

BREAKING: Charisma News Israel at War Update, Live From the Scene

In full view of the Gaza Strip in Israel, Jonathan Feldstein and his family were rudely awakened Saturday morning at around 6:20 a.m. by a loud siren, only a few hours after they had returned from their daughter's home from a "lovely" holiday meal for Sukkot, the Feast of Tabernacles.

Living in Israel, Feldstein, an Orthodox Jew and regular contributor to Charisma News, and his family are accustomed to sirens that signal military-type attacks from terrorist groups like Hamas. These attacks are frequent.

But this time, the incident was much different. Feldstein says "thousands" of rockets—3,000 is the number he heard—rained down on Israelis during Shabbat, a time of the week for rest and spending time with family. From news accounts, more than 700 Israelis died while hundreds more were kidnapped by members of the reprehensible terrorist group.

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The attack came as a complete shock to Feldstein and his fellow Israelis, who were in the middle of the Sabbath and were completely offline. They didn't know about any of it—until the sirens sounded.

"We were peacefully asleep in bed when the air raid sirens went off, about 50 yards behind my bedroom window," Feldstein tells Charisma News in a live video interview. "You know, some people don't wake up from their alarm clocks, but this is

something you don't sleep through. We grabbed our stuff, and my wife and I went downstairs to our bomb shelter. It's a standard Israeli construction to have a bomb shelter in your house.

"We had two of our six kids at home, and the four of us sat for several minutes until we heard explosions," he says. "But what was surreal was that we were sort of in between being awake and asleep while you're just lying there and not completely aware of what's going on. I didn't think it was real. I paid no attention to it. Then moments later, we realized when we were scurrying down to the bomb shelter that the booms we heard were the Iron Dome knocking out rockets that had been fired 40 or maybe 45 miles from the Gaza Strip to where we live in the Judean mountains just south of Jerusalem.

What became real to the Feldsteins and others was that war—a very real war—had come to their own backyard, and on Shabbat, which is a dangerous time of no communications for Orthodox Jews in Israel.

"The general rule in observing the traditions of Shabbat is that if it's not life threatening; you're not using technology," Feldstein says. "You can be completely unplugged. So we didn't even have lights on in our bomb shelter because no one thought at that time that's where we would be."

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Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu issued a declaration of war against Hamas, saying in a statement:

Hamas forces invaded Israeli territory on the morning of a holiday and Shabbat and murdered innocent civilians, children and the elderly. Hamas started a cruel and evil war.

We will win this war, but the price is too heavy to bear. This is a difficult day for all of us. Hamas wants to murder

us all. It is an enemy that murders innocent children and mothers in their homes. ... What happened today is not seen in Israel and I will make sure that it does not happen again. The entire government stands behind this position.

Feldstein says there may be terrorists “camped out” in his own community and others, so this is a time where Israelis are “living in tremendous danger, tremendous fear. ... This is not a war in the sense of armies going to war against each other. This is an obscene terrorist attack against civilian populations. It is a war crime on every level.

“What Americans need to do is pray,” he adds. “I’m always praying that God will change the hearts of our enemies. But barring that, and God could have done that yesterday or last week. If he hasn’t done that yet, we have an obligation to go in and defeat our enemies. And that’s solidly biblical.” {eo}

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