



Amir Tsarfati
Anchor Podcast with Erez Bar-David
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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9HdLdFeWrok&t=6s>



AMIR: Hey Shalom everyone, I'm Amir Tsarfati and welcome to one more episode of our *Anchor Podcast*. And today we have such a great treat. With me today is my long lifetime friend, Erez Bar-David who actually is the person that led me to the

Lord in 1990. Actually, I'm getting depressed just from thinking about how long ago it was and how old we're getting. But anyway, Erez is not just a friend and a brother in the Lord but is someone that once I start talking to him, we can actually find ourselves talking for hours. We see things in a very similar way in many different shapes and forms. Erez normally is a very shy and reserved person, but maybe for the first time, he actually can see the urgency of the times and the seasons in which we live, and the hypocrisy in our world, and the lack of unity that we have. And Erez decided to join us today for our podcast and speak out and give us some words of wisdom and encouragement. So Erez, Shalom and welcome to our podcast.

EREZ: Thank you so much, so wonderful to be here today.

AMIR: And Erez, many people don't know that we've known each other since I think...

EREZ: ... 4th grade.

AMIR: The 4th grade, exactly.



EREZ: 4th grade...

AMIR: 4th grade...

EREZ: ... in elementary school.

AMIR: Correct. And for the longest time, I knew something is different about you and your cousin, Ayelet? Yes? You guys were in the same class with me and with some others and you were always different. I could tell you're different. I wanted to be with you and be around you. And then came the last year of high school. How do you remember that time when we finally talked about the things that matter?

EREZ: Well, as you pointed out, we go way, way back. And obviously as kids, you don't want to be different. You don't, but you know that you are. And we as a community, because my community is all believers, we...

AMIR: You live in Yad HaShmona ...

EREZ: We live in Yad HaShmona which is a community...

AMIR: ... A community of Jewish and Gentile believers that live in the western outskirts of Jerusalem, next to a Muslim Arab village and an Ultra-Orthodox Jewish town.

EREZ: That's right. Yeah. And so, us kids, the group from the place from the village, obviously, we did a lot of things together. We celebrated different celebrations that normally are not being celebrated in Israel, at least not in the Jewish—among the Jews. But when it came to school and people who were not part of our small community, it was very different. And I remember that it took many, many years for me to open up. And that, of course, reached its climax pretty much towards the end of our high school, when I felt really for the first time more comfortable and ...

AMIR: ... and confident...

EREZ: ...confident, exactly, to share my deepest beliefs with you and some of the other friends who were there at the time.

AMIR: And at the same time, I was going through my own crisis in my life. I grew up without my parents. I grew up in the foster system, which is different than what people normally see in other countries where foster care is, more or less, it's like a kid that grows with you and he's "almost" adopted. No, in those days, we were 12 foster kids in one house. And by the way, if you can hear in the background, you're hearing the F-16s taking off from the nearby Air Force Base. So basically, I went through my own life crisis which led me to decide that I want to end my life, actually. And when I decided to give the world one last chance, that was exactly when we decided to study together for the high school diploma tests. And I was invited to your house first. And I wonder how is it that, how does the whole story look like from your perspective? What were you thinking at that time?

EREZ: Well, what I remember the most is the long nights that we spent together, you and a few other friends who were actually kids in the foster family were living in the same place, in the same room even. And I remember those nights where you were kind of sleeping over at your place and during the day we would prepare for the exams. But then we had a lot of time later on to talk about a lot of important things. And I just felt that this was really the best time to, really, for the first time to take the time and really to explain what my faith was all about and who I was. Because this was a very central part of my identity, which was pretty much concealed for a long time.

AMIR: So, I knew you were different, but I didn't know why because you never really shared that.

EREZ: Right. Yeah. And you probably knew a little something about our community. You knew that we were somewhat different. You knew about the connection to Finland and all of that stuff,

and the Christians that founded the place. But we never had really time, I think, to sit down and really to talk things over. And I was also very young at the time, obviously, as you were and the others. And it wasn't like the natural thing to really evangelize, to spread the word. So, I basically did what I felt most comfortable with, which was just to explain things from my point of view, even using the limited things that I knew theologically and just really to explain what our faith was



all about.

AMIR: We were 17.

EREZ: We were 17 at the time. That's right. And I remember those long moments of you and some of the others that were there. You were just listening,

and I was actually pretty impressed by the fact that you had the patience really to listen to what some would maybe consider boring or alien or any of those things. But I really felt this thirst that you really wanted to listen and know more and more and more. And later on, I remember that my mom, especially, she took more time and she—I can physically see this in my imagination, you sitting there in our living room at home, and my mom over the Bible, and she was just showing you different verses from the Old Testament and how they point to the fulfillment in the New Testament and things of that nature. And I just felt that, yeah, there was some sort of a higher calling. There was a purpose for all of this, the fact that we met at such a young age, the fact that it took years for that to really mature, and God at the perfect moment made it happen.

AMIR: Correct. Yeah, and you were obedient to share. And I was at the bottom in my life and all I had to do is look up and listen. And do you remember that we went to see *The Jesus Film* of Campus Crusade in Jerusalem?

EREZ: Yeah, of course.

AMIR: And that was right after I asked God to show me who Yeshua is, and I went to work, and I put together... I was working in a grocery store if you remember. Every morning before school, I would go and put all the dairy products, all the fresh bread and everything inside, and then I would put together the daily newspaper and it came in different parts. And as I did, I used to read through and literally a day after, the next morning after I prayed and I asked God to show me who Yeshua is, I see a huge advertisement on Israel's number one newspaper, Yedioth Ahronoth. And it says "Yeshua" on it, which was the right spelling and the right pronunciation of Jesus' name in Hebrew. And it was *The Jesus Film* of Campus Crusade showing in a regular movie theater in Jerusalem. And we bought the ticket, even as we bought the ticket, we already encountered some interesting hatred. And then we walked in and—Years later, I think either you shared, or your mom shared with me that people were praying while we were sitting there and watching it.

EREZ: Yeah, for sure. I mean to viewers around the world, especially in the West, it seems like no big deal. But the fact that so many years ago they actually screened a film about Jesus publicly is really something that I...

AMIR: ...in Jerusalem...

EREZ: ...in Jerusalem, the most religious of cities in Israel, is mind-boggling to me. The fact that it really went kind of, at least at first, under the radar and allowed quite a few people actually to watch that.

AMIR: Exactly. And I got—this is where I decided this is it. And then my foster family, a few weeks later, kicked me out of the house. I moved to live with my aunt for a few weeks, and then you guys opened the door. And I moved to live in Yad HaShmona. I went to work in the carpentry with you.

EREZ: Yeah.

AMIR: Remember?

EREZ: Yeah.

AMIR: And then a lot of people don't know that, but we joined the IDF not just the same day, but the same minute. I'm the following ID number...

EREZ: ... number. That's right.

AMIR: You end up with 540, I'm 541.

EREZ: Yeah. Well, back in the day, it was pretty much an assembly line.

AMIR: Correct.

EREZ: So it was a kind of an open day for all those who were designated for combat units.

AMIR: Correct.

EREZ: And various different units. And so airborne and infantry and armor, you know, everything. And I remember that there were actually three of us—you remember? There was another one who was actually in front of me. And so, we were basically in line. I remember...

AMIR: Who was the other one?

EREZ: Ariel. Ariel Benzakan. He was in front of you. So, we have actually three numbers, okay, that are right after the other. And I remember...

AMIR: He was 39, you were 40, and 41.

EREZ: Exactly. Exactly. And I remember us. I can imagine that even today, you know, it was like a big hangar and you basically go in one way, and then the soldiers that have already gone been processed, they were on their way out. And I remember they were yelling at us, "Oh, rookies, rookies!" [Laughter: Both] Just a few seconds in the military. So, they were yelling at us, you know, that we are the rookies.

AMIR: They're five minutes older.

EREZ: Exactly.

AMIR: Yeah, I remember that. And then our ways split. You went to the infantry, I went to the armored corps. And you were in an elite special commander unit within the Golani Brigade. And the reason why I mentioned the Golani Brigade is later on you're going to tell us what this cap is all about. It is related to Golani, and it is related, unfortunately, also to October 7. We'll talk about that in a second. But so, Erez, so you and I went through the military service. I stayed an extra year because I was an officer, and I was in Jericho. You sat at the School for Tourism at the Hebrew University for the tour guide diploma a year before me. I joined a year later when I got out. And we both became licensed tour guides in Israel. But then you got married. You met your wife and you moved to Finland.

EREZ: That's right...

AMIR: ... and tell me a little bit about that before we move to your return and our life here now.

EREZ: Yeah, so back in the day, we had a program of volunteers. They were Christian volunteers who would come over to our, basically, Kibbutz. And they would work and live there for a little while. And my wife was one of them. And I was just fresh out of the military.

AMIR: And they worked because there was a hotel.

EREZ: There was a hotel. There was also a carpentry. And they were employed in very different works. And the idea was that they would come for anywhere between a month and maybe a year sometimes and they would get full boards, accommodation, everything, food, etc. And in return, they would work there for several hours.

AMIR: Every day.

EREZ: Almost every day. Yeah, so for the days of the week.

AMIR: And Satu, your wife?

EREZ: My wife came from Finland. She was fresh out of high school. I was fresh out of the military. And the rest is history.

AMIR: Correct. And then you moved to Finland. You had two children born there. And you studied English?

EREZ: I studied English and history, and education.

AMIR: Education. So, you're basically a teacher for English and history.

EREZ: That's right. I'm actually a certified English teacher as a foreign language.

AMIR: And you lived in Finland for how long?

EREZ: Almost 10 years.

AMIR: 10 years. And these are the 10 years I was a tour guide. And I also studied in the School of Ministry in California for a while. And then you came back and basically you decided that you want to go on as a tour guide rather than an English teacher.

EREZ: That's right.

AMIR: And we've seen a lot of things as tour guides, a lot of people, a lot of things going on. And you feel as a tour guide, you feel that everybody's view of Israel will be depending on how you teach them and how you see things. Because the way you see things is the way you communicate them and that's the way they get it.

EREZ: Absolutely.

AMIR: And that's a big responsibility.

EREZ: Absolutely. Yeah, because obviously there's so many things to talk about. When somebody comes to a different country, foreign land, most people aren't familiar with a place, let alone a place that bears such a tremendous biblical significance. And so especially for people who come, who are believers, what they expect is really to have a better understanding of things they've

been reading about for years sometimes, sometimes their entire life. And then for the first time, they make the trip of their life to the Holy Land and it's a huge responsibility for the tour guide, really, whoever is there to show them around, to make sure that things are well connected, that they have this understanding beyond just the history and the dates and the stones and this and that, the artifacts, but truly to have a kind of a spiritual take that they can take with them later on and will help them in their growth, in their spiritual life.

AMIR: As Israelis, we can divide our lives in many different ways. I mean, before we were soldiers, after we got drafted, before we were married, after we got married, before we were parents, after; but I think most of the Israelis will agree with me that October 7th is another way to measure the before and after. And another point in our lifetime that we will always ask ourselves, "Where were we during that day and what are we taking with us from that day?" Now, personally, I was on a speaking tour. I was in Philadelphia at that time. I was literally asleep, it was midnight my time... after midnight, actually. I got up because I heard so much chatter on the WhatsApp of the family. And it's Saturday morning, why would they send so many messages? So, I got up to check my phone and that's when I saw... Because I have this Telegram channel and at that time it was all about news. I was also following a lot of news sources and some of them were actually Hamas affiliated, Hezbollah affiliated. I actually saw Hamas's broadcast, live broadcast while the whole massacre took place. I saw *horrific* things. And I'm sitting in my hotel room in Philadelphia. Where were you on October 7th?

EREZ: Yeah, I think if we can compare that event to anything that viewers, especially in America, can relate to, it's September 11th. Today, oftentimes people ask, "Where were you on that day?" And I can relate to that [AMIR: "I was in New York."] because it was on that magnitude. I was actually on my way abroad to Europe [AMIR: "Really?"] on that day.

AMIR: So, you were on the plane?

EREZ: I was on the plane. I was about an hour in the air already.

AMIR: So, it's 5:30, ...

EREZ: ... at 5:30 our flight took off. Obviously we heard some things. People, Israelis that were sitting on the plane, they were talking among themselves that something was happening in the South. But at the time, at the moment, it didn't really feel like anything special because we've kind of gotten used to that.

AMIR: Correct. Especially when you want to run away from problems.

EREZ: Exactly. Yeah. And they were talking about some missile attacks and such but...

AMIR: ... We're used to it.

EREZ: There wasn't something out of the ordinary. I think the first time that it really hit me, what really happened was when we already landed, and I remember initially we didn't even look at the news or anything like that. We just went on our with our plans. And then towards the end of the day when we got checked into the hotel, man, every single channel on TV—and it was like all the news and everything, it was just showing these reels of the horrendous things that were happening. Obviously it was Europe's. They didn't show the uncensored things. But I remember that the first time that really hit me, the magnitude of that, was footage of an Israeli Humvee (High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle) that was driven through the streets of Gaza. And to those that are not familiar with that, this is a big thing because, in my opinion, it's unprecedented. You don't really see Israeli equipment, military equipment, being paraded in an Arab city, let alone in the Gaza Strip. And all of a sudden to see that with all the antennas and the gear and everything...

AMIR: It's somewhat like probably many Americans felt when the Taliban was parading with all of their machinery when they pulled out of Afghanistan.

EREZ: Yeah, that's right. That's right. And then, of course, I called back, and I mean, the whole country was in a state of shock. I think it took many hours even for people here in Israel to really understand what was happening because it took hours and hours for things to unfold. I think even senior command wasn't really aware of what was happening in the opening phases of that attack, let alone people were as in my case abroad. But yeah, as soon as I started speaking with my relatives, with Satu, my wife, who was left in Israel, we realized the severity of the occasion. And again, it wasn't something that was just like merely an attack, a sudden attack—and we've experienced that in the past—but there was a serious threat that as to what was going to happen next, because now we know much more about the plan, the really satanic plan that the Iranians had planned and orchestrated initially. They had a plan to combine all those attacks against Israel at the same time. And of course, what we know today is that it didn't really go according to their plan miraculously. The fact that that Sinwar decided to go on his own and wanted to take all the credit for himself meant that we're up against Hamas, but not under a combined attack assault from every direction, because the Iranian plan was to assault us from various different directions. And the Radwan force in the north invading Galilee, and then a barrage of missiles from Iran and the Houthis—and everything was supposed to happen at the same time all those combined forces, the axis of evil, so to speak. And the fact that it was just at the time just one front, meant that despite the surprise and the shock, we could actually react to that much, much better. But at the time, it was very unclear. And I remember there were even rumors that something might happen internally inside of Israel. Bear in mind, we have millions of Arabs living, whether in the West Bank, I mean, in Judea and Samaria, but also Israeli citizens and major concerns that that might escalate into an all-out war with them.

AMIR: A lot of things changed since. I think that I can people ask me, I say, I'm the different person. And I think that I also can tell you that we're a different nation. All the dreams about peace with the "peace-loving-Palestinians", everybody understands this was all a smokescreen to the real intention to destroy us. Because it's one thing that thousands invaded and massacred and butchered, but it's another thing to see that the rest cheered up for that and never condemned it and actually supported it. So basically, if I may say, 90% of the Palestinians either did it or supported it.

EREZ: Well, unfortunately, not only the Palestinians.

AMIR: I know, but I'm just saying those are the people that the world thinks that we need to have peace with.

EREZ: Of course. Yeah...

AMIR: Of course, the rest of the world, it didn't take more than a few days to, or few hours in some cases. So, when you and I were talking about that, first of all, you shared with me that in a very unexplained way, in all of your career as a tour guide, we never really took people to the border with Gaza. It was never a part of our tour. But yet two weeks before October 7th, you found yourself right there. Can you tell us a little bit about that?

EREZ: That was a very, very unique and unusual kind of detour that we did. It just so happened, just a couple of weeks before October 7 that my tour group was invited over to one of the outposts right outside of the Gaza border, outside of the Gaza Strip. And we met the soldiers, some of whom were killed two weeks later.

AMIR: Many of them.

EREZ: Yeah, many of them, yes.

AMIR: In that same outpost, more than 50 people...

EREZ: ... 53 if I remember correctly, 53 soldiers were killed. Quite a few were taken into Gaza from that particular outpost. And it was Nahal Oz. They really suffered the brunt of the assault, they and several other.

AMIR: So again, people may not know, but there is Kibbutz Nahal Oz, which is a civilian community, and then there was a military outpost. It was supposed to defend the Kibbutz and also be there to see what's going on in Gaza. And you visited the military outpost. But October 7 was a disaster for both the outpost and the kibbutz itself...

EREZ: The outposts were designed to defend the border. They were designed and placed there in order to defend the civilian population. And Hamas knew that very well, and therefore, in the morning of October 7, they first targeted those outposts. They took them out. I mean, think of them as just like the forts in the old West in America. By disabling them and having those soldiers being forced to defend themselves rather than the civilians, they did two things. First of all, they managed to obviously hit those bases. But more importantly, ...

AMIR: ...They left the civilians vulnerable

EREZ: ...Exactly, exactly. They were completely left to defend for themselves. And that explains also the magnitude of the disaster and the fact that they could go freely in many cases into those Kibbutz for hours on their rampage of murder and rape and everything else.

AMIR: Our military and our secret service sold us the illusion that we're well-protected, that the border fence is super—the electronic one—is super, super sophisticated, and that we have enough cameras and sensors. They sold us this illusion that the Palestinians are not exactly into any confrontation because they understand the ramification of it. They said to us that all they want is work, work in Israel and that everything else is okay. They never really alerted the people nor, not

even the soldiers themselves, because you said that two weeks before October 7, your visit to that outpost exposed to you a reality where *nobody* thought that Gaza is a threat. Am I right?

EREZ: Absolutely. Absolutely. I was actually shocked to see what I saw there because I was myself a soldier, a combat soldier, and back in the day, you would pretty much know what to expect when you would reach a border outpost. And that didn't really seem like a border outpost to me. It seemed like one of those bases may be in the rear part of the country where, obviously, you don't really need to take the same precautions and the same procedures as right on the border itself. But what shocked me more was the sense of security that the soldiers themselves had, the way they conducted themselves.

AMIR: Self-confidence that nothing will happen.

EREZ: Yeah. I mean, they trusted the system. They trusted the surveillance cameras and the border fence and everything. And at the end of the day, it turns out to be an illusion. It was a false sense of security. And because of that, they were simply unprepared. Obviously, I don't blame the soldiers themselves because they take their commands from their superior ones. But the truth of the matter is that they were outgunned, they were ill-prepared, and they were taken by complete surprise. And those young soldiers suffered.

AMIR: And our deep state, our secret service and the highest command of our military, truly believed that there's a partner on the other side and "let's not do anything that might anger them" or "let's not have," they call it "miscalculation," all of that crap, excuse me, for my French. And then came October 7 and showed us it was all a big illusion.

EREZ: But I think this is something that goes way beyond Israel. Israel, of course, is a tiny little island of democracy and Western civilization, but it's part of the broader Western civilized world. And I think that one of the biggest problems we have in the West is the premise that the others, all

the other cultures, they're all the same. I mean, people are the same. They have the same needs, they have the same view of life, they have the same objectives, and this is simply false. Obviously, everybody has the same basic needs: Everybody needs to eat. Everybody needs to drink. Everybody needs to breathe air. But that's where it ends.

AMIR: Just as some people prefer to drink water, other want to drink blood.

EREZ: I think what, again, and I think this is also part of... kind of something that relates really to the way the West conducts itself. I mean, we are used to terms like "a dialogue" or "compromise" or these type of things... "live and let live."

AMIR: Even now, when they say there is a deal with Iran, "The Iranians told us that they will never have weapons, a nuclear weapon. They assured us that they will not acquire. They told us that...." Are you out of your mind? Look, what do you mean they told us? They will tell you whatever you want to hear because they know you're stupid.

EREZ: That's right.

AMIR: But they will do what they want to do, and we already know what they want to do.

EREZ: First of all, deception in the name of their religion is something not only acceptable but recommended. *Taqiyyah*, probably a familiar term. And so, it's all part of their natural tendency. It's not even something that they have to work hard to achieve or that they have some problems, moral problems dealing with. But again, I think it all goes back to the same desire that we have as people of the West to live in peace because we cherish life. And for the most part, people in Israel, just like people in America, just like people in Europe, they have pretty much the same goals in life. They want to see their families prosper. They want to develop things. They want to... This is basically their goals in life, right? But where it comes to Islamic fanaticism, it is exactly the opposite. Their goal is the destruction of the non-Muslims. It's to create a global Islamic world.

This is their purpose. And for that, they will do anything. And it doesn't matter. No sacrifice is too grand in order to achieve that final victory. And this is exactly where the West is falling again and again to those traps. Because again, they don't realize there's no real partner on the other side. And as they say, it takes two for a tango. But when you have this kind of miscommunication, it's like they're transmitting on completely different frequencies.

AMIR: Yeah. As you said, and I also say many times, stop speaking English and start speaking Arabic.

EREZ: Absolutely.

AMIR: Listen in Arabic and talk to them in Arabic because they will use English to tell you what you want to hear, but they will speak Arabic to their own people and tell them what they really are going to do.

EREZ: That's exactly what our former politicians used to say, "I don't care what Yasser Arafat says in English. I do care what he says in Arabic."

AMIR: Correct.

EREZ: And again, I don't think that we as Israelis are immune to that. And I think this is also the reason why, especially before October 7, there were a lot of Israelis, Israeli Jews, who would blame themselves for supposedly something that happened. It's a bit like the abused-wife syndrome. She always blames herself rather than to see the fault in her husband. But at the end of the day, when you look at what it's all about, it's one way. It's essentially we are forced to fight for our mere survival. We are defending ourselves. We're fighting an existential war. We don't have a choice. We don't love it. We don't like it. But we have no other choice.

AMIR: And the problem is people have an image of us as a nation that always wants to fight. No, we want to actually have peace, and we want to live in peace. But when we are being attacked, we

are not going to sit and do nothing. People, after October 7, I always tell people all around the world, I don't care what you think about me anymore. I don't care if you love me, you hate me, support me, you're against me; all I want is to survive and live and I will do whatever it takes to do that. If we need to go into Gaza, if we need to go into Lebanon, if we need to go into Syria, if we need to visit in Yemen or in Tehran, we will do whatever it takes for *us* to live in peace. And we don't have any territorial demands neither in Lebanon nor in Syria, certainly not in Yemen or in Iran or in Turkey or other places. But they all day long plot to destroy us. And we will not allow that to happen, and we'll do whatever it takes.

Now let's move to this is another front, which is global anti-Semitism and the sense that it's not just in the kinetic physical, but it's a spiritual warfare. Let's talk about that.

EREZ: Yeah, first of all, I want to point out that October 7 was especially important in the sense that all masks went off. And I think that it's especially important, it was important for the local Israeli public here, because again, a lot of Israelis wanted to feel embraced by the West, especially the West. They felt that they were part of that family. And I think that what October 7 demonstrated above all was the lack of compassion, the hostility that all those that were supposed to back us up had. There was no sympathy for Israel. I mean, I'm talking about the next day that there were already marches and demonstrations against Israel. They already started talking about apartheid and genocide and all those big words, right, a day after the worst day in decades for Israel, perhaps ever in the modern history of Israel. And I think that really shook up a lot of people. And I'm not talking about believers or people or members of the conservative camp here in Israel who lived that all along, especially liberals, liberals. I think that was really a death blow to the liberal camp in Israel, because they realize if you have these LGBTQ-whatever marching on the streets, demonstrating against Israel and for Hamas and all those radical organizations...

AMIR: ...that will eat them for breakfast, ...

EREZ: ... that will chew them up. How can you really excuse that? How can you actually try to even appeal to them?

AMIR: And that's when you know it's spiritual.

EREZ: That's when you know that it's spiritual. That's exactly when you know that it's spiritual. And I think to us as believers, I think it was known all along. I mean, we knew that.

AMIR: Because we speak in that language of we're not only fighting against flesh and blood, but against powers and principalities. We know that there is a spiritual aspect to everything that is going on around the world. But the average Israeli doesn't really much look into that part.

EREZ: Yeah because the so-called pro-Palestine camp is really not the pro-Palestine camp. It's the anti-Israel camp.

AMIR: Or the Jew-hating.

EREZ: Or the Jew-hating, exactly. It has nothing to do. They could care less about the Palestinians or any other person who lives there. The Palestinians are the dagger that is supposed to serve the death blow to Israel.

AMIR: So, who hates us? Obviously, most of those who march in the streets don't have a clue where we are, who we are. Many of them never met a Jew in their life. They chant "From the river to the sea," they don't even know the river or the sea. So obviously, I don't think it's them. Obviously, there is a bigger hatred from a bigger and a higher level.

EREZ: I think what's really common for all those people that are marching on the streets, all those people who have this rage and this disdain for Israel and the Jews and even Christians from around the world is, in my opinion, the hate of God, the God of Israel. I think it all goes back to that.

AMIR: You know, you're so right. And a lot of people don't know that. And that's one of the reasons I love quoting Psalm 83. I believe that in the prophetic, it was a psalm that has been prophetically fulfilled in the War of Independence. But it says, **"A Song. A Psalm of Asaph. ¹ Do not keep silent, O God! Do not hold Your peace, and do not be still, O God! ² For behold, Your enemies make a tumult; and those who hate You have lifted up their head. ³ They have taken crafty counsel against Your people, and consulted together against Your sheltered ones. ⁴ They have said, 'Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation, that the name of Israel may be remembered no more.'"** (Psalm 83:1-4) Their problem with Israel is because Israel is the sheltered ones and God's people, and they hate God, and they're the enemies of God. And they cannot fight God, so they go after His people. But they don't understand, they're His sheltered ones. And so, you're saying this is it. It's not about us as much as it's about God.

EREZ: Oh, certainly, certainly. It all goes back to God because the fact that the Jewish people are God's chosen people. And by the way, chosen doesn't mean better.

AMIR: Exactly.

EREZ: It's chosen for a purpose. And I believe that that purpose will serve a very, very central role in the end time. The devil knows that. And so, what can be better than to try and eliminate that, to take away those who represent God on earth? I think the tragedy is that Israelis and Jews around the world, and many of them, of course, they don't understand why they're being hated in such a manner. They don't understand that point. Oftentimes, you hear people say, "Well, maybe because they're successful, because they're this and they're that. Maybe it's jealousy." I don't think it's that. I think it doesn't really matter what they do, or they don't do. You see people who have this rage against is something spiritual.

AMIR: Thank you for saying that because a lot of Jewish people think that if I only do things better, if I only sound better, look better, they may like me then. And they miss the point. It's not about you. They hate God, and they'll always hate you because they hate Him. And it's so right... and you're so right that a lot of Israelis and a lot of Jews around the world don't understand that and therefore, they're frustrated and angry. And accusations such as, "You are baby killers" and all of that, when you know that we could have ended up that war a day later if we didn't really care about human lives. So many of our soldiers were killed *because* we were so cautious, and I wish we were not. And then you're asking yourself, "Wait a minute, how come they don't see it?" They don't want to see it. They don't want to see; they'll turn their blind eye to 40,000 Iranians that were butchered within 48 hours by their own regime, because it doesn't serve the narrative, and it doesn't have anything to do with the Jews that "we need to hate, and we need to hate them, we don't even know why." It's because it's all satanic.

EREZ: But Amir, there's nothing new under the sun. When you read through the Old Testament, through the Bible, and you look at the ancient Hebrew tribes, they were trying to assimilate. They were trying to do the exact same thing that modern day Israelis and Jews around the world are trying to do. Instead of doing what God had called them up to do in order to try and draw closer to God and to realize and try and seek the true God and who He really is, they're trying to go the opposite direction, trying to supposedly be accepted by those who reject them.

AMIR: Some Israeli professors in the University of New York and others, super liberal, super liberal, and yet they were hated and boycotted and they couldn't believe that their peers, their best buddies now turn on them. But I want to show you something very interesting. I've been teaching about Balaam and Balak, the king of Moab and all of that. And it's interesting because when Balak, Balak Ben Zippor, the son of Zippor sent people to get Balaam it's very interesting to see how he

is telling him something very interesting. I think it's in chapter 20... 22 if I'm not mistaken... here [AMIR: searches in the Bible]. So those people came to him and look what he says. **“¹⁰ So Balaam said to God, ‘Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, has sent to me, saying, “Look, a people has come out of Egypt, and they cover the face of the earth....”” (Numbers 22: 10)** This whole “the Jews are taking over the world” conspiracy existed a minute after the Jews were born as a nation already. And it justified paying someone to go and curse them because, “Well, let's kill it when it's still young.” And it's very interesting to see that eventually, Balaam couldn't curse them, he blessed them. And when I looked at all the chapters that led to Numbers 23, it's full of the sinful nature of Israel. In other words, God said, “Don't curse them because they're not cursed,” not because they were perfect, they were sinning left and right almost every day. And yet God had a purpose for them, a plan for them, especially in order to bring the Messiah to the world and eventually to bring them to faith. And it's interesting to see that it's the same old trick, the enemy is deceiving people.

EREZ: The nation of Israel was supposed to be a vessel, an instrument in the hands of God. And unfortunately, time and time again, to this day, they're failing. But it's not about them and that's the point. It's about God. And God has preserved the nation of Israel for a purpose. It's all part of His grand plan.

AMIR: For a reason and for a season.

EREZ: But again, we turn back to October 7. And imagine there's so much, such a great deal of symbolism there. Imagine it happened almost to the day, 50 years after the outbreak of the Yom Kippur War. The Yom Kippur War to those who are unfamiliar with that conflict in 1973, actually it was open on October 6, almost to the day, it started off very, very similar to October 7...

AMIR: We were invaded...

EREZ: ...complacency. No, but I'm talking about the mood in the nation. That it's our military, it's our might, God wasn't even in the picture. And then the worst thing happened. And then 50 years later, I believe there's a great deal of symbolism.

AMIR: You're right. I agree with you.

EREZ: And so, I think one of the main questions is, "Why did God choose that?" And by the way, on the Day of Atonement, that was October 6.

AMIR: Yom Kippur in 1973.

EREZ: Exactly.

AMIR: And then it was in the day of...

EREZ: Yeah so, 50 years later, the same thing happens as if we learned nothing from that experience. But I personally believe that just like 50 years ago, God did that or allowed that to happen for a purpose: to shake us up, to shake us up first as a nation, but also as believers around the world. Exactly.

AMIR: Yeah, you're right. And that brings me to our kind of last segment for today. And I hope that you'll come again for more because I think there's so much more to talk about. But what is the believer's call to action that you think has to be in these last days?

EREZ: I think that the first thing and the most important thing perhaps is really to identify the source of all this. I think there's a great deal of confusion. There's a great deal of fear also among believers around the world. And I think that the most important thing before you start thinking about, "Okay, what is my role in all of this?" is to identify the problem, to identify what it's all about. And this is something that perhaps we, you and I know, but it's not something that we can take for granted. People around the world, Christians, people who have read the Scriptures their entire life and all of a sudden they're exposed to all those lies. I think there's a serious danger that

they too might go with the flow, so to speak, if they're not firm, they don't really understand what it's all about.

And so, when we understand that it's all part of a spiritual warfare, that we're drawing very, very close to the end time, we are in a way already living in the end time. But we're, this is like the final leg. We need to take all these things that are happening around us very seriously. And we need to think first and foremost, what is our place? What is our role in these dramatic historical events? Are we going to sit on the bench? Are we going to join the mob against God's chosen people? Are we going to betray everything the Scriptures are talking about?

AMIR: So, is that urgency that you feel, is that what caused you to come and speak out today?

EREZ: Absolutely, absolutely.

AMIR: You think it's enough with the days that I would sit and just rant about those things on a WhatsApp group?

EREZ: Absolutely, absolutely. It's not enough to be in a kind of an echo chamber with people that are like you. We need to take the battle over to the enemy. We cannot allow ourselves to remain passive or be intimidated or scared by things that are happening around us. And I think that a lot of things that are happening around us, October 7, a lot of things that happened since, are designed to stir us, to shake us up, and to wake us up and to, as a kind of a rally for God's army, to go and do their role in the accomplishment of God's grand plan.

AMIR: And I also think that God is, in the last few days, is trying also to tell us, "Do not trust world leaders. Trust Me. Do not put your trust in princes and presidents."

EREZ: Cursed is the man...

AMIR: Exactly. Yeah.

EREZ: ...who puts his trust in men.

AMIR: And so, I think that we all understand that, and we all know, look, I don't know what the outcome of America is going to be or Europe, but I know exactly the end of the story for us. It's all written. We don't have to guess. And I think that we know that the day will come when God is going to fight for us. And eventually also at the very end, the end of the tribulation, all Israel will be saved, at least those who survived that. And so, it's comforting to know that, but we know that we don't have the luxury of not saying anything or not doing anything. And yeah, do you have any encouraging last words to tell people in these...? Remember, there's hundreds of thousands of people that are watching, mostly believers, obviously, from all over the world. And I think that with all the negativity, they want also to hear some words of encouragement.

EREZ: Well, I think the most important thing is to remember that it's all part of God's grand plan. God is in control completely. It's no surprise to God. He allows all these things to happen for a reason, for a purpose. We know that as the time draws closer and closer to the end, things will get tougher. There's no question about that. We know that eventually the whole world will turn against Israel. And by the way, not only against Israel, against believers, believers will have to make a choice. Sometimes they would be even martyred for their faith, right? So hard times are coming. But at the end of the day, it's nothing in comparison to eternity and to the promises that we have for eternity. And I always because of our upbringing, the fact that we've been in the military, I always kind of fall back on these memories in basic boot camp. It's really tough. It's really tough. And when you're there in the thick of the woods, you kind of think to yourself, "Man, I wish I could get out of this, what do I need this for?"

AMIR: Well, I remember those days.

EREZ: But it's a short time. It's just a quick and short episode compared to the rest of your service. And then you enjoy it so much more understanding the things that you have accomplished.

And so, in retrospect, I'm pretty sure... first of all, we won't remember all these hardships in eternity. But I think that, again, a word of encouragement is that we know how the story ends. And it ends in complete victory, not earthly victory, but heavenly victory.

AMIR: And when you see the finish line, you don't want to stop running.

EREZ: Absolutely.

AMIR: This is the right time to just keep on running the race, fighting the good fight and keeping the faith, as Paul said to Timothy.

EREZ: And we also need to remember that it all boils down to one moment when we will be facing the Seat. And there will be one question that will matter, have you been a good and obedient servant?

AMIR: Faithful, yeah.

EREZ: That's it. They won't ask you if you belong to First Baptist or Second Baptist or Third Baptist. But this is really what counts and what matters. And so, again, I think that it's really a high time for us to be active as believers, not passive, not just to...

AMIR: Yeah, and I think everyone has a platform nowadays, if you are on a Facebook group, if you have some social media platform, all you need to do is share things, comment on things. Don't just be passive. If it's good and important, like, for example, this podcast, I encourage people right now put a comment so the algorithm will help and share. Follow us, subscribe to our channel, but also comment and share. It's the least you can do if you want a content that promotes the Word and promotes faith to go out. All it takes is just a click.

EREZ: And nothing is too little for God.

AMIR: No, not at all.

EREZ: Taking from our own experience at the time when I shared my faith with you and a few other friends, I didn't have a platform, I didn't... I wasn't in the studio or anything like that. I didn't have any preparation or anyone to mentor me as to how to speak and what to say. But I just shared. I just shared from my own perspective, and the good Lord put the right words in my mouth.

AMIR: Remind me something. Was it in your room that I saw that you had a prayer on the wall? I don't remember if it was in... Because when I came back, I put a prayer on the wall and I knelt down and I said, "Lord, show me who Yeshua is." That was it. I didn't even say that I believed because I didn't know. But that's how I prayed the hours before I went to work and found about the movie. But I think I got that idea from you.

EREZ: It may have been in our home.

AMIR: Yes, in your house.

EREZ: Whether in the living room or...

AMIR: Yeah, I spent hours and days and weeks in your house at that time. I remember your parents really were like a family to me. And that was an incredible season in my life. Well, thank you for sharing the most important thing with me.

EREZ: And just one last thing if I might add. I think especially at a time like this, it would mean the world to ordinary Jews, ordinary Israelis, if you, non-Jews and non-Israelis, were to show compassion, to show that you care about them. I mean, it would mean the world to them. They won't understand oftentimes where it's coming from because they're used to the exact opposite. But I think that's really the little that you can do just to show empathy.

AMIR: You know, people may not know that. But when I travel, as of late, I have to remove my wedding band because it has Hebrew on it. If I go through an Arab country, I will even leave my Hebrew Bible at home and I will stay with my iPad and all of that. But for a lot of Israelis, either

encountering a non-Israeli or traveling outside of Israel, it's almost like a military operation. We have to think about how the enemy... because everybody is a potential enemy.

EREZ: And this is unprecedented.

AMIR: Exactly. We've never had anything like that. And now we have to conceal where we're from. In fact, the government is telling us, the Center for Combating Terrorism is releasing statements, try to hide your Israeli identity in certain places and all that. But the point is this, that's why it's so important what you just said, for us as Israelis to travel or to encounter a non-Israeli and to find out that he actually likes us, supports us, it's a *huge* thing and it's a great encouragement. And that's already two-thirds of the way to his heart. And then when you share your faith, he listens because he understands, "Man, if that faith caused this man to love us when the whole world hates us, I want to hear more about that faith." And that's important.

Well, Erez, look, we ran out of time. I hope you'll come back again. We have so much to talk about. There're so many other things about what's going on in Israel and the rest of the world, issues and topics relevant for today. So, I hope you can come again. Until then, are you working on something or a book or do you have like a social media platform that you're developing?

EREZ: I'm old school. No, I'm not on social media. And at the moment, I'm supporting my family, of course, and I just feel that it's our role really to provide help to people around us, people who are in need. So, this is what I'm focusing my efforts on at the moment.

AMIR: All right. Well, can people find you anywhere on social media at all?

EREZ: The truth of the matter is no.

AMIR: No. Okay. Well, we will expose you on our podcast to more people as we talk more about things in the future. And until then, you heard it, fascinating conversation about the things that are going on in this country over the past almost three years. The major shift that we as Israelis went

through, but also the plan of God, the Word of God and the fact that He's in full control, it really helps and comforts all of us in these last days. I want to thank you, Erez, for being part of our *Anchor Podcast* today. Please share this video with as many people as you can. Subscribe, comment, follow, and share. Thank you and God bless you. And Shalom.

* Scripture is taken from the New King James Version unless noted otherwise.



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