

# What Israel Cost Us

David and Leah Ortiz followed the call of God and immigrated to Israel from the U.S. in 1985 with their three young children. They lead a congregation in Ariel in central Israel where they live, and the family has walked out an immense calling in Israel, boldly taking the gospel to Jews and Palestinians. But it hasn't been without backlash.

On March 20, 2008, a bomb disguised as a Purim gift package was delivered to their door by a Jewish extremist. Their youngest son, Amiel, opened it, and the bomb detonated in his hands. Amiel miraculously survived the blast and dozens of operations since then, and the Messianic Jewish family's witness has gotten only louder.

*Charisma* interviewed David and Leah Ortiz about what happened on the day their son almost died and how God has used their near-tragedy for His glory.

***Charisma:*** You were very open about your faith in Ariel from the moment you moved there, but you were warned by believers and nonbelievers alike to keep your faith to yourself. What did you do?

**David Ortiz:** I said, "If the Jews don't want me, I'll go to the Gentiles." I went to an Arab village with an Israeli friend. They beat us up, but we went back. Some of them became believers, but I didn't know what to do with them. I wasn't expecting them to multiply so quickly. When I started reaching out to the Palestinians, the people in Ariel got jealous. Then everything opened up with the Palestinians witnessing to the Jewish people and giving out Bibles in Hebrew.

***Charisma:*** You were already no stranger to persecution. What sort of threats had you encountered on both the Israeli and Palestinian side?

**David Ortiz:** The [residents] did a demonstration in front of the house in Ariel, telling me we had to leave. We were warned to keep a low profile concerning Jesus. I kept telling my neighbors about Jesus anyway. Then there were demonstrations, posters; and people literally turned their backs on us. Regarding my work among the Palestinians, the Mufti of Jerusalem issued a *fatwa* [a religious edict] against me saying, "The head of David Ortiz should be removed from his shoulders."

**Charisma:** The opposition culminated in the events of March 20, 2008. What happened then?

**David Ortiz:** My wife and I were in Jerusalem. I got a call from my son in the army telling me there was a bomb in Ariel. Then he called back to say it was on our street. My wife called Ami [Amiel]; he didn't respond. She called our housekeeper, but the police answered the phone and said to go straight to the hospital. The secret police were waiting for us. They told us a bomb was planted in our house by radical Jews.

The Lord showed me very quickly after that they wanted to kill us, damage us, erase us, but instead they critically wounded a 15-year-old boy who caught the heart of a nation and the world. When the doctor told us Ami might not make it, the truth is I didn't receive that. All of a sudden I had an injection of faith that he was going to make it.

**Charisma:** How has your testimony changed since the bombing became national news?

**David Ortiz:** In the book of Jeremiah it says, "You will no longer go to them, but they will come over to you." People come over to me now. People in Ariel that were avoiding me come up to me. In a horrible thing, God has glorified Himself.

The biggest testimony to Israel is that we have forgiven. We've been able to speak on national television that we are

Messianic believers. People now know Messianic believers exist in this country and that we are a movement. Israelis are very curious about the faith. [The bombing] is nothing you'd ever choose to have happen, but our prayer since we came here is that name of Yeshua would be lifted up in this nation.