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**The Recent Conflict**

Again Israel has been forced to wage a harsh military campaign against the Hamas regime in Gaza, following repeated rocket attacks, firm warnings from Israel and Hamas preparations to attack Israel through an extensive attack tunnel system and the accumulation of medium-range rocketry with a range that covered most of Israel. Much as President Kennedy could not countenance Russian rocketry in Cuba, Israel could not countenance evident preparations made by Hamas to attack.

As usual in an asymmetric conflict in which a terrorist organization engages a country, Israel found itself combating a deceitful, immoral foe who observed none of the rules of war and was not inhibited in the least by the suffering of the people it claimed to represent. Hamas hid its fighters, launching pads, munitions and other military material in civilian homes, hospitals, schools and kindergartens, even in mosques and UN compounds, violating the sanctity of their own houses of worship and the special status accorded United Nations facilities. Hamas even used Red Crescent ambulances to transport troops and attacked a field hospital set up by Israel to treat Palestinian wounded.

At the same time, it lobbed thousands of rockets at Israeli cities, staged attempted commando raids and sent suicide bombers against Israeli civilians and troops, repeatedly violating humanitarian cease-fires granted by Israel, four times refusing proffered cease-fires of which Israel had no need but would allow Hamas to care for its civilian population, tend to its wounded and bury its dead.



Israel's readiness foiled Hamas plans by nipping commando raids in the bud, intercepting most of the rockets that would have caused Israeli casualties or strategic damage and entering Gaza to find and destroy the tunnels. It now remains to be seen how the present round of violence will end. Israel has no interest in blockading Gaza so long as liberties granted are not used to prepare for the next, more vicious, round.

## Ministry and Family News

Having completed an abbreviated **tour in the US**, I am now home, at work, while Bracha remained for another two weeks in the US to assist Keith and Shlomit upon the arrival of their third child and second daughter.

In the course of the recent tour we visited various churches and our three daughters, who live in the USA. At the same time, I edited my book on Matthew and continued translating the New Testament into modern Hebrew, preached and taught in various locations and honed the commentary on Colossians. We drove just under 8000 miles.

While the conflict in Gaza continued, I was often **on the verge of returning home** and had made the necessary preparations should my return be justified. Happily, I was able to complete the tour as planned. Grace and Truth, the church I pastored for almost 33 years, was forced to cancel worship service for a time and The Hope of Israel where Bracha and I now worship met under duress, but none in the two churches suffered harm. Rose remained home, sleeping on the floor of our walk-in closet which also serves as a bomb shelter. Rockets flew and some exploded nearby or overhead, as our home is proximate to a major military airbase. No damage was incurred.

One of the goals of this tour was to endeavour to supplement our decreasing income due to the negative exchange rate between Israeli and foreign currency and in light of rising costs in Israel (a long-term reality). In this we failed, not so much as managing to cover the costs of the tour. As the year nears its end and budgets for 2015 are being prepared, we would be grateful if our supporters would kindly consider assisting us by raising the level of their support. We are now short by some 15% of the value of our income. Please inform us of your decision, should you make any such.

I made reasonable progress in **translating the NT** into limited vocabulary modern Hebrew, being near the end of work on I Thessalonians (I had hoped to complete Philippians). This is extremely enjoyable work. I wish I had adopted the habit of translating every portion of scripture before expounding it; I would have done a much better job! I now long to get back to **writing my commentary on Romans**, on which I am nearing the end. Before going over the whole work and fine-tuning it, I'm working through each of Paul's uses of the OT in this epistle, seeking to demonstrate the validity of his hermeneutic. This is an important issue for Jewish Christians.

**Bracha and I** are very well. I continue to be surprised by the level of health I have been granted: even after a two-month tour, with some 8000 miles of driving and repeated engagements, I'm as fresh and ready as ever.

The **Erez family** has bought a house in Bothell, Seattle, to be near the Richardsons. Eran will work from home, maintaining his position with SanDisk. Noam will attend a local High School and Nadav and Maya a local Christian school.

The **Thompsons** were delivered of their third child (a girl, Elinor Rae) on Sunday August 11. The **Richardsons** are likewise expecting a child (also a girl) in October. Bracha plans to remain with the Thompsons until August 18 to help following the birth and then return in October to help the Richardsons.

**Katya and Felix Volenski** have moved to Quebec and are settling in. The initial period has been extremely difficult, fraught with uncertainties, a sense of loneliness and of need. Do please pray for them.

With **Rose's** engagement terminated, she has resumed her preparations for college.

**You can help** by purchasing copies of Baruch's three books from Barnes & Noble or from Amazon, by asking for them at your local bookstore and by posting reviews of these books on Barnes & Noble or Amazon websites. The three books are:

COME LET US REASON TOGETHER (on the Unity of Jews and Gentiles in the church)  
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for our whole salvation.

JONAH: A PROPHET ON THE RUN, Shepherd Press. A non-technical but informed  
commentary on the book of Jonah, with practical application, themes for further study and  
discussion. Designed to be useful for preachers, private devotions and group Bible studies.

MALACHI: A PROPHET IN TIMES OF DISTRESS, Crossbooks. A non-technical but  
informed commentary on the book of Malachi, with practical application, themes for further  
study and discussion. Designed to be useful for preachers, private devotions and group Bible  
studies.

Events permitting, the coming issue of MaozNews will carry the next section in Baruch's  
biography. We are gratified with the kind responses received to this serialized account and  
here repeat our firm request that the series not be collated and/or published in any other  
form or by any other means.

Baruch's sermons may be heard, among other sites, on Sermon Audio. Click this link:  
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