and goings, exactly where you are today and when and where you need to be next. Trust Him to always move you with His own hand...”*

I’d had a nudge to begin re-reading a book that I had previously read 30 years ago, the huge double volume of around 1200 pages telling the story of Hudson Taylor and the ‘China Inland Mission’. In the first volume, *Hudson Taylor in Early Years, The Growth of a Soul* by Dr. and Mrs. Howard Taylor, the Lord led me to the following quotes:

“And I will go.  
I may no longer doubt to give up friends and idle hopes,  
and every tie that binds the heart...  
Henceforth then it matters not  
if storm or sunshine be my earthly lot,  
bitter or sweet my cup;



*I only pray, God make me holy,  
and my spirit nerve for the stern hour of strife.”*  
p. 361

The next quote was again a confirmation that when unexpected difficulties arise, we need to deeply trust His will. Hudson Taylor and his ministry companion at that time, Mr. Burns, had made very specific plans, when quite suddenly, due to eminent danger and sudden illness, they had to give up their plans completely and travel back to base. The following was his way of dealing with and accepting these new circumstances:

*“’Till that God blesses is our good,  
And unblest good is ill:  
And all is right that seems most wrong  
If it be His sweet will.”*  
p. 358

And then the Lord began to deal with me directly about the wilderness. First was another quote from Hudson Taylor which deepened the message for us as Believers to remain on the ‘narrow way’:

*“‘It is not sufficient,’ he wrote his sister early in August, ‘to have the every road pointed out merely, to be prevented from straying to the right hand or to the left, though this is no little blessing...*

*We need Him to direct our steps...step after step.*

*Nay more, we need to pass through this wilderness leaning, always leaning on our Beloved. May we in reality do this, and all will be well.”*

Then Yeshua told me that a time in the wilderness was also part of the last chapter in Song of Solomon and He directed me to the following quote:

*“Who is this coming up from the wilderness,  
leaning upon her beloved?”*  
Song of Solomon 8:5

All of this gave me the understanding that the pathway that lay before me would not be an easy one, that it would truly be a wilderness experience. But He also by His grace and in His mercy helped me to understand that it would be time- limited, since there would be a time when I would come up from the wilderness—and that whatever difficulties I would face there *would help me in the end to depend upon Him in a deeper way than ever before.*

The place where I was next to live had already been prepared. Majdi, an Arab friend, had been telling me for some time already about an apartment that was available for rent at a much lower rate than the house in Ein Kerem. The same dear sister continues by God’s grace to pay my rent each month, and that continues to be an amazing grace in my life. But in the last year a number of people who had previously sent help for living expenses stopped sending it, and the landlord in the little house was raising the rent for the coming year—which meant that it was going to be very difficult to stay there! The apartment that Majdi was talking about was very inexpensive,

because it was located in a place where no one would want to live. Imagine my surprise when the Lord let me know that it was to that exact apartment that I was heading!

The apartment was located in a Muslim village on the top of a hill in the Judean wilderness on the way down to the Dead Sea. Even worse than that—it was a village that was behind the security fence, which meant that I would have to pass through an Israeli army checkpoint in order to visit Jerusalem—or anyplace else, for that matter! It was in Area C—which meant that it was indeed a ‘Palestinian’ village behind the security fence, but that it was still under full Israeli military control. It would have been against Israeli law to live in—or even to visit—a village that was in Area A or B, which is under PLO security control. But it was still a scary and potentially dangerous place for a non-Muslim to be! It was a very different season in this little land from the time that we had lived happily on the Mt. of Olives. After the Intifadas, living in a Muslim village was a dangerous proposition. Especially since I represent in one person everything that they hate the most—I have an Israeli identity card, I’m Jewish, I believe in Yeshua—and I’m an American! Yikes! I knew that the place of safety is always in God’s will, but I also knew that it wouldn’t be easy to live there.

There was a mosque half a block away—plus another dozen scattered around the village—and the call to prayer from the nearby mosque was DEAFENING! There was no computer, phone, TV or Internet access. The apartment had a number of large rooms, but the kitchen was just a blank wall—no appliances, no sink, no cupboards—nothing. (I owned my own refrigerator and later purchased a hot plate). And 4 inch cockroaches came out of the jagged wall. (I gave them names, and if I could catch them scooped them out the door). The only hot water was in the bathtub, and so if I did dishes I had to wash them there. It was the last house in a compound owned by an Arab family, and they agreed to rent the apartment to me not knowing that I am Jewish.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of September, instead of beginning a new year in the place that I had loved so much—I moved into my wilderness home. It was in the literal wilderness. It was also in a spiritual wilderness, since the Muslim faith is very dark. It was in a wilderness from contacts, as no one visited me there and since there was no public transportation and I do not have a car, it was not easy to get to Jerusalem.

And the Lord seemed very, very far away...the very worst wilderness of all...

There were other factors that made life there very difficult. Arabs are known to be cruel to animals, and I was witness to many heart-rending things. (I won’t burden you by sharing them). There isn’t always kindness towards children, either. Even though there was a regular garbage pick-up, garbage was nevertheless strewn everywhere. In so many ways I was plunked into a totally different living environment from my peaceful house on the hilltop in Ein Kerem!

To be honest, there were a few times that I simply cried from the desolation of it all. But basically, since I’m a very optimistic person and love to laugh, I found I could be happy even there—*trusting somehow that He had a purpose in it all*.

While there, I continued the re-reading of the two volumes on Hudson Taylor’s life. When I had read it initially, I had just started out on this adventure of faith. This second reading followed almost three *decades* of the *actual* adventure of service to our Messiah. So many things in the books amazed me that I never would have understood thirty years ago! It was a confirmation in many ways of experiences that I have had over the years. Hudson also was separated for a time from his children when they had to be sent back to England from China—and even sadder things happened to him when his lovely daughter Grace died, and later his first wife. He also had to move many, many times and also encountered dangers and severe financial difficulties. In the end,

however, God kept His promises and Hudson reached inland China with the gospel—a ministry which continues to this day.

When I first headed for the wilderness in obedience to His call—I could never have imagined in a million years what the *next* step would be—one that never would have happened if I hadn't obeyed Him by moving to the so-called 'West Bank Palestinian village' in the first place. The story of the next chapter follows! It will also surprise you—it certainly surprised *me*!

Having grown up near the Atlantic coast in Massachusetts and later having lived in Connecticut, I have always loved the sea. Only a true-blue sea-lover could have joyfully crossed the Atlantic as I had in a freighter—no entertainment, only 5 passengers—and loved every minute of it. The trip was supposed to take 14 days, but due to a storm in the mid-Atlantic, it took an additional 3 days. Even during the storm I was able to eat!!

During the many years in Israel when I had a car, from time to time I would drive down from Jerusalem to the Rishon le Zion Beach. In recent car-less years, my favourite beach was a bus ride to the Tel Aviv coast. But for a real sea lover—an occasional trip to the sea was a MUST! (That is one of the reasons why I loved travelling to Patmos so much). At the Tel Aviv beach, there was a building called "The Opera Tower" that I always went into to change in and out of my bathing suit. It was a luxury residential building that had a huge public area with restaurants and shops facing the sea. (Every Friday without fail I would read in the Jerusalem Post what was available for rent in that building—just for fun, of course, for anything available would have been *far* out of my price range!)

One day, a number of years ago, I had a nudge from the Lord to contact the realtor and to make an appointment to view the rental apartments available then. The ones facing the sea were incredible—like living on the brow of a ship. But even the apartments that had a view of greater Tel Aviv without even a *glimpse* of the sea — nevertheless had the sea *itself* only a minute's walk from the door! The realtor and I had a lovely time together that day, and she invited me out for lunch.

One day during my wilderness time I 'escaped' and took a bus to the Tel Aviv beach. It was actually on my 40<sup>th</sup> day in the wilderness, and I had felt from the Lord to visit with the realtor at that same building. Amazingly enough—she remembered me from our meeting years ago and gave me a warm welcome!

With a nudge from the Lord, I asked the seemingly impossible question. "Do you have any apartments for rent that *aren't* expensive?" I asked her laughingly

She looked surprised. "Well, as a matter of fact there is one that will be available for rent on the 14<sup>th</sup> of October—the end of the week." She gave a price that was lower than any place I've lived in a number of years.

The figure amazed me—but so did the date! "The 14<sup>th</sup> of October—that's my birthday!" In that moment, I truly felt the Lord's love—and I knew that as impossible as it seemed—my way out of the wilderness would be *to this building by the sea that I had always loved so very much*.

She explained that two brothers had lived in the flat for the past five years, and that the actual owner of the apartment was an attorney living in Paris. The owner obviously had no understanding of the value of his apartment even as a rental facility now, and that is why the rental was so low.

"Is it normal for rentals in this building to be so inexpensive?" I asked her.

"No, NEVER!" was her emphatic reply. "And if you want it, you'd better say so quickly, for it will not last long!"

I had to make a number of stipulations, sensing from the Lord that if she and the landlord could agree on them, it would definitely be a sign that this surprising move was definitely a gift from the King. So I said, “First of all, since I wasn’t expecting this at all, I won’t be able to move in until the 15<sup>th</sup> of November—a full month away. Also, I don’t have a bank account in Israel, so will have to pay each time in cash.” The requirement was for two months security deposit and two months rent at the time of the contract signing, plus an additional month’s rent as the realtor’s fee—standard procedure in Israel. I took a deep breath and continued, “Plus—I can pay one month’s rent and one month’s security deposit when I sign the contract, and the other month’s rent and security deposit when I move in—but I won’t be able to pay your commission until the 20<sup>th</sup> of December.”

It’s not to be imagined, *but she agreed to it all—and so did the landlord...* She then explained that she never, ever allows a tenant to have a key until her commission is paid—but she trusted me—based partly on our meeting some years ago! When I stepped out into the sunshine of a Tel Aviv day, it was with such a sense of amazement!

The only problem was that I was due to meet her again the following Monday with two months rent—and *I didn’t have any money at all*. When I returned to Jerusalem, I made three phone calls to friends from the 1960’s and 70’s, Marike, Betsy and Marcia. Since they were close friends, they were among the few who knew about my wilderness living and they were getting increasingly concerned about my safety there. In the beginning, I was fine being identified as an American, since Obama was something of a hero to the Arab world with his obvious hostility towards Israel. But when the U. S. vetoed their UN bid for statehood, my position was more precarious. What happened amazes me even now—but each one of those friends agreed to pay a part of what would be needed to secure the flat in Tel Aviv, *and the following Monday, on time, I arrived with the money and signed the contract*. How awesome is *that*?!

There was still a month left before the move to Tel Aviv, and in every way the wilderness experience continued—except that now I knew when I would be leaving and to where I would be heading! By the time the two and a half months of wilderness living were over, the Lord had brought me to the most basic of all basic prayers—and truly the only way that I could express what the time there had been like. My prayer was simply this: “*Keep me, Lord. Please keep me.*” It came from the depth of my knowing that to belong to Him was all that mattered, and that in me there was no good thing that would help me to stay there without His power and without His grace...

When I moved to Tel Aviv, it still felt very new! Having by then lived in Jerusalem for almost forty years—a city that I loved with all my heart—a move to Tel Aviv made me feel vulnerable, to put it mildly! On my first night in Tel Aviv, as I looked out of my window, still in shock, the Lord spoke to my heart. “*But I also love Tel Aviv...*” was all that He said. And from then on I truly sensed His love for that city, a city so different from my beloved Jerusalem. But I adore adventures, and Tel Aviv, as it turns out, is a wonderful, open, fun and beautiful city!! However, a big surprise awaited me.

My apartment faced the back of the building with a view to the greater Tel Aviv area. Meir, a friend from Jerusalem, came to visit from Jerusalem and gave me some rather astonishing news! “Did you know that from your window you can see three Messianic congregations?” He pointed out the Gilgal Hotel to my left, a hotel owned by Yakov Damkani, a messianic Jewish evangelist. “A Messianic Congregation meets there on Friday nights, and it is also where Yakov hosts an international outreach program training Believers from abroad how to share the gospel to the Jewish people in Israel.”

Meir then pointed to a tall building straight ahead that was two blocks from the Opera Tower. “In that building are the offices of Avi Mizrachi’s ministry, with a prayer tower on the top floor and a coffee shop outreach ministry on the bottom floor.” And *then* Meir said, “Do you see the apartment building directly across from you?” I nodded. “Well, that is the residence for Calvary Chapel’s ministry. They have Bible studies there and also prepare food once a week to feed the poor in a nearby park.” He then pointed to another hotel to the left, and said, “They have a Congregation that meets there on Saturday mornings.”

Please remember that I’m a hermit-at-heart so the news didn’t make me happy at all! I later said to the Lord, “This is totally out of my comfort zone,” to which He replied at once, “You don’t have one any more!” Yikes! And, true to form, almost at once He sent me out to the congregations. First I met Avi and Chaya Mizrachi, both of whom I’ve known for many years. When they greeted me, I said, “The Lord just moved me to Tel Aviv,” at which point Chaya gave me the biggest hug, began to cry, and said, “If God moved you here, that gives me hope for Tel Aviv!”

When I went to the Calvary Chapel’s service, all of a sudden a woman recognized me, shouted for joy, and raced over to give me a huge hug! It turns out that she had read my book and it resulted in her coming to live in Israel with her husband and children!

In the end, Avi asked me to work with them in the coffee shop outreach, which I did two days a week, and became a part of their ministry. Yakov Damkani also asked me to teach at his school of evangelism, and I taught there for six weeks.

Through contacts at the three congregations, I met a Dutchman—Gerard—who took a copy of my book in Dutch back home to Holland to get it ready for the Internet. And then he translated my second book into Dutch! I also met a German woman—Ingrid—who had visited us in Israel 20 years ago—and she is doing the same thing with the German edition! Also in Tel Aviv I met a new immigrant from Russia, Hannah, with her two small sons, and she felt to translate my second book into Russian! A friend with the Dugit ministry added the German, Dutch, Finnish and Russian books to my website for free downloads! Then I met a woman from Switzerland who had with her a financial gift on the very day when I had run out of EVERYTHING—and had serious bills to pay as well. It was amazing! So my move to Tel Aviv has brought a gift for bills! Miracles! Blessings! Confirmations! The beauty of the sea as well! And the very best of all, the treasured friends that the Lord blessed me with while I lived in Tel Aviv. “ ☺



In 2010, my two granddaughters, Gabriela and Michaela, came to visit me on their own in Jerusalem. My son Joe, his wife Pascale and the two girls were living in Bristol, England, at the time. They had planned to spend two weeks of their summer holiday with me. But they discovered very quickly that Israel is a country that loves children, and their hearts were touched. So they extended their holiday for an additional three weeks. At the end of *that* time, they said, “Cut the passports! We want to stay!” We had a wonderful time together and they both fell in love with Israel.

On their third summer’s visit with me, I had by then moved to Tel Aviv. Since I lived in a resort on the sea, it was an amazing visit! One Friday evening we walked along the shore to the village of Jaffa in search of a restaurant for dinner. As we neared the port, we heard a lot of noise. So we followed the sound, and the closer we got, the



louder it became, until at last we found ourselves at a restaurant called “The Old Man and the Sea”. Perhaps you read the book by that name by Ernest Hemingway?



When we entered, we were amazed by what we found. The restaurant was filled with large round tables, it was almost full, and oh so noisy with hundreds of people talking! It had such a festive and lively atmosphere! We were directed to a table and handed a menu. The menu instructed each diner to pick a main course, primarily consisting of fish and seafood, as this was a restaurant next to the Mediterranean. Immediately after ordering, a waiter arrived at our table with a huge tray and he deftly placed in front of us 24 small dishes of salads and a big plate of steaming laffa, a popular Israeli flatbread of Iraqi Jewish origin. The waiter returned with a large pitcher of fresh lemonade with mint! Soon our main courses arrived. Any time that we finished a little salad, the plate was whisked away and a new salad arrived in its place! It was a really fun dinner and we were so pleased with ourselves for having discovered it!

The girls returned to England in time for school. But a few months later, Joe was offered a job in Jerusalem and the family moved to Israel along with their Golden Retriever, Charley! Their move here was such an amazing gift from the Father's hand!

In October of 2013, my sister Jane—nicknamed “Goldie”—arrived to help celebrate my 70<sup>th</sup> birthday! It was so much fun to share with her my life in Tel Aviv! On her first night here, a whole group of my Tel Aviv friends were gathering at “The Old Man and the Sea” to meet Goldie and to have a festive meal together! We all had a wonderful time!

When we returned to my apartment, jet lag was catching up with Goldie and she headed straight for bed. Since it was Friday, I had purchased the Friday edition of the Jerusalem Post—something like the Sunday papers in the U.S. I have always loved reading the rental ads for Jerusalem, and so that was part of the paper that I read that evening, but nothing looked even remotely interesting!

The next day Goldie and I had a lovely Shabbat together and went out for dinner at a quiet little restaurant that evening. On Sunday morning, after I read the Bible, the Lord said, “Check the rental ads again...” His instruction was a surprise, but as I read

them again, I found a little ad stuck at the top that I hadn't noticed before. It said, "Apartment available, long term, large garden, Abu Tor." I had lived for many years in that Jerusalem neighbourhood! As soon as I read the ad, the Lord instructed me to phone the real estate agent and to make an appointment to see the apartment the next day. Goldie and I were travelling up to Jerusalem to spend two nights with Joe and the family because they had planned a birthday celebration for me. So I arranged with the realtor to see the apartment on our way to Joe and Pascale's—the day of my actual birthday.

When Goldie woke up, she was surprised with my news! "I asked the realtor where the apartment was located, and so she told me the name of the street. There is one house on that street that I have always loved—because it is hidden behind a wall and you can't see it from the street!" (My hermit's heart, remember?) "If it turns out to be *that* apartment, I would be willing to rent it without even looking inside!" I jokingly told Goldie.

Later that day when we arrived on the street, I was overjoyed to discover that the apartment that the Lord had shown me in the newspaper was the very house that I had always loved so much! I told the realtor that I was very interested in renting it, and made plans with her to come again the next day with my family to see it again and to make the rental arrangements. She then asked, "Can I give you a ride somewhere?" Goldie looked startled when I said, "No thank you!" I refused a ride because I had a surprise for Goldie!

We walked pulling our overnight suitcases behind us to the end of the street, went down a flight of stairs—and knocked on a door—the door to Joe's apartment! Goldie was amazed that I would be living just up the street from the family!

The apartment was a very, very special birthday gift from the Lord. I had totally enjoyed my two years in Tel Aviv—it is such a fun and lively city and I met so many wonderful people there. But my heart had remained in Jerusalem! I had lived in Jerusalem for almost forty years and loved every inch of the city. So to receive a birthday gift of a return to the city that I loved so much was overwhelmingly beautiful! And it was such fun that Goldie could share that miracle with me!

Joe and Pascale had prepared an unbelievable birthday celebration in the hidden garden behind Christ Church near Jaffa Gate in the Old City. Many friends were there from my years in Jerusalem, plus eighteen friends had come up from Tel Aviv—including the realtor from the Opera Tower! The meal that they prepared was incredible, and Joe and his friend Dave had produced a video of my life and screened it for everyone. Many people spoke and it was an evening to remember forever.

After we returned to Joe's house, everyone had gone to bed except for Pascale and me. As we sat together at the table, I told her about the apartment that I had found earlier that day. As I described it—a duplex with a lovely walled garden—she had an astonished look on her face.

"Esther," she exclaimed, "That sounds just like my first home in Jerusalem 20 years ago!" She went on to say that she had come to Israel in faith and was living in that house taking care of an elderly French woman. While she lived there she had been given a copy of my book and told how it had truly blessed her when she read it. And sure enough, when we all went to view the house the next morning, she had tears in her eyes. It was indeed the very same place where she had lived twenty years earlier! That was such a special confirmation that I was meant to live there!

Goldie and I returned to Tel Aviv the next day so blessed by all that had happened. And a month later, I was able to return to my beloved Jerusalem to the

walled-in house a block away from Joe and Pascale and my granddaughters and their Golden Retriever Charley...



## *Hearing from God*

*H*earing from the Lord is a big part of my relationship to Him. Being able to hear and really listen was a process that definitely took time, but in the end I learned to live my life in accordance to His will. It isn't always easy and there are times when I still disobey. But in general, I have submitted my will to His, and try to do the things that He wants me to do. Since I have always had a real sense of adventure, it suits me perfectly. I love the unknown, and in a real walk with the Lord, it is impossible to ever know what lies around the next bend! The whole concept of hearing from the Lord and obeying Him is covered in detail in my second book, entitled "The Voice of My Beloved: A Handbook on Obedience". It is also available as a free download on my website, [www.estherkorson.com](http://www.estherkorson.com) in English, Russian and Dutch. But in this book, since we are talking about adventures, it is some of those adventures themselves in hearing from the Lord that I would like to share with you now.

I've travelled extensively, three times around the world, and have spoken in a variety of venues—churches, messianic congregations, halls, parks, prisons, homes, television, radio, etc. Whenever I speak, I always begin with a prayer. I pray openly for the Lord's wisdom and for the blessings of His love—so that when people are touched by His love in the meetings, they will know that it comes from Him and has nothing to do with me. But then of course, I have the responsibility to give the message that He puts on my heart. People have no idea that I am actually *listening*, because normally after that prayer, He gives me the first few words and then the message simply flows from His heart to theirs.

There have been times, however, when it wasn't quite that simple. I still remember the first time it happened. I was speaking and travelling with friends in North Carolina when we stopped at a Christian radio station. My host introduced me to the DJ, and he said, so unexpectedly, "I don't know who you are or anything about you, but the Lord just told me to give you the next seven hours of air time!" We were so amazed! I think I talked for around three hours altogether, and the DJ would announce from time to time that I would be speaking at a local church that evening and invited the listeners to attend that meeting.

When we later arrived at the church, it was packed! Many people who had heard me earlier on the radio program were sitting there expectantly, and after some music and an introduction, I was called up to speak. As always, I began with a prayer, ending by praying for the Lord's wisdom and for the anointing of His love to bless each person there. But this time, *He didn't give me a single thing to say!*

The temptation was there to speak without Him, but it only took me a second to realize that if I did *that*, it wouldn't bring a blessing to anyone. So finally I said, "As you heard, I prayed for God's wisdom and for His anointing. But He hasn't given me anything to say, and without Him, I have nothing to offer. Would you please pray with me while I wait before Him?" And I closed my eyes and bowed my head, as did almost everyone in the sanctuary.

I waited for what seemed like a very long time, feeling really embarrassed which of course was nothing more than pride! Finally the Lord said to me, "What are they doing?"

“They’re waiting in Your presence, Lord,” I replied.

“For most of the people here tonight,” He told me, “this is the first time that they have ever done this. And that is what I want you to teach on tonight—the importance of listening for My voice and being obedient; the possibility that a real friendship with Me is possible for everyone!”

A week later, on that same trip, I was travelling with Sid and Betsy and we were at a home group in Georgia where I was, again, the invited speaker. However, they asked Sid, who was a pastor of a small church in Baltimore, to say a few words first. He began to speak, and he kept talking and talking and talking. And I kept thinking dreadful things like, “Why doesn’t he stop? Nobody’s going to want to listen to *me* by the time he’s finished...I’m the important speaker...When is he ever going to sit down?” Finally, after about 45 minutes, he did sit down, and then it was my turn, *the important speaker*, to give a message.

So I started like I always do, with a prayer, and asked in front of everyone for the Lord’s wisdom and then waited, listening intently, for His message to begin. But He didn’t give me a single word to say! Since this had happened to me a few days earlier in North Carolina, I asked the people in the home group to wait with me before the Lord, explaining that since I had prayed for God’s wisdom, I had a responsibility to truly speak only the message that He would give me. So we all waited before the Lord together.

After some minutes had passed, the Lord said to me, “First, I want you to apologize to *Me* for what you were thinking...and then I want you to apologize to *Sid* in front of everyone...” Oh, no! But I did what He asked me to do, and then waited before Him again for the message. But yet again, He didn’t give me a word to say. Finally I told the people, “The Lord isn’t giving me a message today. I could think of lots of things to say on my own; but if it doesn’t come from Him, it won’t be a blessing to anyone...” When I sat down, I was close to tears. I had no idea that that was exactly the message that He wanted them to hear—that if it doesn’t come from the Lord, it is a waste of time! It seems that they had been cluttering up their lives with many activities and interests, and the Lord used that evening to help them in a deep way to reevaluate their lives and to make Him their priority!

As I said, most of the time the Lord gave me a message immediately! But some years later, at a meeting in New Zealand, the same thing happened again. When I asked the people there to pray with me, we all shut our eyes and silently prayed. All at once, the Lord said to me, “I want you to get up and leave the room.”

“But Lord!” I objected. “I’m the *speaker*!”

“I want you to get up and leave the room!” He said again.

“But it will look like I’m sneaking out when their eyes are closed!” But, close to tears once more, I obeyed Him and got up and quietly left the room. I went to a room in the back, feeling very vulnerable. Finally, the Lord spoke to me.

“What are they doing?” He asked me.

“They’re waiting in Your presence, Lord,” I replied.

And then He said, “That is your only purpose—to bring people into My presence and then to leave...”

This time, it was a deep lesson *to me*. It was a very firm reminder that no one was to look to me, that my primary job was to help people to get to know the greatness of the Lord’s love *for them*.

That day in New Zealand, I went back into the room and told everyone what had happened, and then He gave me a message for the people there. But for myself, the reminder from the Lord was a message that I never forgot.



In 1980, I was speaking to the Congressional Wives Prayer Group at Fellowship House in Washington, D.C. I was telling them a story that I had heard that had taken place in the Soviet Union at one of the underground churches. I told them, “There were a group of Christians praying together in a church meeting when suddenly the door burst open and a soldier entered carrying a gun. He aimed the gun at them and then shouted, ‘Those who don’t believe in Jesus may leave!’ Now supposedly they were all there in the *name* of Jesus, but for most of them, there were things in their lives that they loved more than Him and they ran for the doors. The soldier looked at the small handful of people left who loved the Lord enough not to deny Him even if it cost them their lives. Very slowly, the soldier lowered His gun and very quietly he said to them, ‘I, too, am a Believer in Jesus, and I wanted to know who the *true* Believers were so that we could rejoice together...’”

That afternoon in Fellowship House I was about to say, “I think that what the Lord is asking us today is—if that door were to open right now (I planned to point to the door at the end of the room), where would we be? And if we would run for the door, what is it in our lives that we love more than Him? It is the first commandment in both the Old and the New Covenants—that we must love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul and with all our mind...”

However, I got as far as saying to the Congressional wives gathered in the elegant room that day, “I think that what the Lord is asking us today is—if that door were to open right now”—and I pointed at the door. At that very moment, *the door opened!*

Of course, a soldier wasn’t there with a gun—simply who thought she could sneak in late and no one would notice! She must have been shocked when we all screamed! But it was truly the Lord’s perfect and amazing timing, and it helped us all to rededicate our lives to the Lord! We deeply searched our hearts to be certain there was nothing in our lives that we loved more than Him. It was a profound experience for us all.



One day last year in the early spring the Lord prompted me to phone a dear friend of mine named Heidi. Heidi and her husband Hermann, who died a few years ago, were friends that I visited either alone or with Mike and Joe whenever we were in Switzerland. And every year Hermann and Heidi would spend two weeks at the lovely Ein Gedi Kibbutz Guest House near the Dead Sea. I would always visit them there and we always had such a wonderful time together! However, even though the Lord told me to phone her in Switzerland, for some inscrutable reason—I *didn’t obey Him*. The next day He repeated His request, and the following day as well, but I never phoned. Then, two weeks later, I again heard from the Lord: “Phone Heidi!” And this time, sorry that I hadn’t obeyed before, I phoned her at once.

“I’ve just returned from Israel,” she told me as soon as she heard my voice, her first trip here since Hermann had died. “Since I didn’t have your phone number, I prayed so hard that somehow I would see you! I was so disappointed that it didn’t happen!” She added, “While in Jerusalem our tour group stayed at the Scottish Hospice near the Old City.”

My heart simply broke. When the Lord had prompted me to phone her initially, I would have heard the amazing news of her impending visit. The Scottish Hospice is down the hill from where I live! It would have been so wonderful to have been able to spend time together

once again! But instead, I had to sadly tell her of my disobedience. “The Lord tried to let me know in advance that you were coming!”

As I have often told others, “It doesn’t pay to disobey.” I’m saddened about that lost opportunity until now!



There have also been innumerable times in my travels for the Lord when He has said unexpected things. For example, one day I was heading for the Central Bus Station in Jerusalem to hop on a bus to the coastal town of Bat Yam to spend the day with a dear friend of mine also named Esther! En route, the Lord said to me, “I want you to give her 200 NIS.” That was rather an astonishing request, since He knew that I didn’t *have* 200 NIS to give her! But in the middle of our visit together, my friend said, “Oh, by the way, before I drive you back to the bus stop, I have to stop at the bank. We have a tithe to give to you!”

I laughingly told her of the Lord’s instructions to me earlier—to give her 200 NIS that I didn’t actually *have*—but from the tithe, it would be possible to return 200 NIS to her!



One day I was in a charming village in the Swiss Alps where I was staying to work on my second book on obedience. It was breathtakingly beautiful up there and really quiet since no cars were allowed! One day as I was walking by a bench, a woman asked me something in Swiss-German. I replied, “I only speak English...” But then the Lord prompted me to add, “v gam evreet” (and also Hebrew). As I hesitated, I felt a nudge from the Lord to simply do as He told me to! So I said to her with a laugh, in Hebrew, “v gam evreet...”!

Full of joy, she replied at once, “At medeberet evreet?” (which means, “You speak Hebrew?”) And we then proceeded to talk our heads off! It turns out that she had worked and studied in Tel Aviv for two years, and really, really loved Israel! And I was able later to send her a copy of my book in German. She wasn’t a Believer, but I sent it to her with the prayer that she would truly come to know the Lord as she read it!



Some years ago, on a four month, ‘round the world trip, I was in Finland speaking to a group at a lovely home north of Tampere and my Finnish friend Marike was translating for me. She had been my translator already in a number of countries, and we were used to hearing from the Lord together as He gave us the message.

The very next day all those weeks of travel would end and I would at last board a plane for home.

As I already explained, I pray at the beginning of each meeting for God’s wisdom and for His anointing, and then I truly *listen* as He then gives me the message that is on His heart. However, because of my extreme tiredness, as the Lord was giving me the message to share that night, I stopped concentrating on the message and instead began to think about *home*... I was in the middle of telling the story of experiences on a previous trip to Rome while Marike translated. I was about to say, “One day I went to my post box, and you’ll never guess what I found inside! A letter from one of the nuns that I had met in Rome!”



But because I wasn't concentrating and because the Lord wasn't happy *at all* by my distractedness, I overheard myself say by mistake (which Marike faithfully translated just as I had said it), "One day I went to my post box, and you'll never guess what I found inside! One of the nuns that I met in Rome!" You have to admit that *would* be a surprise! When I could finally stop laughing, I explained to Marike and the astonished guests what had happened.

Believe me, from then on when speaking, I *concentrated*...



## FINANCES

Yeshua clearly said in the Scriptures, "You cannot love God and money..." Serving God full time, as He has called me to do, means that I have had to depend upon Him for everything. Seeing His provision on a daily basis has been a special kind of adventure! Since it *has* been on a daily basis, I could tell you thousands of stories! His faithfulness and care have been extraordinary! But I'll filter them down to a few.

Back in 1993, my life took a very unexpected turn. The Lord made it clear that it was His will for me to open a restaurant, along with my son Joe—an English Tea Room! He let me know how to serve the tea—on a tray with a doily with an individual teapot with a tea cozy, a silver tea strainer, a pot for hot water, and of course, a sugar bowl and little milk pitcher. He gave ideas for the menu and the decor as well! In that simple direction—to open a restaurant—the Lord in an instant took everything that I hated the most in life and turned it into a job! First of all, I'm a dreamer and not very practical at all, and therefore find details to be tedious. As a hermit-at-heart, my personal preference would be not to have to deal with people at all. But in a restaurant, the list would be endless—staff, customers, suppliers etc. etc... With a deeply embedded sense of adventure, I love not knowing what tomorrow will hold! But in a restaurant—although as I discovered each day is indeed different from the day before—there was definitely structure—like having to go to work each day! As it turns out, even though there was so much about this new job that was an anathema to me as a person—somehow the Lord made it fun, which only He can do!

The Tea Rooms were always popular. The last one we opened, in 2009, was busy as well. We always had loyal customers and they were thrilled to find us open again! Word spread fast, and as in the past, we had lots of people! And then one day, dramatically and unexpectedly, customers stopped coming. Instead of our usual bustle, on that day the restaurant was almost empty. It happened again the following day! On the third day, a reporter came in from the Jerusalem Post—someone who had always loved the Tea Rooms and had written wonderful reviews about us from time to time in the newspaper. "Esther," she said to me that morning, "I'm sorry to have to tell you this! But the anti-missionary organizations have let your customers know on the Internet that you are a Believer in Jesus and they have reported you as a dangerous missionary. Many people phoned me to ask about it, because they knew that I had written positive things about the restaurant. So I told them, 'It doesn't matter what she believes personally! The food is wonderful, it's a great restaurant and it's kosher!'

Everyone was talking about it at my synagogue on Saturday. And everyone said the same thing—‘*we’re not going there anymore...*’” And they stopped coming! I really appreciated that she let me know what had happened!

The Jewish people have an incredible communication network. It’s amazing when it works in your favour—but it is equally effective when it works against you. And the fact that it was announced on the Internet made the news spread faster than ever. Almost overnight, we lost our main customer base.

Usually in the restaurant business it takes at least a year to be able to break even financially. We had re-opened only three months earlier—and we were already breaking even! But then, after this devastating event, there was almost no income whatsoever. After one month, I was not able to pay the salaries! After praying about it, I called an emergency meeting of the staff. Of course, they knew what had happened and had seen the dramatic change from one day to the next.

“Well, as you all know, due to the unexpected huge reduction in income, this month I don’t have the money to pay your salaries. So I did what I usually do in most situations—I prayed about it! The Lord gave me the strangest sense that in a few days I’ll be sitting in the back of the restaurant handing out cash, kind of like the ‘Godfather’ (referring, of course, to the mafia movie). I have no idea how this will happen—but that was God’s answer to me when I prayed!”

Two days later, friends of mine, Barbara and Barnabas, entered the restaurant and asked me to join them at their table, and so I did!

After introducing me to the man who was with them, Barnabas said, “Esther, tell him what happened and the situation that you are in right now.” There weren’t many people who knew about our dire financial circumstances, but they had been friends of mine for many years and so I had asked them to pray when they had stopped by the Tea Room a few days earlier. So I explained to their friend—an American pastor living in Budapest—the terrible situation we found ourselves in due to persecution because of my belief in Yeshua.

“Tell him how much money you need now to pay salaries and suppliers,” Barnabas said. So I told him.

Immediately their friend asked, “Barnabas, is your passport valid?”

“No,” he replied.

Unexpectedly, the Lord prompted me to say, “I have a valid passport.”

“Come with me,” he said. “Because it’s Friday, we don’t have a minute to lose,” and we raced for the nearest travel agency before everything closed for Shabbat. He booked two tickets leaving the next morning for Budapest—and said he would meet me at the airport prior to our departure! “Bring only carry-on luggage,” he added, and then dashed off.

Astonished and amazed, I found myself early the next morning in line for check-in on a flight to Hungary!

When we arrived in Budapest, my host kindly took me to his home to meet his family and later we all went together to a restaurant serving traditional Hungarian food. Hungarian goulash—in Hungary! It was a lovely restaurant with tables snuggled under a huge chestnut tree, and, still feeling amazed at finding myself there, I enjoyed it immensely. That afternoon his son-in-law gave me a tour of Budapest—from the Buda side. Later, the pastor deposited me in a room in their church complex in town, and, giving me a key to the building, explained where I could get breakfast at a nearby café the next morning. “Then we’ll see you for church services here at 11:00.”

It was hot and humid in the centre of town that day, and the air conditioning in my room didn’t work. I was the only person in a huge old building and it all felt a bit

oppressive. But I had brought a good book to read—one of my favourite pastimes—and so made it through the night.

The church was a large one and they had a love for Israel! The church was founded by the American pastor and he founded a number of other churches in Hungary. After the morning service, they included me in a drive to a second church about two hours away, where the congregants welcomed us with a buffet lunch. Late that night, I was dropped off again at the church building.

The next morning the pastor drove me to the airport and handed me an envelope as I prepared to go inside. When I arrived home again after the return flight to Israel, I was able to check the contents of the envelope that he had given me. As I counted the money inside, I was so amazed and so deeply grateful to the Lord for His provision and for the obedience of His servant for having provided it! It was hard to imagine, but inside that envelope was \$12,000—the exact amount that was needed!

The next morning found me at the restaurant in Jerusalem, sitting in the back, handing out cash to staff and suppliers—just as the Lord had said I would! The story of how it all happened was quite a testimony to the staff of the faithfulness of God! And it was, for me, yet another unexpected adventure!



Way back in the 1980's, the Lord arranged a trip for me around the world. It was scheduled to last for three months. SAS, which was still an airline back then, booked the tickets for me. It was a magnificently done ticket, because it could in no way show that it originated in Israel even though it did! The trip included three weeks behind the Iron Curtain, and if they saw Israel as any part of my itinerary, my Soviet visa would be cancelled at once. The airline handled it brilliantly! The entire packet of tickets cost \$3500. (No doubt it would cost considerably more now!) The Lord had totally confirmed that this trip was in His will, and all of the doors had opened for speaking tours in various countries and my Soviet visa had been approved. But only a week before my departure date, the finances for the ticket had not as yet arrived. Not any of it! I went to see the travel agent, named Sarah, and explained the situation to her. "I might have to cancel the ticket and just buy one-way tickets one at a time as I travel," I told her. "As of now, I don't have the money to pay for the whole itinerary!"

She was shocked. "You can't do that!" she exclaimed. "It will cost you a fortune!"

Sarah had been booking tickets for me for a number of years, and had been very touched by my stories of trips to visit the Jewish people in the Soviet Union.

On the day before my scheduled departure, money still had not as yet arrived. So I went off to her office to ask her to cancel the ticket. She hesitated for a moment, and then she said the most amazing thing! "I'm going to issue the tickets. I'll give you the travel agency's banking information, and when you receive the money, you can send it to me..." And a short time later, I left Sarah's travel agency with a fistful of tickets to the other end of the earth. I was so blessed and amazed by her kindness and her trust!

The trip began in Norway followed by some other places in Europe; on to the U.S. to visit family and friends; and then off to New Zealand from California via a three day stop-over in Hawaii on my way 'down under'.

My speaking tour in New Zealand began with Auckland and ended with Auckland, and I stayed with a couple who had originally been from Great Britain. He had been a Colonel in the British army and she was vice president of Women's Aglow

in N.Z. Over breakfast one morning I told them the story of the tickets and that I was believing the Lord that somehow during my five weeks in the country I would be able to send the \$3500 back to Jerusalem.

"Well," they explained, "New Zealand has very strict laws concerning foreign currency. We will have to go to the bank now and apply for permission to send the money to Israel when you return to us in Auckland at the end of the five weeks."

And so that very day, we did just that! The Colonel accompanied me to their bank.

"I want permission to send \$3500 to Israel in five weeks when I return to Auckland once again," I cheerfully told the bank teller.

"That should be simple," he said, requesting the Jerusalem banking information.

"The only problem is, I don't, um, have the money yet..."

He looked astonished beyond belief. Trying to recover, he asked in a business-like way, "So tell me, how much money did you bring with you to New Zealand?"

I glanced at the Colonel, who was still sitting there stoically, and I replied, "Um, not very much."

"How much?" he asked again. He was not able to hide his irritation.

I looked at him sheepishly. "One dollar," I replied in a very small voice.

I'm sure that there are not many people in the world who would travel to the end of the world and happily arrive with only one dollar! But since by then I had lived by faith for a very long time, I knew that I could trust the Lord to take care of me. Faith makes sense on the level of faith, but it sounded very foolish indeed when confronted by an annoyed bank employee!

"And just how exactly do you intend to *get* the money?" he asked, looking at me as though I was an international criminal of the highest order.

The Colonel was magnificent through it all.

"You know it is against the law for tourists to work in this country," he said, "and so I ask you again—how do you expect to get the money?" By then he was positively glaring.

After a quick prayer for wisdom, I said to him, "Have you ever heard of living by faith?" And then I proceeded to explain that I trusted in the Lord for everything and gave a testimony of His faithfulness. I concluded by saying, "I don't know how, but I am sure that by the time I return to Auckland, I will have the money that I need to send to Jerusalem."

After seeing the look on the young man's face, the Colonel interjected, "You can go ahead and apply for permission to wire the \$3500 and use our account with the bank as a guarantee."

After filling out the necessary paperwork, the bank teller asked, "What date will you return with the money?" When I told him, he said, "Oh, no, I'll be back from my vacation by then." Obviously he was not happy at all at the prospect of dealing with *me* again!

During my five week visit to New Zealand, they had booked me for one, two or three meetings every single day, plus newspaper, radio and television interviews. During my travels around that beautiful country, I spoke at 15 different Women's Aglow chapters. Of course, most people in the world have no concept of living by faith, and each Aglow meeting traditionally gave speakers a gift of \$20.00. It was a nice honorarium for most speakers who have jobs! "But," I thought to myself, "in order to pay for the tickets, I'd have to speak at 175 Women's Aglow meetings!" It made me laugh in spite of myself.

Halfway through my five week speaking tour mail that had been forwarded to me from Israel caught up with me. And inside the letters there was almost enough money to send to Israel for the tickets! It was 2½ weeks early besides, which surprised me a little! As I was thinking about that, the Lord said, “And what makes you think that the money is meant for *you*?” He taught me long ago that everything that I have and everything that I am belongs to Him. Instead of teaching me to tithe, He let me know early in my walk by His side that *all* the money that I received belonged to Him, not just 10% of it! And He would always let me know what to do with the money that He provided!

The mail arrived to the home of the family who had organized my speaking tour in New Zealand while I was actually staying with them for a few days. The parents were planning on leading a tour group to Israel in October to attend the Feast of Tabernacles celebration in Jerusalem. Their seven year old daughter told me that she had been praying for the money to be able to go as well, but that it seemed impossible since the whole tour would cost so much! Well, you guessed it; the Lord let me know that the money that had arrived in the mail was the answer to their little daughter’s prayers! It blessed her so much!

At the end of the five weeks speaking tour, I was the main speaker three nights in a row at the Women’s Aglow National Convention. Until then almost no additional money had arrived! But there were two couples who heard from the Lord and obeyed Him—and on the day before my return to Auckland, they handed me envelopes—which together contained all of the money that I needed!

And so, just in time, the Colonel and I returned to the Auckland bank. The disgruntled teller was back from his holiday and he was clearly not at all happy to see me again! But, just as we had arranged more than a month earlier, permission had been granted and I was able to pay Sarah in Jerusalem the \$3500 for the tickets that she had so kindly given me and that the Lord had so graciously provided.



## *CRITICAL MOMENTS*

*When* the Lord asks us to do something in obedience to Him, we never can know His purposes until we actually obey and do whatever it is that He has asked us to do. Sometimes He has things planned that are simple and sometimes He has things planned that are complicated and complex. When we come to the place in our walk by His side where we recognize His right to sovereignty in our lives, we also understand the importance of obedience in an even deeper way. I know my own weaknesses and therefore I wake up every morning and ask Him to help me to be faithful to His purposes that day. And when we get used to obeying, we never can know what new adventure awaits! There are four examples of ‘complicated and complex’ that I’d like to share with you. In each scenario, I was always so grateful that He had helped me to do the small thing that He had asked because each one led to something quite extraordinary. I would have hated to have missed a single one!

The first one began on a plane way back in 1979 when I was travelling between Rome and Israel.

As soon as the plane took off, I settled back against the seat feeling tired and grateful that the seat next to me was vacant. I was really looking forward to the three hours of rest that this plane trip would give me after three weeks in Rome with full and

emotion-packed days! But then I overheard the man sitting behind me mention to his travelling companion, "I happen to be Roman Catholic myself!" And at once, the Lord said to me, "I want you to share with him!"

My immediate reaction was rebellion. "I'm tired, and I don't feel like talking with anyone. I deserve a rest, and I'm going to take it. And what would I say to him anyway?"

A few minutes later, the Lord played back to me all of my comments—with the whines included—and I could hear just how selfish and childish I sounded. "Oh, Lord, I'm sorry!" I giggled, and turned around to the unsuspecting man sitting behind me. I knew that the Lord wanted me to talk to him about Yeshua, so I got right to the point, as I have never been very comfortable with small talk. "If I told you that I was a Jewish Believer from Jerusalem who has just been to Rome to see the Pope, what would you say?"

"Wow!" was his reply, and he moved to the empty seat next to mine. I shared with him for the next three hours—first of all how Yeshua had touched and changed my life; then some of the lessons that He had taught me; and finally, the rather amazing story of my time in Rome. And in the end I said to him, "I'm sure that Yeshua had me here today, at this very time and in this very place, and do you want to know why? Because He loves *you*, and He wants you to know it!"

He then explained to me that his wife had recently had an experience of Yeshua's love, had joined a group in the Catholic Renewal, and had been praying for him. "And tonight, I promise you that when I have some time to myself, I'll put my life in Yeshua's hands as well."

Now, if nothing else had happened, that would have been precious enough. Heaven rejoices every time someone places his life in the Lord's hands. And I knew as well how overjoyed his wife would be when she learned that he had also come to know Yeshua. But in addition to that, it just so happens that the Lord had a whole series of circumstances lined up just depending on that small step of obedience in speaking to the man sitting behind me on the plane.

This is what happened next. As we were approaching Ben Gurion Airport, he returned to his seat, commenting to the man sitting next to him, "That woman is from Jerusalem and she had an amazing story to tell!"

Sitting behind *him* was a Believer from the States who had been praying, "Lord, send me an angel to help me to get to Jerusalem!" After the plane had landed and we were starting to depart, she came up to me and said, "I overheard the man in the seat in front of me comment that you were from Jerusalem. Will you please let me travel there with you?"

Two friends, Sid and Betsy, were waiting for me at the airport and so we all travelled up to the city together as she had requested. All the way up to Jerusalem I shared with Sid and Betsy some of my recent adventures in Rome. As we dropped her off at her hotel, she thanked us for our help and then said, "I'm here to meet up with a Christian tour group. Would you be willing to come have dinner with us at the hotel tomorrow night? The three of you are welcome, and then I would love it if you would speak to the group following the meal," she said to me. My first reaction was totally negative. I had been away from home for a long time, and tomorrow evening was the beginning of Shabbat. I wanted to spend Shabbat at home at last—and not at a hotel with people that I didn't know! But immediately the Lord spoke to my heart. "Tell her that you'll go," He said. So we made plans to meet the following evening, Erev Shabbat.



The tour group was led by a man named Dr. Clifton Robinson. After dinner, I was invited to share my testimony to the tour group of Christians. When I returned to my seat and we were preparing to leave, Dr. Robinson said, "Esther, I don't quite understand it, but the Lord is telling me that you are meant to attend the President's Breakfast." I had no idea what he was referring to, but at once, the Lord said, "Tell him that you'll go." We then exchanged contact information and headed home. Later I said to Sid and Betsy, "What was he talking about anyway, the president of *what*?"

They both laughed. "Well, that explains why you were so casual about it!" Sid said. They then explained to me that it was a Prayer Breakfast that was traditionally held at the opening of Congress each year in Washington, D.C. It was attended by dignitaries and politicians from many nations and the President of the United States was always the guest of honour.

I was flabbergasted! I totally could not picture myself at such an event. When I went to bed that night I said to the Lord, "This is just a test, right? Maybe you want to see if I'd be *willing* to go? But I don't actually have to *go there*, do I?"

"If this is My will, *I will fulfill it*," was all that He said. It was not exactly a reassuring answer.

The next day I phoned Dr. Robinson. "When you mentioned the Presidential Breakfast, I had no idea in the world what you were talking about! I'm scared to death!" We both laughed. He then explained, "It is usually impossible to obtain an invitation unless you are known to the core group of Believers in Washington. And it is so carefully done that they only issue invitations to people that they know in advance will attend." He continued, "Actually, the invitations have already been given out for this year's Breakfast, and so it seems impossible. But I still believe that the Lord wants you to be there. So let's put it in His hands and see what happens, okay? I'll phone you from D.C. as soon as I have news."

Two weeks before the scheduled events in Washington, Dr. Robinson wrote, "Still no invitation, but two senators on the committee are working with me on it. We are believing for a miracle."

It was amazing to think that two *senators* were working with him to help to get me an invitation! As I was sitting there in wonder over that news, the Lord let me know that it was His will for me to travel to the States in faith on a one-way ticket even though I had not as yet been invited to the Presidential Prayer Breakfast! I sent Dr. Robinson a telegram informing him of my departure to the States. When I arrived in the US and phoned him, he said that my telegram had been like taking a step of faith into the water—20 minutes after he received it, he was notified that I had been granted an official invitation as the first person from Israel to be invited to the Breakfast!

Before travelling to Washington D.C., I spent a few days with a special friend of mine named Marie in Nashville, Tennessee. Before coming to know the Lord, she had been on the carnival circuit. When the Lord touched her life, she told Him, "Send me to the people in the greatest need that no one else bothers about." She was outspoken and brave and the Lord used her in incredible ways.

A short time after I arrived at her home, she said bluntly, "The Lord told me that I need to look at what you have in your suitcase. Would you open it, please?"

It was a startling request, but I opened my suitcase. Finally she said, "Are these the clothes that you were planning to wear?" When I nodded in the affirmative, she said, "Well, you can't possibly wear these things! They're terrible!" She then told me that a wealthy friend of hers had recently delivered an elegant wardrobe to her, simply saying that "I know that these are meant for somebody!"

There were beautiful silk satin suits with elegant buttons. A long black skirt with a matching cashmere beaded sweater. Gloves. Shoes. Matching purses. And a sable jacket! *And every single item fit me perfectly as if they had been tailor-made for me personally!*

And so, I arrived a few days later with a complete, perfect wardrobe for the days that I was to spend in Washington. It was such an amazing provision from the Father's hand!

At the Presidential Breakfast itself, it was such an incredible moment when it was announced to the 3,000 international guests gathered there that morning, "Please rise for the President of the United States and the First Lady."

Following the wonderful breakfast itself, the international guests were divided into smaller seminars. And very unexpectedly, the Lord worked it out for me to address the meeting that I was attending. As a result of the response to my brief message that morning, I ended up speaking to the Woman's Seminar; to the Congressional Wives Prayer group at Fellowship House (some details of that visit I already shared earlier in this book); to the State Department Prayer Meeting; and to the D.C Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship.

Imagine it. *God had all of this planned, depending only on a single simple step of obedience on my part* by talking to the man sitting behind me on the plane from Rome to Israel. It made me recognize once again His right to sovereignty in our lives and the utter privilege we have to serve the King of Kings. If I had disobeyed that day on the plane, I never would have imagined in a million years all that the Lord had planned...

And why did He send me to the States on a *one-way* ticket? Because He opened the door for me to sail back to Israel from the port of New Orleans on an American freighter to Ashdod. Seventeen days at sea! Only five passengers! A lovely private cabin with a steward in attendance! Wonderful meals with the Captain and officers! And the endless expanse of ocean, a dream come true for a sea-lover like me! It was a true gift to me from His hand!



The second portion of "Critical Moments" again illustrates the Lord's impeccable timing and underlines definitively the importance of obedience to His still small voice within our hearts.

After my first visit to the Soviet Union in obedience to the Lord in 1981, one day He let me know that it was His will for me to travel there again the following September. Having been there once, I understood the importance of being certain of the Lord's will in the matter. If I travelled to the USSR *against* His will, I could endanger the people I visited there. So I told the Lord that I was indeed willing to go again, but I asked Him for a confirmation. Asking for a confirmation was not something that I did often, because in general I recognize His guidance in my life and I have always had a desire to obey—it is part of my sense of adventure! But since this was such a serious issue, I asked Him to confirm it!

About a week later, I was in Nashville, speaking to a prayer meeting of country music stars. The meeting was held in a room behind a Christian bookstore. On my way out, I told the Lord that if there was a book in the store that He wished for me to read, to please show it to me! He guided me at once to a book on a bottom shelf entitled "*Faith Despite the KGB*". As I was waiting at the cash register to purchase it, I noticed that the forward to the book was written by a pastor of a Ukrainian underground church

by the name of Gorgi Vins. I recognized his name. He had been arrested by the KGB in Kiev because of his faith, and was later ‘exiled’ to the United States in a prisoner exchange.

That same week I was on a plane travelling from Chicago to Minneapolis busily writing letters, feeling important for some odd reason. Suddenly the Lord said clearly, “Put away the letters and begin to read the book, *“Faith Despite the KGB”*. It didn’t make any sense at all, and while I was sitting there debating, the Lord added, “What do you have to lose by obeying?” Nothing, of course, so with a smile I put the writing material in my bag, took out the book, and obediently began to read.

After about five minutes, the young woman who ‘happened’ to be sitting next to me on the plane leaned over and quietly asked, “Do you like the book that you are reading?”

“Yes, I like it very much,” I replied.

“Well,” she went on to tell me, “My father wrote the forward...” I was sitting next to the daughter of the pastor from the underground church in Kiev, Gorgi Vins! I felt the Lord’s presence at that moment so strongly that I simply began to cry!

If I had disobeyed the Lord and had refused to put the letters away and begin to read the book—I would have missed not only the confirmation I was seeking—but one of God’s great moments. His timing is monumental! His orchestration of events masterful! It is humbling to think that He uses us in His plans and in His purposes. That is why my cry to Him daily is—“please oh please keep me faithful to Your purposes today! Help me to obey!”

Gorgi’s daughter told me that her name was Lisa. And I told her how the Lord had used my meeting her as my confirmation that I was to return to the USSR. We had an amazing conversation that day on the plane! And—she was able to give me directions by tram and by bus to the underground church in Kiev that her father had pastored before his imprisonment and exile. “It is difficult to locate,” she told me. She later sent me a picture of herself to bring to the church as a way of introduction. And that is how my adventures with the underground church began.



Another “Critical Moments” story occurred in 1996. At that time, the English Tea Room that I told about earlier in this book was housed in a lovely old building called “Ha Bustan” which is Turkish for “The Garden”. It was designed by the renowned German architect Conrad Schick who arrived in Jerusalem in the late 1800’s. He was a Protestant missionary and architect and some of his lovely buildings were a part of the move from the Old City out to the surrounding area. Some of his other well known buildings include Christ Church inside Jaffa Gate and the Swedish Institute on Prophets St. (which had been his private home).

The Conrad Schick building that we rented was set back on Jaffa Road and had a lovely private garden with a fountain for outdoor seating, as well as the stately rooms inside with beautiful stone floors. The restaurant was very popular—we had a fabulous menu divided into Olde England and New England—and of course, it was an outreach as well. Everything was going really well, until something terrible happened.

One day, there was a bus bombing on Jaffa Rd. on one side of the restaurant, and a few days later, there was another bus bombing on the other side of the restaurant. Nothing like that had ever happened before. They were caused by Arab terrorists wearing explosive belts—suicide bombers. The residents of Jerusalem were horrified

and frightened and for quite a while no one wanted to come to the centre of town and very few people felt like eating in restaurants, as you can well imagine!

Until that happened, the restaurant had been full most of the time, and on Saturday nights, when everyone heads to the centre of town at the end of Shabbat, people waited in line to get in. It was so busy on those nights that we told people who had made reservations, “We’re sorry, but we can only hold your table for twenty minutes. So don’t be late!” And then, in a moment of time, we went from that—to almost no customers at all.

After a few weeks the city centre began to recover a bit, but nothing like it had been before the suicide bus bombings! And that’s when the next “critical moment” arrived.

I received a telephone call at the restaurant from a Jewish Believer named Michael. We met quite a few years earlier when we both had been living in the village of Ein Kerem.

“Esther, I’m calling to see if there is any possibility to get a job working in the restaurant,” was his comment when I answered the phone.

Of course, it was the worst possible time to hire a new employee. We could barely pay the staff that we had. The sensible, practical thing to do would be to simply say, “Sorry, it just isn’t possible at this time to hire anyone new!” But God doesn’t ask us to be sensible *or* practical. *He asks us to be obedient.* So I said to Michael that day, “Just a minute! Let me check!” When I said that, I guess that people would imagine that I would deal with practical considerations, financial and otherwise. But what I *really* did was this: I put down the phone, asked the Lord what to do, and *listened*.

His answer was strong and it was immediate. “Tell him that you do have a job for him and that he needs to come to Jerusalem at once.”

“Okay,” he replied. “I’ll see you in about four hours!” (He was travelling from Haifa). . Hiring him wasn’t as simple as it sounds, as the staff were very angry to hear that I had hired someone new, which they considered to be impractical and irresponsible due to our current financial circumstances. But the Lord had been very, very clear—*“Hire him now!”*

I knew that in the restaurant business, there is always work to do and that somehow the Lord would help me to be able to pay him. But what I *didn’t* know was this: Mike had been a serious drug addict for many years, using pure prescription drugs, and had recently been a part of a Haifa Christian drug rehabilitation program. But he ended up going back to drugs, causing his wife and his son to reject him and the fellowship to reject him as well.

Just before he phoned me, he felt so discouraged and hopeless that he had tried to hang himself—but the rope broke. The minute that it broke, the Lord said to him, “Phone Esther in Jerusalem and ask her if she has a job for you...”

And so he placed the call, with the determination that if I was unable to offer him a job—*he would follow through with the hanging!* (Mike actually arrived at the restaurant with the marks of the noose on his neck!)

When I understood all of that after he arrived and we had a long talk, I was very humbled by the trust that the Lord had placed in me. Mike’s life was on the line—and the Lord knew that I wouldn’t give the logical, practical answer—but that I would seek His will instead. I was so grateful that I had listened and obeyed and that therefore his life was saved. Mike assured me that day that he had again stopped taking drugs.

Addiction is always a cry for help and when Mike arrived he was feeling worthless and empty. Since he had no place to stay, I invited him to join us at home.

And for the next month, I tried to encourage him as much as possible to try to give him again a sense of self-worth.

And then, one morning the Lord said so unexpectedly, “Michael has been lying to you. He is still taking drugs.” The Lord then proceeded to tell me where in Jerusalem Mike was purchasing them! The Lord continued, “Don’t tell him that you know and simply treat him as you always do.” That seemed odd, but I do know that the Lord is wise and always knows what He’s doing and why He is doing it!

About a week and a half later, the Lord instructed me to take him out to lunch—that it was time to talk to him.

Mike chose McDonald’s for lunch, and after we brought our orders to the table, I said to him, “Michael, about one and a half weeks ago the Lord let me know that you’ve been lying to me and that you are still taking drugs. And furthermore, He told me where you are buying them” and I mentioned the place. He was clearly shocked!

Then I continued, “Let me ask you something, Michael. I’ve known this for more than a week. Have I treated you any differently during that time?”

“No,” he replied.

“That’s because I care about you—but even more important than that, the Lord loves you very much. *The person that you’re hurting is yourself.* Please, Mike get help for your own sake.” I then told him about an Israeli drug rehabilitation program that has been very successful in helping addicts to overcome their addictions and to lead happy, fulfilled lives. “And they have an opening.”

Because his self-confidence had been restored in the weeks that he worked with us, he had the strength to agree to enroll in the program. He successfully completed the rehabilitation, was later reunited with his wife and little son—and the three of them moved to England where Michael enrolled in a bible school and has served the Lord ever since.

Once again, I was so grateful that I had listened to the wisdom of the Lord without giving heed to the practical considerations! It was a critical decision that actually saved his life!



This “Critical Moments” testimony is a short one, but yet another example of a time when I was so grateful that the Lord had helped me to obey *immediately*.

Quite a few years ago Jenny and Wolfgang were visiting Israel and had rented a car. One evening, as we were driving together, somehow we ended up by mistake in an Arab village. We were by then on a small narrow road and we were trying to find our way out. There were no streetlights and it was really dark. All at once, the Lord prompted me to scream, “STOP!”

Thankfully, Wolfgang stopped the car at once. When we got out of the car and looked around, we discovered that just ahead of us, the road ended. Without the warning from the Lord, the car would have driven off a cliff if we had continued to drive!



*Double Life*

It was a sunny October day in Jerusalem in 1985 with a touch of winter chill in the air. As I was walking down King George Street in the centre of town, I passed a friend. As we exchanged pleasantries, she invariably asked, “So what’s new?” to which I replied, “Oh, nothing much. What’s new with you?” When we went our separate ways, I almost laughed out loud, as I imagined what her response would have been if, in answer to her question, I had told her what was *really* new—that just two weeks before I had been arrested in the Ukraine by the KGB! It sounded far-fetched even to me!

My adventures behind the Iron Curtain had actually begun unexpectedly a few years earlier, in 1981. One day I was visiting a friend of mine in Nashville, Tennessee, named Marie Rice. We were sitting in a small restaurant having pizza together, when out of the blue the Lord spoke the following to my heart: “I want you to travel to the Soviet Union.” My advice from then on was—never, ever have pizza with Marie!

Since then, until the time of my arrest in 1985, I had visited the former USSR annually and had spent three weeks there on each visit. Most of my adventures behind the Iron Curtain are chronicled in my first book, *I Am My Beloved’s*. So for now I will share only the details that are relevant for the purposes of this story. The incident that I am about to relay happened a month after my first book rolled off the press.

During the communist regime, it was against the law for tourists to speak with the citizens of the country and vice versa. The street maps that were available in the hotels were all in Russian and only had the names of the major thoroughfares. Most tourists travelled in groups and therefore didn’t need the maps anyway! I travelled each time as an individual tourist—but it was highly unusual!



On the day before I was planning to visit someone, I would try to find the place! It usually took many hours of walking and praying—but in the end, the Lord always helped to reach my destination! Similarly, on the day before my trip in Kiev to the underground church, I tried to find the street, following as best I could the tram and bus directions that Lisa had given me. But I couldn't find it anywhere! Lisa had given me the days and times of the meetings, so I had to pray that the next day I would actually find it in time for the service!

On the day of the church meeting, after having transferred from the tram to the bus, someone standing in front of me asked if I had a bus ticket that they could purchase. I did, and after they paid me for it, I handed them the slip of paper with the street name on it in Russian. They passed it around, but no one seemed to know at all where it was! A few minutes later, someone tapped me on the shoulder. I turned around to see a Ukrainian woman with a beautiful smile on her face. She pointed to the right—and I knew that she was pointing to the street that I was looking for. I got off the bus at the very next stop. This was the first time in my life that I have ever used the word 'beautiful'—and it is also the first time in my life that I ever knowingly saw an angel! She had not seen the slip of paper that had been passed around to people in front of me, and her smile was totally 'other worldly'! I was amazed!

The street that she had pointed to was a simple dirt path with houses on either side. As I started to walk, the Lord said, "Do you see the people in front of you?" Way at the other end of the street I noticed a small group. "Yes," I told Him. Then He said, "They are Believers. Follow them. They are going to the church..."

A few minutes later I found myself standing outside a high fence. I opened the gate and stepped into a courtyard next to the building where the church meets. A number of people came up to greet me—but no one could speak English! Finally I remembered Lisa's picture, and took it out as a way of introduction. Someone exclaimed "Oh, it's Lisa!" as people gathered round to see the picture for themselves. And then along came a Believer from Ethiopia who spoke English! He explained that the Lord had unexpectedly sent him to the church that day from another city—and he was therefore able to translate! The first thing that people told me through his translation was that it was almost impossible for people to find the church! Hidden at the end of a nondescript dirt lane, I could imagine why!

Since this part of the story has already been told in full in my first book, I'll simply summarize by saying that after the service began, the pastor met with the Ethiopian and me in the basement. We had a blessed time of sharing together, and then the pastor invited me to speak to the church. "I have to warn you, however, that members of the KGB are in the building posing as Christians. And since this government really hates Israel, they will not be happy if you tell them where you are from. But it's up to you," he told me and then went upstairs to the meeting.

"What should I do?" I asked my Ethiopian brother.

"You have to do what God asks you to do," was his firm reply. Since as translator it posed some danger for him as well, I appreciated his bravery and understood that the Lord had sent him to the church not just to translate!

We then went upstairs. Towards the end of the amazingly heartfelt service, I was welcomed by the pastor to greet the congregation. I looked at the translator briefly, smiling, and then said, "I bring you greetings from Jerusalem, Israel..." After speaking to the general assembly, afterwards I was also invited to speak to the youth group. I shared with them for more than an hour. It was an amazing time! When I told the story of the miraculous way in which the Lord had brought Lisa and me together on the plane,



eventually one of the young people asked, “And what was the name of the book that you were reading?”

I took a deep breath and then laughingly replied, “Faith Despite the KGB.” Then we all laughed together, knowing that it was funny, but not *so* funny since it exemplified their life of faith!

Towards the end, a young woman came up to me and asked me to follow her. “The KGB is waiting for you near the bus stop,” she informed me. She then guided me out through a hole in the fence behind the building where some of her friends were waiting. Holding hands, we all walked together to the tram.

The young woman who initially contacted me introduced herself as Vera. Vera and her twin sister Lyuba were leaders of the young people’s choir. The choir sang like angels! The whole service in this underground, persecuted church was totally amazing.

When we arrived at the station, we all took the tram together. At the end of the ride we were the only ones in the car, and the young people sang with all of their hearts, in Ukrainian, that wonderful old hymn, “How Great Thou Art”. It was a moment never to be forgotten.

That day marked the beginning of a friendship and relationship with the church and with Lyuba and Vera and Vera’s husband Paul that continued through the years that I travelled behind the Iron Curtain. And that is how, on the day of my arrest, I was visiting with them in the home where Paul and Vera lived.

On that fateful day, Vera was in the kitchen putting the finishing touches on a soup that smelled wonderful while Paul, Lyuba and I were sitting together in the living room looking at pictures from Paul and Vera’s wedding. Suddenly their doorbell rang. Paul looked out through the peephole in the door to discover three men standing outside smoking cigarettes. Paul and Lyuba signaled for me to follow them. We quickly went out to a little porch. They rolled back a rug, and underneath was a hatch which led down to a root cellar. Lyuba and I climbed down the small ladder while Paul closed the hatch above us and replaced the rug. He then answered the door, as the three men kept ringing the bell persistently. Lyuba placed dusty old potato sacks over our heads so that in case the basement hideaway was discovered, it would simply look from above like things were stored there. I usually sneeze at a little dust, and the whole time I was down there I felt the need to sneeze—but God gave the grace in answer to my fervent prayer for it not to happen!

The three KGB men entered the apartment, apparently to search for me. They stayed there for more than an hour! Finally Lyuba whispered to me, “They’re outside now in the garden asking the children playing there if they noticed anyone climbing out of the windows.” It was truly a miracle that they did not discover our hiding place! A few minutes later Vera and Paul opened the hatch. “You must leave for the train station at once,” they informed me, as they handed me my shoes and coat. Paul got out his bicycle and with me hanging on to the rear, took off toward the station! The bike ride was an adventure in itself, as the roads were really rutted! But we arrived at last. Paul told me to sit on a bench and await the next train, and he went further down the platform to see what would happen. Vera and Lyuba, who had followed on foot, sat down next to him a few minutes later. Suddenly a tall man stood in front of me and demanded to see my documents. I ignored him. He then told me to follow him, to which I responded, “I’m not going with someone I don’t know!” He left. But then he returned again with a Russian soldier in full uniform, and he again ordered me to follow him! So the last that my three friends saw of me that day was as I walked off the platform with my two escorts, got into a black car, and was driven away.

Even though I had not been found in the home of my friends, it was clear nonetheless that I had been arrested. I had left the hotel in Kiev many hours earlier, and I had missed the soup lunch that had been prepared for us all to share. And I was really hungry! I had no idea how long I would be at the KGB headquarters, and I knew that in my bag I had a Snickers candy bar and I was determined to eat it. When I unzipped my bag, the men on either side of me tensed up. Maybe I had an Uzi in my purse?! I had a sense from the Lord throughout the ordeal ahead to simply act like the stereotype of the 'dumb American tourist.' So when I pulled out the candy bar, (much to their visible relief) I offered them each a bite if they wanted it! They were quick to reply. "Nyet, nyet," they said. I proceeded to open the Snickers wrapper and gobble it down, truly feeling like some kind of a TV commercial for Snickers candy bars!

We arrived after a short drive at a grey, nondescript building with a flower box next to the entrance. I was led inside and brought into a small, bare room with a desk and a few chairs and told to wait there. (What, I was going to run away?!) I soon understood that there was a real dilemma—they were unable to find anyone who spoke English! As I explained, in the Communist days, it was strictly forbidden for any Soviet citizen to speak with a foreigner, just as it was forbidden for tourists to speak with Soviet citizens. The two countries that were hated and vilified the most at that time were the United States and Israel. English was not taught in schools.

Finally, after more than an hour had passed, a woman entered the room with two KGB officers. She nervously introduced herself, saying that she would be the translator. "I've never done this before," she confessed.

Laughingly, I told her, "Well, neither have I! But God will help us..."

The chief interrogator looked almost identical to my next door neighbour, Emery, when I lived in a country house years ago in Connecticut. The neighbours had been lots of fun, and because of the resemblance, I had a hard time taking this KGB interrogator seriously.

His first question was to ask me what I was doing in—(and then he named a Ukrainian town)—and at that moment I was able to relax. I understood at once that somehow my friends lived in a district outside of Kiev. Restrictions on tourists were very defined. I had a visa for Kiev, but anyplace other than the permitted city was strictly off limits. The reason that I relaxed was that I understood that at that point they didn't really know anything about me other than the fact that I was in a town where I was not permitted to be. And so I could honestly reply, "Sorry, but I didn't realize that I had left the boundaries of Kiev!"

They continued to fire questions at me, especially asking if I had visited people in that town. There was no way in the world that I was about to endanger my friends, so I said no. Finally the KGB officer resembling Emery screamed at me, "We have ways of dealing with our friends. But we also have ways of dealing with people who are not our friends!" he said menacingly.

So I screamed back, "Until now I thought that I was a friend! But you are NOT being very friendly, and this is no way to treat a friend!"

Finally they made me sign a statement and told me that I was free to return by train to Kiev and that I was to go directly to my hotel. I thanked the frazzled woman who had been enlisted as translator, and then told 'Emery', "Thank you, but I don't know how to get to the train station from here!"

This information seemed to annoy him greatly, and finally he said roughly, "I take you. Wait outside." And so at last, after some hours had already passed, I stepped outside into the late afternoon sunshine. I heard a bird sing. The flowers looked more beautiful than ever. The sky was so blue! And I was so very grateful that the Lord had

enabled me to get through that ordeal. He had helped me to feel calm and He had helped me to know how to answer them. And when I exited the grim confines of the office into the beauty of His world, there is no way to describe the relief that I felt.

A few minutes later, 'Emery' stormed out the door and headed off down the street. Since he was very tall and was walking fast, I had to practically run to keep up with him! He was smoking, and so I tapped him on the shoulder and tried to signal that smoking wasn't good for him, still trying to act like a naïve tourist! When the train to Kiev arrived, he sat ramrod straight across from me with his arms folded, glaring the entire time. When we arrived at the correct station in Kiev, he said, "Go hotel now and don't leave!" From the platform I waved to him before heading off towards the station. That ordeal had ended.

The next day I travelled on to Leningrad according to my Intourist schedule, and a week later left the country. A few days of rest in Switzerland found me once again on the Jerusalem streets where a friend had asked the simple question, "What's new?" It's hard to imagine what she would have thought if I had actually told her!



### *Extraordinary Experiences*

When the disciples were with Yeshua during His three year ministry in Israel they experienced many things—some quite extraordinary. There are a few extraordinary things that happened to me as well during the more than 40 years that I have served Him. Here are two of those 'extraordinary' experiences that I would like to tell you about in this book of adventures!

There was a ten year expanse of time when the Lord surprisingly sent me to Germany whenever a door opened to offer a message of repentance to the German people for the horrors of the Holocaust. It was not an easy thing for me to do. It meant leaving Israel that I loved to travel to the land that had been responsible for the murder of six million Jewish people. But of course, the only place of safety is in the Lord's will, wherever it is in this world that He chooses to send us! My German friend Wolfgang accompanied me each time as translator, and I knew that it was difficult for him as well. (He translated my first book into German).

At the end of the ten years, we were visiting a concentration camp in East Germany. A Holocaust survivor was there giving tours, in honour of those who had perished. He told about a beautiful tree that the inmates had loved. He then sadly told us that it had been destroyed by the Allied forces as they flew overhead and how the loss of that tree had saddened them all. *The Jewish prisoners had shown more compassion for a beautiful tree than most of the Germans that I had spoken to over the years had shown about the loss of six million Jewish men, women and children...* At that point, the Lord let us know that our ministry to Germany was over, and that when we boarded the plane to leave Germany, we should shake the dust from our feet and not return again. (Wolfgang and his wife and family lived in Norway).

Later that day we were travelling on the Autobahn, a road system that has no speed limit. I was actually driving, at a speed of 220 km. per hour. (Believe me, many cars whizzed past!) Suddenly, I noticed a magnificent double rainbow to our right that touched the ground on both ends. I felt that it was truly a gift from the Lord for our ten

years of service in Germany, and I told Wolfgang that I was going to pull over to take a picture of it. To which he responded forcefully, “It is not allowed to stop while on the Autobahn except for an emergency!” and he ordered me to continue to drive. At that speed, the beautiful rainbow was quickly left behind, and I felt sad. But—just ahead was *another* double rainbow! The colours weren’t as distinct as the previous rainbow, but this one also touched the ground at both ends! And then the Lord said to me, “The Autobahn belongs to *Me* and you can stop on it if I tell you to!” I repeated to Wolfgang what the Lord had told me as I pulled off the road. I got out of the car and took pictures of the beautiful rainbow and then we switched drivers. As we drove along, I was shocked to discover that for some reason, Wolfgang did not at all believe that the rainbows were a gift to us from the Lord.

Unexpectedly, the Lord told me to turn around, and there just behind us, was a small, brilliantly coloured rainbow that Wolfgang could see perfectly from his rearview mirror! But Wolfgang *still* refused to accept the multiple rainbows as a gift from God! Finally the Lord simply attached a piece of a rainbow on the rear of our car and it stayed there travelling with us for a long time! And dear Wolfgang had to finally accept that the rainbows were indeed a rather extraordinary sign of His love! (I have a picture of the little piece of rainbow attached to our car!) None of us can ever be *worthy* of His love—but that doesn’t stop Him from loving us in whatever way that He chooses!



The second ‘extraordinary’ adventure began in a rather unusual way. I received a letter from friends of mine, Mike and Renee. We met many years ago at my mother’s messianic congregation, and they have remained special friends ever since. In the letter, they mentioned the fact that the Lord had instructed them to purchase a really warm winter coat for me, and they were on the lookout for the Lord’s choice. After weeks of looking, they were visiting Arizona from their home in Colorado. While there, the Lord directed Mike to one particular coat at the Burlington Coat Factory—and they sent it on its way to me in Jerusalem. When the coat actually arrived, it had a label inside that designated it as suitable for arctic temperatures. It was a beautiful coat, lightweight with a cozy fake fur lining and hood. But it was totally unsuitable for Jerusalem! It can get cold here, with snow occasionally, but nothing that would warrant an arctic coat! “What will I ever do with it?” I wondered. I was soon to find out!

A few weeks later I travelled to the States especially to spend time with my son Mike and his family in Saratoga Springs, N.Y. Also, I had been invited to speak at a fellowship in Cape Cod, Massachusetts.

Cape Cod is one of my favourite places in the world, so I was thrilled to find myself there once again! The pastor and his wife, in whose home I stayed, have had a similar journey with the Lord, serving Him and trusting Him for everything. When we discovered the similarities—we absolutely couldn’t stop talking and sharing experiences! There are very few people in the world who truly understand what a total life of faith is all about! It is always an amazing experience when we meet one another!

The pastor invited me to speak to his church and to a youth group. When he introduced me the next morning, he said something rather surprising. “I’ve been asked to speak to a Bible School in Latvia—but I think that the Lord wants Esther to go instead!” The meeting would be in February, and amazingly enough, the Lord confirmed that it *was* His will for me to speak to the Bible School in Latvia!

When I returned home to Israel, I phoned my friend Marike in Finland. When she heard that I had been invited to Latvia, she said at once, “You have to come to Finland first and then we can travel to Latvia together!” Marike and I have been friends

since 1977 and have had adventures together in eight countries! Plus she translated my first book into Finnish.

On my first morning in Helsinki, I woke up early and left my room en route to the bathroom. The guest room was next to the kitchen—and I was surprised to find Marike and her husband Kiejo already sitting at the table holding knives and forks waiting for me to wake up and make them American pancakes, which I had promised to do! We had a fun breakfast, and I was happy to be there with them!

The next morning, one of the lenses from my eyeglasses fell out. So at breakfast *that* morning, we made plans to go together to the mall. During the course of our conversation at the breakfast table, I said jokingly, “Well, it’s a relief to know that no one here in Helsinki will recognize me! It’s a nice feeling!!”

Marike and Kiejo live in a small apartment complex in a suburb of Helsinki. A bit later I was walking between two high snow banks on a little path to meet them at the garage so that we could leave together for the mall. It was hard to imagine, but a bundled-up-against-the cold woman was walking towards me! As we were passing one another, suddenly she screamed, “Esther? What are you doing here?”

I was flabbergasted! It was a friend from Jerusalem who now lived in a different part of that very same apartment complex! The timing was brilliant! It was totally amazing! It was the Lord’s sense of humour due to my comment earlier, “No one here will recognize me!”

Picture this: Marike and Keijo left their apartment ten minutes before me so that they could heat up the car. How could they imagine it if I told them that on the three minute walk from their building to the garage—I met someone that I knew from Jerusalem?

It was so unbelievable that I dragged her with me to the garage to prove to Marike and Keijo that someone *had* actually recognized me on the short walk from their apartment to the car! Otherwise, it would have sounded too farfetched to be true! It was a fun moment for us all—and another reminder not in any way to limit the Lord! He can do *anything* at any time, anywhere!

Finland in February is almost always *cold*, and I discovered that the temperature was minus 15 degrees Celsius! (5 degrees Fahrenheit). I was already grateful for my new arctic coat! But when we arrived in Latvia a few days later, that lovely, carefully chosen coat helped me to survive bitterly cold weather—minus 35 degrees Celsius (minus 31 degrees Fahrenheit) with a wind-chill factor of minus 50 degrees! Yikes! I wrote to Mike and Renee as soon as I returned to Jerusalem to tell them what a lifesaver their coat had been and to thank them with all my heart for their obedience to the Lord for having sent it!

For three days I shared each morning and afternoon at the Bible School. I enjoyed the time with the students and Marike and I had lunch with them each day. Then we would be driven back to the little guest house where we were staying. One day I remember leaving a bottle of water in the car—and when we returned to the car less than an hour later—the water was solid ice!

We had about a five minute walk from the guest house to a small shopping mall where Marike and I had dinner together every evening in a lovely little Italian restaurant. It was so bitterly cold that our faces really hurt by the time we reached the mall!

On our last evening in Latvia, upon our return from dinner, it had begun to snow. *And here is the extraordinary part of this story!*

As you know, every snowflake is different, but on this particular evening, the Lord had a special gift prepared for us that was truly miraculous! *Every single*

*snowflake that fell was identical—and each snowflake formed a perfect Star of David!* The Stars of David were solid white, as if they had been cut out of paper. We would watch in amazement as the Stars of David landed on our sleeves and coats. Then we would dash inside, thaw out for a few minutes, and venture out again. And each and every time—perfect little Stars of David continued to fall from the sky! And the next morning, as we were sitting in the lobby waiting for our ride to the airport, the Lord had a light production with the snow that was quite extraordinary but impossible to describe!



### *More Adventures*

“Adventure in the Big Apple” is how I refer to this *next* adventure that I’ll share with you now. It happened in 2006. At that time I was living in a small house with a magical hidden garden overlooking Mt. Zion and the Old City walls. It often made me think of the verses in Psalm 87

“The Lord loves the gates of Zion  
More than all the dwellings of Jacob  
Glorious things are spoken of you.  
O City of God!” Selah.

One day a friend, Meir, came over to visit, an Israeli Believer in Yeshua, someone I’ve known for many years. In the course of our conversation, he happened to mention that in July he would be participating in a massive “Jews for Jesus” outreach in New York City. Over the years he’d been invited to a number of their campaigns—in France, in England, in Holland, in New York and of course, in Israel.

On that day he explained that the campaign would be called “Behold Your God” and it would be the culmination of five years of campaigns around the world. It was going to be a massive outreach to the Big Apple! (New York City has a huge Jewish population).

Suddenly, in the middle of a sentence, he said, “Esther—I think that the Lord wants you to go!”

I was flabbergasted and totally resistant. I preferred to stay in my cozy home overlooking Mt. Zion! Ignoring my protestations, Meir simply said, “I’ll send you the application information. Pray about it! I think that you’re coming!”

And so, I prayed about it! I always want to be in the Lord’s will, wherever it is on this earth that He wants me to be! Needless to say, He confirmed it as His will, my application was accepted, and two weeks before the start of the campaign I surprisingly found myself in New York City for training and instructions.

Growing up in Massachusetts, I often spent time visiting my favourite uncle and his family in New York City. I have lots of memories from those visits! It was during the time of the Brooklyn Dodgers, and baseball season was always exciting! My paternal grandparents lived with them, and I also remember going to the noisy and colourful Jewish market with my grandmother. My grandparents had immigrated to the US from a small shtetl in the Ukraine. (Sadly, two weeks after their arrival in the

United States with their first son, my grandmother's family was killed in a pogrom). I also remember visits with their Yiddish speaking friends!

My Uncle Harry was so much fun and exactly how I thought every adult should be! He worked in the then-bustling garment industry, and would bring home shimmering and elegant materials for us to play dress-up with. One of my cousins, Lois, was my age and Cynthia was a few years younger. The exotic materials really sparked our imaginations! I also remember travelling by subway with Lois to her violin lessons. Coming from a quiet New England town, I found New York City to be amazing! And I've always loved it!

The pre-campaign training was held in the Kings College—which was located in the basement of the Empire State Building in Upper Manhattan. The training was intensive, and after learning the basic guidelines, we were sent out to the streets to pass out tracts and to share whenever a door opened. We wore our "Jews for Jesus" T-shirts

One day when we returned to the Empire State Building after some street witnessing, one of the security guards asked me a simple question. Noting our T-shirts, he asked me quietly, "Is Jesus only for Jewish people?!"

It was one of the most magnificent questions I had ever been asked. As you probably know, very early in history, the Gentile traditional churches lost their Jewish roots in total contradiction to the Scriptures (Romans 10 and 11). For two thousand years the Gentile churches turned against the Jewish people, blaming us for the death of Jesus. They lost the understanding that it was the Lord Himself who placed Yeshua on the cross, the fulfillment of the story of Abraham and Isaac, as Yeshua became the final sacrifice for forgiveness of sins. At the moment of His death, the veil in the Temple was torn in two, which meant that through His atonement, we now had access to the Holy of Holies—the very presence of God Himself. (Even though I've known Yeshua for many years, I still love the description of His gift to us written in the 53<sup>rd</sup> chapter of Isaiah). The Messiah of Israel came first to reconcile us to God; and will come home soon to Jerusalem as King to usher in His eternal Kingdom....

However, instead of honouring Yeshua's Jewish roots, as the centuries marched past we've been hated, killed and persecuted more in the name of Jesus than any other name. To the Jewish people, even the Holocaust, the greatest tragedy in our history, is seen as Christian, since the Nazi murderers always took time off to celebrate Christmas, etc. So to be asked by the security guard in the Empire State Building if Jesus was only for Jews was music to my ears!

But of course, I knew the question *behind* his question, and so I said to him, "No, of course not, Jesus is for everybody." The Lord then prompted me to say, from His all-knowing heart of love, "And he loves you, too—very much! I would be happy to pray with you so that you can place your life in His hands and come to know the depth of His love for you in a real way." He agreed at once.

The two of us stepped over to the side as I explained salvation to him. People were getting impatient with only one security guard available, but the second guard guarded *us*, telling the people, "Something very important is happening there..."

I'll never forget the moment on the first floor of one of the tallest buildings in New York City when we bowed our heads and that dear man gave His life to the Lord. After we had prayed together, the second security guard was jubilant. "I'm a Believer," he told me, "and I've been praying for him and witnessing to him for years!" What a precious moment we all shared together! So whenever I see pictures of New York or movies featuring the Empire State Building like "An Affair to Remember" or "Sleepless in Seattle" I can only smile with a heart full of joy when I remember the gift that God gave me as I answered his question, "Is Jesus only for Jews?"



The actual “Jews for Jesus” campaign was impressively planned. The “Jews for Jesus” organization spent a million dollars to rent billboard space in the subways, colourful posters which said alternatively, “*Jews for Jesus*” or “*Jesus for Jews*.” Newspaper ads were published and they also paid for radio advertisements. In the care given to the hundreds who came to participate in the campaign—including delicious lox and bagel breakfast buffets each morning—to the actual organization of it all—it was very professionally done!

The subway advertisements received a lot of attention, and as a result the campaign was covered extensively by all the television news networks—ABC, NBC, FOX NEWS, etc. The leaders of “Jews for Jesus” were often interviewed, and there were reporters for the networks out on the streets covering the actual outreach itself. As a result, the media coverage was extensive! Here is an example of just one of many TV news stories:

***ABC EYEWITNESS NEWS at 6:00:***

“Tonight’s news is about a religious campaign in full swing these days. Perhaps you’ve seen their posters or been handed one of their brochures—an unlikely group with a seemingly contradictory name, ‘Jews for Jesus’. And one of the groups that they’re targeting for recruitment—Orthodox Jews.”

The news story then switched to an ABC reporter on the street: “It’s certainly a massive outreach here in the New York area, above and beyond the usual handouts on street corners and subway stations. You can find ‘Jews for Jesus’ advertisements plastered on billboards. There’s direct mailing, even radio announcements.”

It was then returned to the studio for an interview with David Brinkner: ‘Well, this is the biggest campaign that we’ve had in New York in our group’s 33 year history,” David explained.

“The executive director tells us this next month here in the city is the culmination of a five year project to blanket areas outside Israel with a Jewish population of 25,000 or more. But the question is, just how many takers will there be? For leaders in the Jewish community, to them the suggestion that some Jews can perceive Jesus as their Messiah is spiritually offensive.” To this, David commented, “What we don’t like is apathy, and we’re certainly not getting that from New York”

The reporter continued, “And this campaign contains far more than just advertisements and pamphlets. For the first time ever, the ‘Jews for Jesus’ are targeting the Hassidic community. In fact, they even sent out 80,000 DVD’s in Yiddish.” (The film in Yiddish, the primary language spoken by the Hassidic communities, was the Campus Crusade movie in many different languages based on the Book of Luke showing Yeshua’s earthly life in Israel. I loved that film, as it was the only film about Jesus that I ever saw that depicted Him in a traditional Jewish way). David: ‘We’ve literally been getting thousands of phone calls from Hassid’s who received the DVD.’”

“The ‘Jews for Jesus’ say ‘expect the campaign to continue until August.’” **ABC NEWS**

At the end of the two weeks of training, the rest of the “Jews for Jesus” team arrived from all over the world, and assignments were given out. I was called into a meeting with only a handful of people and I was totally unprepared for the assignment that we were about to receive! We were told that we had been especially chosen to participate in a first time ever outreach to one of the Hassidic neighbourhoods in Brooklyn. I was reminded of a “Dry Bones” cartoon from years ago, showing a woman walking up to a Hassidic man and announcing that she was a Jewish Believer in Jesus, to which the Hassidic man replied, “And you’re on kamikaze duty, I presume?”

Most Jewish people are negative when confronted with the concept of Jews believing in Jesus. You have to remember what I shared earlier—that over the centuries, we have been hated, killed and persecuted more in the name of Jesus than any other name.

But beginning in the 1970’s, two things began to happen. First of all, some Jewish people began to recognize the Messiahship of Yeshua and understood that giving their lives to Him did not negate their Judaism. As I told on a speaking tour in Belfast and Dublin years ago, “I don’t know why here in Ireland you Protestants and Catholics are fighting with one another. You’re both wrong! It’s all Jewish, anyway!” Fortunately, the Irish have a great sense of humour, but the Believers attending the meetings understood it on a deeper level as well. And that brings me to the *second* thing that began to happen in the 70’s. Gentiles began individually to give their lives in a real way to Jesus, and when they did, they came to understand the Jewishness of their faith and came to love Israel and the Jewish people. The so-called “Christians” that hated and persecuted us throughout the ages *didn’t really know the Lord at all*. They followed a religion. Because when you come to the Messiah of Israel and the God of Israel in a real way, *you will know as well His love for His people!* Period. No ‘and’s, if’s or but’s’ about it! The Lord let me know that He was using Israel as a sword to divide the true church from the false! In the US alone there are 80,000 Evangelicals who love Israel!

But the Jewish people in general are only familiar with the persecution in the name of Jesus. So it is an anathema to them to hear of Jewish people who believe in Jesus. They have almost never known His love through Christianity. And in Israel, the strongest anti-missionary organizations are from the Hassidic community. (In a way, I understand their strong reactions and I actually respect them for trying to save the Jewish people from what they perceive as the enemy camp!) So to openly reach out to that community especially is indeed like kamikaze duty!

After some serious training, the morning finally arrived when the group of us drove to the Hassidic Brooklyn neighbourhood of Borough Park. We arrived in a van and had already been divided into teams of two. We wore modest clothing and of course did not wear the “Jews for Jesus” T-shirts. My teammate, another woman, took one side of the street and I took the other. According to our careful instructions, we stayed away from the commercial centre and began walking on side streets, praying as we walked. We were told to keep an eye out for one another.

After some time, I noticed that my partner was talking with someone so I walked further down the street and then stopped to wait for her to finish. As I was standing there waiting, I noticed a young Hassidic man on the other side of the street standing on the steps leading to an apartment building. I was waiting, and he was waiting. Finally the Lord said to me, “He *is* waiting—go and speak with him!” As I crossed the street, the Lord let me know that he had seen the video. When I approached him, I could see that he was really nervous. I began with the opener I had chosen for this neighbourhood, “Have you heard that there are Jewish people who believe in Jesus as the Messiah?” As I spoke, I surreptitiously handed him Yiddish brochures and Scriptures, which he nervously slipped into his bag. In the midst of our conversation, an older man arrived pushing a baby carriage. He asked what we were doing, to which the young man replied, “We’re talking

about the Moshiach.” Looking at us suspiciously, he continued on his way and entered the building. I thought that was such a wonderful answer—for we truly *were* talking about the Messiah! As I spotted my friend walking in my direction up the street, I said quietly to the young man, “Here is a card with phone numbers on it. Phone and someone can meet you away from the neighbourhood and he will answer all of your questions.”

That night, he actually made the phone call and told how he had been speaking with a young woman with gray hair—that’s how they knew that it was me! (I’m not young, but he captured the essence of who I am!) Later he met with a “Jews for Jesus” staff member in a non-Hassidic neighbourhood. And in the end, he gave his life to the Lord and left the Hassidic community! The Lord enabled me to help catch the first fish! (“For I will make you fishers of men...”)

The next afternoon, my partner and I stepped into a small coffee shop for a cold drink and to sit for a few minutes! When we entered, I said jokingly to the owner behind the counter, “I’d like to ask you something if you promise not to kill me!”

He laughed and said, “Well, we haven’t resorted to that *yet!*”

“Have you heard that there are Jewish people who believe that Jesus is the Messiah?”

He joined us at the table for a talk. In the course of our conversation, he said something that was so wise and showed that he had already been pondering the subject, possibly after having seen the film.

“If you want to reach the people here with this message,” he said, “you have to target the rabbis. We listen to them and do what they tell us to do!”

During the days that we walked the streets of Borough Park, it was oppressively hot—in the high 90’s—and humid. Having lived for many years in the dry desert climate of Jerusalem, I found the high humidity to be especially devastating. It was not an easy time for any of us, and in between the few people that we were able to converse with about Yeshua, we spent hours walking and praying. We prayed for the people living there—that the blindfold would be removed and that they would at last recognize the Messiahship of Jesus—who came to the Jewish people all those centuries ago not as King, but as Saviour.

Suddenly on one of those tiring days, things were about to change drastically. My teammate received a phone call instructing us to immediately go to the point where we had previously planned to rendezvous at the end of the day. “Come now!” she was told with some urgency. As we climbed into the van, we noticed that everyone from the team was there already.

As soon as the door to the van was shut, the driver, part of the “Jews for Jesus” staff, told us that four of the men on our team had been discovered. “An angry crowd was gathering around them, and so we came at once to pick everyone up,” he concluded.

As he was speaking, a large van pulled up in front of us filled with Hassidic men who were part of the ‘Shomrim’ (the Hebrew word for ‘guards’).. The ‘Shomrim’ actually work with the knowledge of the NYPD but take the job of guarding the Hassidic neighbourhoods themselves very seriously. A man jumped out of the van and was signaling for us to come out to talk with him. We had a strong sense from the Lord to stay put. After some time, when he realized that no one was leaving the van, he pulled out some kind of instrument and struck the van. We had no idea what he had done exactly, but whatever it was caused a very loud noise. Then he jumped in the van and drove off.

We drove off as well and contacted headquarters. After briefly telling our circumstances and asking for prayer, we also said, “We have no idea how to get out of here!”

We drove along waiting for directions, when suddenly the van full of ‘Shomrim’ in front of us stopped and a young man jumped out and ran into a synagogue. We knew that he was running to get reinforcements which could put us in a truly dangerous situation.

But fortunately a car pulled up behind us beeping its horn, which forced the driver of the Hassidic van to move forward since we were on a narrow one-way street. We finally got away from the ‘Shomrim’, received instructions on how to exit the neighbourhood, and took the high speed bridge connecting Borough Park with the section of Brooklyn where we were staying.

After having crossed the bridge, we located the police station and pulled into the parking lot. What happened next was astonishing. As soon as the van was turned off, *the left front tire immediately sank to the rim.*

We were speechless as we realized that the Lord had saved our lives! The loud sound that we had heard *was the sound of our tire being punctured!* After that we drove for quite a while until we were able to exit the Hassidic neighbourhood. Then we crossed the bridge at high speed, drove further until we found the police station until we finally came to a stop in the parking lot. And during that entire time, *the Lord had kept the tire filled with air.* Purely and simply, *it was a miracle.* We all felt it and we were filled with awe and with deep thanksgiving. When we shared the story later with the “Jews for Jesus” team, everyone was amazed.

We went into the police station while waiting for another van to collect us and reported the incident that had occurred, showing them the punctured tire. The staff member who drove our van had the foresight to take down the license plate number of the ‘Shomrim’s’ van. When we told them where the incident had occurred, they informed us that we were in the wrong precinct. They gave us the address of the precinct on the other side of the bridge in the neighbourhood where the attack had taken place. So early the next morning, off we went to file a complaint!

After a few hours at the police station, we returned to the hotel. The “Jews for Jesus” staff held a meeting that afternoon, and then after dinner we received new instructions.

“We’re sure that the ‘Shomrim’ are convinced that they scared us off permanently. But after praying about it this afternoon, this is what we are going to do,” we were told. “All of you are to return to the Hassidic neighbourhood this evening armed with a large number of small cards. Each card will have a Scripture in Yiddish from the Tanach (the Old Covenant) relating to the identity of Yeshua. Plaster the neighbourhood with the cards! Don’t talk to anyone, but put the cards everywhere—in phone booths, on bushes, on mailboxes, anywhere and everywhere! And then we will meet back here at the van to return to the hotel.”

When the neighbourhood awakened the next morning, it looked like hundreds of us had been there, as the streets were plastered with Scripture cards relating to the identity of Yeshua as the Messiah from the Jewish Bible

All in all, the “Jews for Jesus Behold Your God” campaign was a success beyond what anyone could have imagined. Due to the investment in the huge glass-covered advertisements in the subway stations, the campaign received massive media attention. David Brinkman and Susan Perlman, the two representatives from “Jews for Jesus,” were interviewed personally on a number of network prime time news reports. Occasionally the interviewer was hostile and impatient, but in general they were able to share a testimony with literally millions of people through the news media—free, far-reaching coverage!

The whole campaign throughout all of the boroughs of New York City was brilliantly organized right down to the smallest details. And there were many trained volunteers who handled the thousands of telephone calls and correspondence that they received as a result of the outreach. By God’s grace, it bore much fruit for God’s

Kingdom, and I was blessed that the Lord had called me from my cozy house in Jerusalem to participate in such an unexpected adventure!

When the outreach was over, I took a bus to New York City's Penn Station and bought a train ticket. The train runs parallel to the Hudson River, and it was therefore such a beautiful ride to Albany, where I was to meet my son Mike. Mike and his family lived in Saratoga Springs in Upstate New York, and I was overjoyed to be able to spend two weeks with them before returning home to Israel!



“Adventure in Zurich” is the final adventure in this book.

At the end of each of my trips behind the Iron Curtain (following time spent with Marike in Finland), I always travelled to Switzerland for some days of restoration and rest before returning to the ballagan of life in Israel. Switzerland isn't a country that I could ever *live* in—it is too orderly and perfect for my temperament. I much prefer the craziness of Israel! But after three intense weeks each time in the Soviet Union, Switzerland was a balm to my soul. It is so utterly beautiful!

Arriving in Zurich during one of those years, I checked into the lovely little boutique hotel where I always stayed. The next morning following a delicious breakfast in the charming dining room, I took the trolley to the centre of town. The route passes the lake and I loved the beautiful old buildings that the trolley sped past.

Anyone who knows me will know that I *hate* shopping. As I shared earlier, I always joke that if the KGB had threatened me with shopping on the day that I was arrested, I would have told them everything to prevent me from having to shop! The only exception was in the centre of Zurich. They have two department stores that I adore. The stores are really beautiful and somehow comforting following those three intense weeks behind the Iron Curtain.

On my first morning back in Zurich, I was in the Jemoli department store, having planned to go for lunch later to my favourite restaurant near Paradeplatz. At about 11:00 a.m. as I was happily wandering through the housewares department, unexpectedly, the Lord said, “Go to McDonalds...”

I repeated the instruction incredulously. “Go to *McDonalds*?!?!?” And then I proceeded to immediately list four reasons why I *shouldn't* go to McDonalds! First of all, I wasn't hungry. Secondly, I had already chosen the restaurant that I *wanted* to go to for lunch. Thirdly, I don't particularly *like* McDonalds—especially not in a foreign country where there are so many local places with regional cuisine to choose from! And, last but not least, it didn't make any sense whatsoever!

But here's the catch. If our lives truly belong to the Lord, we have to live with the knowledge that at all times and in all circumstances, *He knows what He is doing and why He is doing it*. It bypasses human logic. So, when He then spoke to my heart, “What do you have to lose by obeying?”—I shrugged my shoulders—and *I went to McDonalds*, which was only two blocks away from Jemoli.

When I arrived, I knew that the Lord had sent me there but I had no idea what to expect. Deciding that I might as well order *something*, I stepped into line. A moment later a Swiss woman stepped into the line in front of me. Since that sort of behaviour was very out-of-line (forgive the pun) for the Swiss, I looked surprised. The woman apologized immediately, saying, “Oh, sorry, I've never been to McDonalds before, and I didn't know quite what to do!”

I laughingly told her, “Oh, that’s alright. I live in Israel where there *are* no lines. I was just surprised to see it happen in Switzerland!”

She was interested in the fact that I came from Israel, and as McDonalds was crowded that day, we decided to sit together.

As soon as we were settled, she told me her name, and then I told her my name. And then it happened—the great moment that the Lord had pre-arranged.

As soon as I told her my name, she began to cry. And this is the amazing story that she had to tell: “Yesterday was ‘Women’s Day’ in Switzerland,” she said, “and I was listening to a radio program about women authors. They began to talk about your book.” (The German edition of my book *I Am My Beloved’s* was very well known in Germany and in Switzerland). She continued. “I’ve never believed in God, but yesterday I prayed for the very first time in my life. I said, ‘God, if You’re real—help me to know how to get a copy of that book!’”

I teasingly told her, “Wow, God must *really* love you! He didn’t just send you the book—He sent you the *author*!” and we laughed together.

Then I explained to her how I had been in Jemoli department store when the Lord prompted me to leave at once for McDonalds. She said with amazement in her voice, “I felt to come here, too! I’d never been to McDonalds before!” We were both so blessed and amazed! Before we parted, I took her address so that I could send her a copy of my book right away. (The German edition is called *Ich Gehöre Meinem Geliebten*)

When I returned to my little room that evening, I got on my face before the Lord to thank Him with all my heart for having helped me to have been obedient to the prompting within my heart. It greatly changed that woman’s life and I was so grateful to Him for having arranged it all!! (As I’m writing this quite a few years later, I have to add that if I got on my face at my age now—I probably wouldn’t be able to get up again!!!)



At the end of the 21<sup>st</sup> Chapter of Yochanan (John), he wrote:

“And there are also many other things that Yeshua did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.”

Yochanan 21: 25

Yochanan wrote that after having spent three years with Yeshua and the other apostles. It’s hard to imagine how many things they would have experienced as they were with Him on a daily basis.

As I complete this book it is towards the end of 2021. By now I have served the Lord daily for more than forty years. As a result, I have had many, many experiences and adventures of every kind and have seen the greatness of His love for people as I travelled throughout the world. As a result, I could probably continue sharing adventures almost forever! But the purpose of this book is to encourage *you*, the reader.

When I first came to know the Lord and He challenged me to serve Him full time, I have tried to follow daily the simple advice that Yeshua's mother Miriam gave to the servants that day at the wedding in Cana—the day of the first miracle—when He changed the water into wine. Miriam said that day, *“Whatever He says to you, do it.”* *Yochanan 2:5*

That is the best advice that I can give to you.

*“Whatever He says to you, do it.”*

And let the adventures begin...

