

# Are You Prepared for Persecution?

This week was a monumental one in Israel for the body of believers in Yeshua. It could easily go into the book of Acts alongside the story of the angel of the Lord opening up the prison doors to free the apostles.

Only this time, the angel of the Lord was *closing* the prison door, for life, on a man who tried to kill God's modern-day apostles.

The man who has come to be known as the "Jewish Terrorist," Jack Teitel, was sentenced to 80 years in prison for multiple murders and bombings. One of those bombings was at the home of a Messianic Jewish family. Teitel targeted the Ortiz family because they lead a Messianic congregation and are very active in evangelism to both Jews and Arabs.

I have personally been with David Ortiz on some of his radical missions for the Lord. I've gone with him to the border of the West Bank, as he waited for a Palestinian Christian pastor, to appear out of the woods. David was bringing him some supplies, mostly clothing for his congregation.

The pastor appeared, gratefully took the supplies, then disappeared into the woods again. It was a clandestine mission, for sure. David told me, later, that pastor is sick with cancer and is persecuted heavily by the ruling Palestinian Authority.

I also remember a couple of years ago when Maoz Publishing printed 50,000 copies of the book, *Betrayed* by Stan Telchin, in Hebrew. The short book, about a Jewish man who came to faith in Yeshua, is an excellent resource to give out to seeking Israelis. Maoz sent notices to every congregation in Israel, that they could come and take as many copies of the

book as they wanted, to give away for free.

In the end, only two congregational leaders showed up that day. Howard Bass from a congregation in Beersheva and David Ortiz.

Not surprisingly both Howard and David have suffered violent persecution for their boldness of faith.

### **It's Only Just Begun**

So while we did experience a victory this week, the battle is far from over. Jack Teitel won't be able to hurt Messianic Jews anymore, but he was hardly alone in his violent ideology.

Teitel admitted to the court that he used to attend meetings with the group Yad L'Achim. He also admitted to volunteering for the group. While Yad L'Achim denies telling Teitel to carry out violent acts, there has been no indication they disagreed with anything he did.

Yad L'Achim proudly boasts of their work to stop any activity by Messianic Jews, anywhere in Israel. That could mean many things: Bringing a crowd to storm a congregation on a Shabbat morning or following a group on an outreach and grabbing their materials and tearing them up; throwing stones at people trying to share the Gospel; infiltrating the government's department of Interior and interfering with believers who want to immigrate to Israel; hanging up posters with believers' names, photos and addresses all over Israel; and on and on and on ...

And worst of all, did you know that Yad L'Achim is a registered nonprofit organization in America, that people like Jack Teitel can make tax-deductible donations to support Yad L'Achim? All with the blessing of the American government!

Where are the believers in America to rise up and call their Congressman to demand this stop immediately? Where is the outrage? Is the church in America asleep?

## **Responding in Love**

Perhaps even more heartening than the sentencing that came this week for Teitel from an Israeli court, was the response of the Ortiz family afterwards. As they gave interviews on Israeli television and to Israeli newspapers, they spoke of their forgiveness towards Teitel and were unapologetic for their faith in Yeshua.

They have been through a fire like most of us will never know in our lives. God chose to use their family in an extraordinary way to glorify Himself.

They have endured five years of hell—hospitals and courtrooms and violence and ostracism. Yet they have responded with only love and faith.

Would you do the same? Are you ready to be hated for your faith in Yeshua?

Will you rejoice like the apostles if you are beaten and imprisoned?

Have you truly counted the cost for what your faith could mean to your life one day? If not, you should.

“And the high priest asked them, saying, ‘Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man’s blood on us!’ But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: ‘We ought to obey God rather than men.’” (Acts 5:28-29)

**Chaim Goldberg** *is the director of media for Maoz Israel and writes a weekly column for Charisma’s Standing With Israel website.*