

# ISRAEL

## & Christians Today

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CHRISTIANS FOR  
**ISRAEL**  
INTERNATIONAL

Understanding Israel and world events from a Biblical perspective

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View of the destruction caused by Hamas Militants in Kibbutz Kfar Aza, near the Israeli-Gaza border, in southern Israel. | Photo: Flash90

## Israel at War

The whole world witnessed the brutal savagery on Saturday 7 October. Militant Hamas and Islamic Palestinian Jihad Islamists from Gaza broke through the barrier and murdered, raped, and mistreated thousands of Israelis and foreigners.

An unknown number of people have been kidnapped and taken as hostages back into Gaza.

The scenes of wanton violence and destruction have shocked the world.

More Jews were killed in a single day than on any other day since the Holocaust.

Many people have been warning for years that something

like this would happen. It is incredible that the Israeli leadership was so ill-prepared.

This is a game-changer. The myth of Israel's invincibility has been shattered. So, too, has the myth of the 'two states' solution.

Over 1,300 people were murdered on 7 October during Hamas's cross-border attack. 126 IDF soldiers have been killed, and 199 hostages were being held in the Gaza Strip, including young children and the elderly.

Over 6,000 rockets were fired at Israel between 7 and 15 October.

Israel is preparing a ground offensive. Over 350,000

reserve soldiers have been called for duty. The Israeli Air Force has flown top ground force commanders over Gaza to familiarise them with the area and provide a bird's eye view of the region in preparation for an infantry mission in Gaza.

Hezbollah terrorist organisation has launched six anti-tank missiles at an Israeli town and military bases near the Lebanon border. The IDF has been retaliating with strikes targeting 'military infrastructure' in Lebanon. Israel has dramatically increased their forces along the Northern border amid fears Hezbollah will increase attacks.

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Emotional Farewell



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Colophon

Israel & Christians Today is the premier publication of Christians for Israel.

Mission

Our mission is to bring Biblical understanding in the Church and among the nations concerning God’s purposes for Israel and to promote comfort of Israel through prayer and action.

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# Pray for Peace of Jerusalem

## ■ Andrew Tucker

International Editor | Christians for Israel

The attack this past week is not an isolated incident but part of a larger strategy. This was a well-prepared and highly coordinated attack. Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) are extremely sophisticated, well-organised and well-funded entities.

It involves and connects many Islamist entities throughout the Middle East and Northern Africa—and beyond—founded on principles of jihad: the use of force to impose Islamism. As the Hamas Charter makes clear, the killing of Jews is central to their ideologically-driven self-identity.

It is quite clear that Iran is playing a central role in all of this. The revolutionary regime in Tehran has been financing and supporting its proxies in the region, such as Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), for decades. There is no way Hamas and PIJ could have carried out this attack without Iran’s close involvement.

In this context, it is also important to observe that the Iranian proxy Hizbollah in Lebanon is becoming involved. Hezbollah shares the Iranian regime’s goal of destroying Israel and has over 150,000 rockets in place directed against Israel. This could easily escalate into a multi-front war in which Israel will be dealing with attacks from the south, north and east.

The apparent strategic objective seems to be to draw Israel into a ground war in Gaza in which hundreds and perhaps thousands of Palestinians will be killed. In fact, that is exactly what is happening— Israel has called up over 350,000 reserve soldiers and is preparing for a massive ground offensive. Its goal is to use great force to root out and destroy Hamas. Given Hamas and PIJ deliberately use their own people as human shields, there will be many casualties.

Israel’s enemies are using psychological warfare to undermine Western confidence in the Jewish State of Israel. Dr Irwin Mansdorf describes this as follows: “When it comes to psychological warfare (often called PSYOPS), various ‘playbooks’ have been used over the years. Hamas, an ideologically driven Islamist terror



People gather and light candles to remember the victims who were murdered by Hamas militants at Dizengoff Square in Tel Aviv, 17 October 2023. | Photo: Flash90

organisation, has used several of these tactics. Most notably, they manipulate the ‘victim’ role to garner support from world opinion. When facing a stronger force like Israel, this strategy (also known as ‘psychological asymmetry’) has allowed them to undertake actions that can be classified as war crimes, and they then take cover under a blitz of distorted information that focuses on Israel as the guilty party. In essence, the asymmetry arises when the stronger military party, Israel, is forced to cease its operations, preventing it from attaining legitimate operational goals.”

It is critical that we pray into this situation with an understanding that the Enemy of the creator of this universe is doing all in his power to destroy the apple of God’s eye, to confuse the nations, and disrupt and distort God’s plans for redemption.

As Christians, we not only have the opportunity but also the duty to engage in spiritual warfare. As the Apostle Paul says in *Ephesians 3*:

“His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

He continues in *chapter 6* of the letter to the *Ephesians*:

“For our struggle is not against flesh and

blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”

We can be 100% confident that the Lord God of Israel watches over His people. The shepherd of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps (*Psalms 121*). The enemies of Israel will be defeated.

So let us pray that the spirit of God will work in the lives of all—

- for the government and people of Israel in their loss and grief
- for the families who have lost loved ones or whose next of kin are missing or captive of Hamas
- for the people of Gaza—that they also will be protected
- for the leaders of Hamas and PIJ—that there will be massive repentance and turning from evil
- that the Jewish people, the Christian world and all the nations of earth will turn to the living God and put their trust and confidence in Him, not in their own strength and wisdom.

Above all, let us pray with increased urgency for the coming of Messiah of Israel, who will judge the nations, tend to His people of Israel, and wipe the tears from every eye.

Only then will evil be overcome, and there will be true peace on earth.

## Prayer Points

### Israel

- The prophet Isaiah says about the *Aliyah* (the return of Jews to Israel), “Your children hasten back, and those who laid you waste depart from you.” (*Isaiah 49:17*) Give thanks for the return of the Jewish people to the land of the Jews! Pray that all Jews returning to Israel will soon feel at home. Pray that they will find housing and work and will soon be able to contribute to the flourishing of the country.
- There is still much unrest in Israel due to ongoing political tensions over Supreme Court reforms and large demonstrations against these reforms. Continue to pray for unity and peace among the Jewish people.
- ‘For He will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways.’ *Psalms 91:11*. There is growing turmoil on the border with Lebanon. The Iran-backed Hezbollah terror force is deploying more and more rockets on the border with Israel. Give thanks that God is Israel’s Keeper and pray that God’s angels will surround the land to protect it from danger.

For daily Prayer Points, go to our website [www.c4israel.org](http://www.c4israel.org)

### Israel & the Nations

- United Nations special envoy Francesca Albanese has called on the International Criminal Court to prosecute Israelis for apartheid. Albanese is known for her strong anti-Israel stance. Pray for Israel’s legal protection.
- Israel’s defence minister has revealed that Israel has prevented more than 50 attacks by Iran on Jews and Israelis outside Israel in recent years. Give thanks for this, and pray that Iran stops plotting attacks.
- The Lord God’s relationship to His people is very clear, “...for whoever touches you touches the apple of His eye.” (*Zechariah 2:8*). Let us pray for a deeper understanding among the nations and in churches that even though we cannot always understand all the biblical prophecies and how current events all fit in, fighting against the Jewish people means fighting against God.

### Christians for Israel

- ‘Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.’ *Colossians 4:2*. Pray that many churches will make prayer for Israel central.



# IDF Prepares for Ground War in Gaza after Murdering Israelis

■ Yochanan Visser

Correspondent in Israel

Israel has been under fire since Saturday morning, 7 October. More than 1,000 people have been killed so far and the number is expected to rise. Nearly 2,500 Israelis were injured in rocket fire and gunfire from Hamas terrorists. Hamas also kidnapped more than 100 people in Israel and transferred them to Gaza. Among those kidnapped are US citizens, a German national, 11 workers from Thailand and youths from Norway and Canada.

## Massacre After Music Festival

The Americans, Canadians and youths from Norway were attending an international music festival near kibbutz Re'im, not far from the Gaza border. Shortly after the invasion of more than a thousand Palestinian terrorists and the start of the rain of rockets, they were startled from their sleep on the festival grounds. Originally, it was because of the rockets flying overhead, but shortly afterwards they heard approaching gunfire. The Hamas terrorists who reached the festival grounds fired randomly at the fleeing crowd of two



Israeli soldiers at a staging area near the Israeli-Gaza border, in southern Israel | Photo: Flash90

found and blown up. On Monday afternoon, another infiltration attempt was made near kibbutz Zikim, south of the city of Ashkelon. A fierce firefight ensued between the terrorists and the IDF. Kibbutz Zikim was also besieged by a group of Hamas terrorists on Saturday. However, an alert kibbutznik saw the

the population in Gaza could go. Israel, however, pointed to Arab countries such as Egypt, which could theoretically accommodate refugees from Gaza. The IDF on Monday afternoon reiterated Netanyahu's warning and ordered Gaza residents to leave. The army has since also cleared a good number of villages in southern Israel. The government in Jerusalem further decided yesterday to close all border crossings with Gaza. Supplies of goods, gas, electricity and even water have also ceased.

## Rockets

Meanwhile, rocket fire on Israel continues in full force. Shortly after noon on Monday, another huge salvo of hundreds of rockets was fired. Some of these rockets reached as far as the area around Zichron Ya'acov, just south of Gaza. There were also unsuccessful attempts to hit Ben Gurion airport. The salvos are deliberately large in number because this is the only way to bypass the Iron Dome defense system. The system is unable to simultaneously intercept such a large number of missiles. This also explains why buildings are regularly hit and people are killed or injured by the rockets of

group approaching and opened fire after which others came to his assistance. Eventually, the terrorists were eliminated.

## Ground Action Underway

Meanwhile, the IDF is engaged in an unprecedented troop build-up along the Gaza border. A total of 300,000 reservists have arrived in the Gaza border area. Among them is former Prime Minister Naftali Bennett, who came to do voluntary reserve service. The huge number of reservists indicates a major military action, but so far there is no talk of reoccupation of Gaza.

## "The IDF is engaged in an unprecedented troop build-up along the Gaza border"

Ground action in Gaza is expected to begin soon and to last a long time. A large number of tanks have been transferred to the Gaza border area and reservists are currently receiving their equipment and instructions. The ground action will follow intense bombing of Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad targets in Gaza by the Israeli Air Force. In total, more than 800 targets have been shelled in Gaza since the start of this war.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, meanwhile, called on the Palestinian population in Gaza to leave. This in turn drew criticism from some foreign media, such as CNN, which questioned where

**"Someone could be heard shouting something in Farsi, the language of Iran. The first concrete indication of Iran's involvement"**

thousand people. So far, 260 bodies have been recovered and an unknown number have been kidnapped to Gaza.

Hamas later published a video showing a bleeding young woman kidnapped and taken to Gaza. As she was violently pushed into a jeep, someone could be heard shouting something in Farsi, the language of Iran. This was the first concrete indication of Iran's involvement in the violence against Israel.

The Re'im massacre was long hidden from the public and the media. However, reports on social media from friends and relatives of the festival goers forced the government to publish the truth about this crime against humanity. Photos of the atrocities at the festival site can now be seen on the Israeli Foreign Ministry's website.

## IDF Retakes Control

It was not until Monday afternoon that the Israeli army, supplemented by the Yamam unit of the police, got things under control. This happened after sixty Hamas terrorists entered Israel again through a tunnel under kibbutz Aza during the night from Sunday to Monday. The sixty terrorists infiltrated kibbutz Be'eri, after which a long confrontation began with the IDF soldiers present.

Eventually, the infiltration was prevented, and the terrorists were killed and captured. The terror tunnel was later

## Short News

### Dogs as Reading Aids



Learning to read is sometimes quite a challenge for children. But how about reading aloud to a four-legged friend? Suddenly it turns out to be a lot more fun and effective, more effective even than reading aloud to one's classmates. This is the outcome of an Israeli study on how to motivate children to read. Shirley Har-Zvi, who was involved in the study, said, "Research shows that being able to read fluently is essential for a child's learning process; it helps them integrate into society." | Photo: Flash90

### First Hydrogen Refilling Station

Near Haifa, Israel's first hydrogen refilling station was recently opened. So Israel is now in the ranks of leading countries in the world that want to replace the use of fossil fuels with hydrogen, among other things. The aim is to open more hydrogen refilling stations in the future. Pilot projects are also being conducted to see if hydrogen can also be used in the industrial sector.

### Millions for Arab Israelis

The previous Israeli Cabinet had already initiated investments for the Arab population in Israel. The current Cabinet will continue those investments. In mid-August, it agreed to invest 780 million euros for the benefit of inhabitants of East Jerusalem for the next five years. The investment aims to reduce economic and social inequality. "It will provide massive development of the infrastructure, health care, well-being, personal safety, employment and education", PM Netanyahu announced when the program was presented.

### Israel National Trail Extended



The Israel National Trail is known to—and loved by—many a hiker. The trail is now even longer than it was before. You can now start—or end—on Mount Hermon, the northernmost part of Israel. To walk the Israel Trail, you will need some time; the trail is over one thousand kilometres long. But you will see all the beauty Israel has to offer. | Photo: Flash90

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# Delegitimising Israel’s Government Only Helps Foes of the Jewish State

*(19 September 2023). Israel is still in a political crisis. The government is sticking to its plans (announced earlier this year) to introduce legislation limiting the powers of the Supreme Court. Massive demonstrations against these reforms continue across the country. When Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu travelled to the USA to meet with Elon Musk in California, to meet other heads of state and to attend the UN General Assembly opening session in New York in mid-September, he was met by groups of Israeli/Jewish protesters. Their protests, which focused on attacking Netanyahu personally, included screening an image of Netanyahu in an orange prison uniform with the words Welcome to Alcatraz, Bibi, on the walls of the infamous San Francisco jail. Giant protest slogans displayed on the UN headquarters read, Don’t Believe Crime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, and an image of Netanyahu with a growing Pinocchio-style nose, with a similar message in Times Square.*

■ Jonathan Tobin

Prior to his departure for New York, Netanyahu took a shot at the protesters, giving full vent to his resentment at their activities. He described the demonstrators as “joining forces with the PLO and Iran .”

He shouldn’t have said that—or at least not in that way. But those blasting him for it are ignoring the implications of their own actions, which, like it or not, are providing ammunition to those who don’t want merely to delegitimise Israel’s government but destroy the Jewish state.

Netanyahu’s statement was denounced by his political opponents at home as well as by the Israeli press as an outrageous slander. They spoke of the demonstrators as ‘patriots’ who deserved respect, not comparisons to those forces wanting an end to Israel.



Anti-overhaul activists protest against the judicial overhaul and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu during his visit in Manhattan, New York City, 19 September 2023. | Photo: Flash90

just about the dismay that the losers of the election conducted in November 2022 felt about the end of the three-year-long stalemate that ended with the Likud Party and its religious allies gaining a clear majority in the Knesset. More than that, it is a culture war in which the country’s Ashkenazi secular liberal elites feel power is slipping from their grasp. That’s why they want not so much to preserve the Israeli Supreme Court but to allow it to rule unchallenged and unelected as the last bastion of the old left’s once-complete dominance of every government institution. And it’s why the demonstrators have engaged in the most vicious slurs against the largely Mizrahi, religious and nationalist voters who helped elect Netanyahu.

It’s all well and good to say that Netanyahu should be more polite when talking about his critics. But those who are treating Bibi as if he were the moral equivalent of an Iranian or Palestinian terrorist who threatens Israel are in no position to complain about civility or hurt feelings. Moreover, the resistance’s efforts to foment mutiny in the Israel Defense Forces and to persuade investors to remove capital from the country are not behaving in a manner that is patriotic or in line with the aims of any real democratic movement.

Netanyahu’s opponents are entitled to say what they like as well as to demonstrate. It should be noted, however, that their tactics of blocking highways and paralysing the

**It’s all well and good to say that Netanyahu should be more polite when talking about his critics. But those who are treating Bibi as if he were the moral equivalent of an Iranian or Palestinian terrorist who threatens Israel are in no position to complain about civility or hurt feelings.**

And to some extent, the criticisms were justified. Those Israelis who hate him and who have done all in their power to try to topple his government since it took office at the end of December are not the same thing as terrorist murderers or Islamist theocrats bent on the annihilation of the Jewish state. At best, Netanyahu’s comments were intemperate partisan hyperbole. At worst, they were an example of how the battle over judicial reform and the composition of the current government has crossed over into the sort of culture war that threatens the social fabric of the nation.

But the idea that it is Netanyahu who crossed the ‘red lines’ that should exist in a democracy to ensure political debate remains at least somewhat civil, is absurd. Even if it would have been more statesmanlike for Netanyahu to try to rise above the fray, the protests being conducted during his visit to the United States are far worse than anything he said. Indeed, the entire tenor of the anti-Netanyahu demonstrations, and the efforts by his opponents to sabotage the economy and national security in order to get their way, are not the actions of a loyal, let alone civil, opposition.

By falsely branding the prime minister as authoritarian and the efforts by the coalition to enact a program of reform of Israel’s out-of-control and power-mad judiciary as a ‘coup’, the protesters have crossed over from political debate to a campaign of delegitimation that is incompatible with a functioning democracy.

Even worse, it soon became apparent that this struggle was not really so much about judicial reform. Nor was it

All that is bad enough. But what the anti-Bibi resistance ignores is the way their campaign is regarded by those who have very different goals from others who just want a return to the good old days when the Israeli left ran the Jewish state—and, I might add, did so without a Supreme Court having a fraction of the power it claims to possess today.

The protesters claim that the government—that won a democratic election—is authoritarian and is seeking to end democracy. That claim isn’t just wrong ,it’s gaslighting. The government’s only goal is to give the Knesset and the executive back some of the power that the courts had seized—seized without reference to any law or constitution other than their own self-manufactured whims.

It’s not just that it is unseemly for groups of Israeli immigrants to the United States and other leftist allies to hound the democratically elected leader of their former country as he carries out his routine task of trying to build support for the Jewish state, especially at the United Nations. The claim that Netanyahu is a ‘criminal’ because of bogus corruption charges that don’t stand up to scrutiny, and which even the judges in the case that is dragging on for years have already said has no chance of ending in a conviction, is also cheap partisan rhetoric.

But in a non-Israeli context, all this also has the effect of undermining Israel’s stance as the only true democracy in the Middle East. Those who make this argument are assisting Israel’s foes, whether that is their intent or not. They are demonising the country’s leader and his supporters.

country wouldn’t be tolerated and, in fact, would be labelled as thuggish and anti-democratic if it were the political right that was behaving in that fashion. Just look back to the protests against the Oslo Accords in the 1990s and the disengagement from the Gaza Strip in 2005. Still, they have no right to cry foul when it is pointed out that their efforts to delegitimise an Israeli government not just at home but abroad go far beyond anything ever done by their opponents.

Some who are protesting are upset about any connection being made between their hatred for Netanyahu and support for a juristocracy with the efforts to falsely smear Israel as an ‘apartheid state’. But the links are there. And it will be no coincidence that while they are trashing the only man who is standing up against the lies of the Palestinians and the nuclear threat from Iran on the podium of the United Nations, there will be other demonstrators there supporting Israel’s destruction. A more responsible opposition would have chosen to say that politics end ‘at the water’s edge’, as Michigan Republican Sen Arthur Vandenberg famously said of debates among Americans in the 1940s. Instead, they have chosen to recognise no limits to their campaign to slander Netanyahu and his voters.

While the prime minister should be more careful when expressing his frustration about his political foes, those who are lying about him and his voters are the ones who should be ashamed of themselves.

*Jonathan S. Tobin is editor-in-chief of JNS (Jewish News Syndicate). Follow him on Twitter at @jonathans\_tobin.*



# Oslo and the Victims of Peace

■ **Yochanan Visser**  
Correspondent in Israel

30 years ago, on Wednesday, 13 September, the first Oslo Accord was signed. That agreement did not bring peace, but from the moment it became clear that an agreement with the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) had been reached, terror attacks against Israelis increased.

**Classified Decree**  
To commemorate the Accord, a classified document was partially released for publication in Israel early September. That document contains the minutes of a cabinet meeting held on 30 August 1993, dealing with the proposed Oslo Accord that was, in fact, a declaration of principles that should have been followed by a final peace agreement. As it turned out, some participants in that cabinet meeting were utterly ignorant of the existence of negotiations with the PLO and were astonished that an agreement had been reached. Among them was the then chief of staff of the Israeli Army (IDF), Ehud Barak. Barak received the draft document containing the text of the Oslo Accord just hours before the meeting with the Israeli government. That government was led by the later assassinated Prime Minister, Yitzchak Rabin, and included the ultra-left Meretz party, which won a record twelve seats in the 1991 elections. Meretz's Deputy Foreign Minister, Yossi Beilin, was the one who started negotiations with Arafat's PLO behind Rabin's back and entirely against the then-existing legislation. Shimon Peres, who was then foreign minister, knew about the negotiations that were held first in London and later in Oslo, Norway. When Peres later informed Rabin about the talks with the PLO, the prime minister ordered them to stop immediately. For some reason, however, Rabin changed his mind and ultimately approved the Oslo Accord. The now-released minutes of one of the most crucial cabinet meetings in the history of the State of Israel show that there were strong reservations from the start about an agreement with Israel's arch-enemies in the PLO. Some of these reflections had even prophetic value, as it turned out. Take, for example, what Shimon Peres, who was a real dovish peace supporter, said during the meeting. Peres warned that it was not clear to what extent the PLO would renounce terrorism and said it was also not clear what would happen if the Palestinian leadership collapsed and was replaced by more extreme elements. "I must say that there is a possibility that the PLO will disintegrate and that some kind of Hamas-like Iran will emerge here," the minister said, adding that Israel had to be careful because there was no certainty that they (PLO) would remain in power.

Well, that is exactly the scenario which unfolded in Gaza after the departure of the Israeli army in the summer of 2005 and the first preparations for war with Israel began. In 2007, Hamas staged a bloody coup d'état, and Gaza was turned into 'Hamastan', as some called the entity in the south of call Israel. Rabin used less precise language, calling the agreement with the PLO 'a difficult deal.' Most of Rabin's comments will remain classified for another sixty years, and this could be an indication that the prime minister was far more critical than Peres. After Rabin's assassination, for example, one of his closest advisers said that the Prime Minister had, prior to his death, concluded that his reservations about the Oslo Accord had been justified. During the meeting on 30 August 1993 Rabin also said that Israel would give the PLO too much in return for very few commitments, a reference to the lack of guarantees that the Palestinian Arabs would indeed renounce terrorism. Later, on 10 September, during a sober meeting in his office in Jerusalem, Rabin seemed visibly unhappy and used a simple Pilot pen to sign the accord with the PLO while his new 'partner' Arafat was absent. Rabin's body language during the official ceremony three days later at the White House showed the same reluctance and uneasiness while the Norwegian diplomats who were involved in the Oslo negotiations were in a state of euphoria. **Barak's Criticism** Ehud Barak, in his capacity as army chief of staff, severely criticised the Oslo Accord. Barak said that Palestinian PLO police officers, who were trained by the Americans in Jordan and received their weapons from Israel, could join Palestinian paramilitary organisations. In other words, they could work with terrorist organisations. Barak also said the agreement would tie the army's hands behind its back in the fight against terror. "If we have information about an impending terrorist attack from a refugee camp, we will not be able to act effectively," Barak said about the end of IDF raids in cities, villages, and refugee camps under the control of the Palestinian Authority. These predictions have also come true. Officers from Arafat's police force, and later that of current PA leader Mahmoud Abbas, took part in terrorist attacks and battles against the IDF. Also, in the early years of the Oslo process, the Israeli army could not enter refugee camps or Palestinian cities. "I remind you that there are extreme elements in Palestinian society who have an interest in sabotaging this agreement," Barak said, in a warning that also had a prophetic quality. Rabin rebuked Barak, however, and said that there were also extremist elements in Israeli society who would be bent on sabotaging the agreement with the PLO. The prime minister was later proven right when the Jew Yigal Amir killed him at a peace rally in Tel Aviv.

**The Oslo War and the 'Victims of Peace'**  
Ironically, it was Ehud Barak who later, as Prime Minister of Israel, led the country into what is referred to in Israel as the Oslo War (Second Intifada). That war was finally planned by Arafat after the failed talks on a final peace agreement at Camp David in the summer of 2000. Barak then went against the advice of many and offered Arafat a near-complete IDF withdrawal to the indefensible 1948 Armistice lines. However, Arafat refused Barak's unprecedented offer because he had been preparing for war with Israel for years and had built up an army of 60,000 armed 'policemen' while under the Oslo Accord, a limit of 8,000 officers was agreed. After signing the Oslo I Agreement, Peres called the many deaths and injuries caused by the terrorist attacks aimed at stopping the peace process 'the victims of peace'. The list of 'victims of peace' is long, numbering in the thousands and still growing. **Series of New Attacks** After three fatalities from two shooting attacks in mid-August 2023, there was another death on the last day of August. Near the city of Modi'in, a Palestinian truck driver drove his truck into a group of IDF soldiers, killing one of them while others sustained moderate to serious injuries. That attack followed three more within 24 hours. First, another car-ramping attack was reported near Hebron. IDF soldiers shot the driver of the car before he could ram his vehicle into a group of soldiers. Then on Wednesday evening 30 August, two buses of the Egged company were pelted with boulders, injuring the two drivers who were taken to hospital. Later, a stabbing attack took place in the Old City of Jerusalem in which an Israeli was wounded in the back. On Thursday 31 August, a terrorist was shot dead near the Palestinian city of Nablus, apparently on his way to the next shooting attack. IDF soldiers later detonated a large roadside bomb that they suspected was smuggled into Israel from Syria or Lebanon. Daily attempts to murder Israelis continued into the first week of September and led to a general warning by Israel's security forces that with the high holidays approaching, terrorist activity would increase even further. All these terrorist attacks usually do not make it into the foreign media, but they show that the Oslo peace process was doomed to become an abysmal failure from the start. The excuse for the terror is usually the so-called 'Israeli occupation' of Judea and Samaria. However, this is not a valid argument because Palestinian terror against Israel did not begin in 1967 when Israel conquered these areas during the Six Day War. In fact, the Palestinian Arab terror began long before the establishment of the State of Israel and targeted the Jewish presence in the Land of Israel.

## Short News

### Yad Vashem Uses AI



Israel's Holocaust Remembrance Centre Yad Vashem will employ artificial intelligence (AI) in order to make the best possible use to archive all the documents it holds. Yad Vashem holds millions of pages of documents, over half a million photographs, tens of thousands of videos, audio recordings and written testimonies about the Holocaust. With artificial intelligence, Yad Vashem hopes to link the right names to photographs, e.g. the testimonies that mention names, dates and places. | Photo: Flash90

### Cooperation Strengthened

The Philippines have strengthened ties with Israel in the field of agriculture. The closer cooperation will mainly take place in the field of exchange; think of training and internships. The Philippines also hopes to focus on developing large dairy farms with the aid of Israeli technology. Israel invited the country to participate in AgriTech 2023, a large agricultural technological fair in Israel in October.

### UN Censors History

On the UN's website is a timeline called The Issue of Palestine. The unsuspecting reader sees a timeline with factual historical events and thinks factual, so objective. But anyone who knows more about the history of the area sees what is not mentioned. It is as if Israel started various wars, without any reason, as if there were no Palestinian suicide attacks that caused Israel to react. The timeline can be found through: [www.un.org/unispal/historical-timeline](http://www.un.org/unispal/historical-timeline)

### Higher Buildings Eilat



Eilat's coast relies on a lot of tourists. There is currently a maximum height for building hotels, so that hotels usually have no more than eight storeys. That is about to change. Israel's National Council for Planning and Building has agreed to raise the maximum to sixty metres, or twenty storeys. There are also plans for a high-speed train connecting Kiryat Shmona to Eilat. Both plans are good news for the development of Eilat. | Photo: Flash90





## Israel Timeline 1948-1993



1948

On 14 May 1948, Israel declares independence, re-establishing the Jewish state after 1,900 years. Armies of five neighbouring countries immediately invade in an effort to annihilate the newly born state. The Israeli Defence Forces are established.

1948-1951

The Jewish population doubles, as over 800,000 Jewish refugees flee racism and violence across Europe and the Middle East and return to Israel.

1949

The United Nations votes Israel in as its 59th member. The first Knesset (Israeli Parliament) is elected, including three Israeli Arabs. Jerusalem is divided under Israeli and Jordanian rule.

1950

The Knesset enacts the Law of Return, fulfilling Israel's mission to 'ingather the exiles' and to serve as a safe haven for all Jews.

1962

Adolf Eichmann is tried and executed in Israel after having been found guilty by an Israeli court of crimes against humanity.

1952-1964

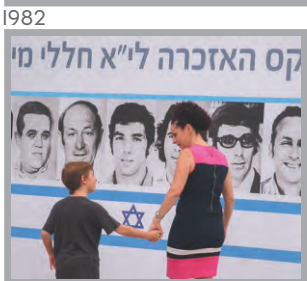
About 240,000 Jewish refugees from Arab states are forced to leave and go to their ancestral homeland in Israel. By the 1970s a total of over 850,000 Jews have fled Arab states.

1956

The Sinai Campaign (also known as *Operation Kadesh*), fought to put an end to the terrorist incursions into Israel and to remove the Egyptian blockade of Eilat.

1951

*Operations Ezra and Nehemiah*: Israel rescues 121,000 persecuted Jews from Iraq.



1967

Six-Day War. Israel regains control of Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria (also referred to as the 'West Bank'), Golan Heights, the Sinai Peninsula and Gaza. Construction begins in Kfar Etzion, an Israeli community in Samaria, destroyed in the 1948 war and re-established following the Six-Day War.

1969

Golda Meir becomes Prime Minister of Israel, the third woman in the world to lead a country.

1972

During the Summer Olympics in Munich, Palestinian gunmen take 11 members of the Israeli team hostage and murder them.

1973

Yom Kippur War, launched by Egypt and Syria.



1950



1984-1985

*Operation Moses*. Israel rescues 8,000 Ethiopian Jews from oppression and brings them home to Israel.

1982

First Lebanon War.

1978-1979

Camp David Accords, agreements between Israel and Egypt, signed on 17 September 1978, that led to a peace treaty between the two countries in 1979. Israel returns the Sinai Peninsula as part of this peace treaty.

1976

*Operation Entebbe*. Israeli commandos mount a successful rescue operation at Entebbe Airport in Uganda, freeing over 100 hostages taken after the hijacking of an Air France flight from Tel Aviv to Paris.

1987

First Intifada. Israelis are attacked with stones, firebombs, guns, and other weapons.

1989

Start of mass immigration of Jews from the Former Soviet Union.

1991

Israel launches *Operation Solomon* to transport over 14,000 Ethiopian Jews to Israel over the course of just 36 hours. Israel attacked by Iraqi Scud missiles during the Gulf War. The Soviet Union is dissolved, resulting in a massive wave of Jewish immigration to Israel.

1993

Oslo Accords, marking the start of a peace process between Israel and the Palestinians. While at first seen as a step toward a peaceful two-state solution, it is followed by terrorism against Israeli civilians and rejections by Palestinian leaders of numerous Israeli peace offers.



Ben Gurion (left) signing the Declaration of Independence. | Photo: GPO Israel



New Ethiopian immigrants on an Air Force Boeing jet en route from Addis Ababa to Israel during *Operation Solomon*. | Photo: GPO Israel



# Israel Timeline 1994-2023

1994

Israel signs a peace treaty with Jordan. The treaty clarified the borders of the two countries and their water rights. Yitzhak Rabin, Shimon Peres and Yasser Arafat are awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

1995

Israel Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin is assassinated in Tel Aviv at a peace rally.

2000

Second Intifada. PLO leader Arafat rejects a proposal for peace with Israel.

2005

Israeli disengagement from Gaza. Israel evacuates all Jews (about 8,500) living in Gaza.

2010

Mount Carmel Forest Fire. A forest fire began on Mount Carmel which would kill forty and burn nearly twenty square miles over the next three days.

2009

The city of Tel Aviv celebrates its 100th anniversary.

2008

Israel launches *Operation Cast Lead* in response to the barrage of over 10,000 rockets and mortars fired from the Gaza Strip.

2006

Hamas, a terrorist organisation wins the Palestinian elections and intensifies rocket fire against Israeli civilians. Hezbollah launches rocket attacks on Israeli cities from Lebanon and kidnaps Israeli soldiers, giving rise to the Second Lebanon War.

2012

*Operation Pillar of Cloud* (Pillar of Defence). Israel wants to halt rocket attacks, originating from the Gaza Strip, against Israeli civilians. It's the 'debut' of Iron Dome, the Israeli defence system that stops rockets mid-flight.

2014

*Operation Protective Edge*, a military campaign aimed at destroying Palestinian tunnels used to smuggle weapons into the coastal enclave and launch attacks against Israel.

2015

Israel is hit with a wave of stabbing, shooting, and car-ramming attacks against civilians in the streets.

2017

Jerusalem, the capital of Israel, celebrates its 50th anniversary of reunification. United States recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel: In December 2017 US President Donald Trump formally announces the United States recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.

2021

*Operation Guardian of the Walls* (Gaza) UN Human Rights Council establishes "an ongoing, independent, international commission of inquiry to investigate, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in Israel, all alleged violations of international humanitarian law and abuses of international human rights law leading up and since 13 April 2021".

2020

'Abraham Accords' brokered by USA and signed with United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Morocco and Sudan.

2018

The State of Israel celebrates its 70th anniversary.

2022

Operation Breaking Dawn  
Thirty-seventh government of Israel formed on 29 December 2022, consisting of six parties and led by Benjamin Netanyahu who took office as the Prime Minister for the sixth time.

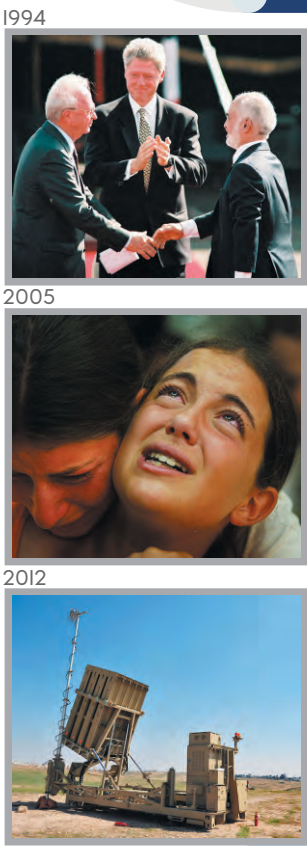
2023

Israel-Lebanon maritime border agreement. Political crisis in Israel as government seeks to implement judicial reforms.

2017

2018

2018



Abraham Accords Signing Ceremony at the White House in Washington, USA, 15 September 2020. | Photo: GPO



People watch the military air show in Jerusalem as part of Israel's 75th Independence Day. | Photo: Flash90

ISRAEL  
75 Years  
Anniversary

Small photos on pages 6-7:  
Shutterstock, GPO,  
Flash90 and C4I



■ Christians for Israel International

In August, Christians for Israel’s President Rev Willem JJ Glashouwer travelled to Thailand to speak at nine different venues. Over the last ten years, multiple speaking tours have been organised in various parts of Thailand for his Biblical teaching and Christians for Israel’s study books. These books include the trilogy *Why Israel?*, *Why Jerusalem?* and *Why End Times?* which have been translated into the Thai language.

With *God is not finished with Israel!* as the main theme, Rev Glashouwer was invited to speak at different churches in and around Bangkok. Although the topic may sound a bit dramatic, it really isn’t. Israel retains significant meaning in our time, although many Christian Churches traditionally think otherwise. The prophetic return of the Jewish people to the Promised Land and the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 is creating a new reality. As Rev Glashouwer explained, “The Church in general assumed that God had finished with Israel. The Church became the new chosen people of God. In general, the belief in many churches and in theology was that the Christian Church was the new Israel. However, nothing could be further from the truth. We all see the return of the Jewish people to the land of Israel; God is preparing planet Earth for His future. One day, the Word will go out from Jerusalem. Jesus will return to Jerusalem. Then peace and righteousness will



Rev Willem Glashouwer at Wattana Presbyterian Church in Bangkok.

cover the earth, and the nations shall not train for war anymore. The promises and covenants that God made with Israel are everlasting and irrevocable. God will fulfil all His promises for Israel.”

Many Christians in Thailand heard this message of hope for Israel and for the world for the first time and gladly welcomed it. Our coordinators in Thailand managed to

get the Thai translation of *Signs of the Times* printed and launched during this trip. A new working committee constituted of Thai Christians from various backgrounds was established to further develop Christians for Israel Thailand. May the Lord open the hearts of people in Thailand to the Biblical message about the Jewish people and Israel.

■ Bryce Turner  
Christians for Israel New Zealand

After having plans derailed by the Covid pandemic several times, Christians for Israel New Zealand were finally able to host Major (ret) Rami Sherman for a speaking tour. Arriving in New Zealand in August, having already completed a very busy speaking schedule in Australia, Rami’s visit to New Zealand was focussed on small groups and meetings. Beginning in the south of Auckland at Pukekohe, Rami shared some of the significant events in his life—most notably his involvement in *Operation Thunderbolt*, the famous Entebbe hostage rescue. Although only in New Zealand for a short stay, Rami was kept busy visiting many groups, bringing a unique perspective. As a Jewish Israeli, ‘born and bred’ on a Kibbutz and having lived through—even served in—some of the most significant armed conflicts in the modern State of Israel, Rami has developed some profound observations. In his personable and unassuming style, Rami openly shares, not only the lessons learned and wisdom gained, but also the journey he is still on as a Jewish man in an increasingly anti-Jewish world.

■ As a Jewish Israeli, ‘born and bred’ on a Kibbutz... Rami has developed some profound observations.

In collaboration with our friends from ICEJ, Rami spoke in Mt Eden and then travelled to Whangarei. Meetings in Hamilton and Matamata were followed by Flaxmere, Hastings, and then a week in Wellington, including a meeting hosted by members of the Wellington Jewish Community. Rami was able to present at meetings held in churches, hotels, halls, and in homes. Returning to Auckland, final meetings were held in Hamilton and



Christians for Israel New Zealand with Rami Sherman in downtown Auckland, New Zealand. Left to right: Cathy Eksteen, Bryce Turner, Rami Sherman and Graham Simpson. | Photo: Christians for Israel NZ

Waihi. Rami was farewelled by members of the Christians for Israel New Zealand team with a dinner on Auckland’s waterfront before he flew to Fiji to join the Christians for Israel Fiji team for a series of meetings there.

In a nation so geographically removed from military conflict, audience members were fascinated to hear various parts of the build-up to *Operation Thunderbolt*. An incredible mission developed in an impossibly short amount of time; the odds of success were not high at all. As Rami shared various parts of the operation itself, including a deep respect for those soldiers wounded in the operation and, of course, reflection on the death of commanding officer Jonathan Netanyahu, any remote ideas of war being anything but a tragedy, quickly disappear. As Rami shared the experience of being prepared to risk one’s life in order to save others—in this

case, the Jewish hostages of the hijacked Air France flight especially—it brought a deeper understanding of the perils of being Jewish, and therefore being the target of such hatred. The terrorists who hijacked that Air France passenger jet were members of the popular front for the liberation of Palestine (PFLP), an organisation that has active members and supporters in New Zealand today. To a New Zealand audience, being aware of increasing support for the terrorist regimes and moves to align with the Palestinian cause—in spite of its stated desire to see the destruction of Israel—the story of Rami’s journey is sobering and an important call to advocate for truth. The staggering odds Israel has faced and continues to face, serves as a bold reminder of who is actually in control of the ultimate outcome in the Middle East.





# Israeli-Saudi Normalisation Shouldn't be Made Conditional



## ■ Andrew Tucker

Director General | The Hague Initiative for International Cooperation (*thinc.*) | [www.thinc.info](http://www.thinc.info)

As part of the realignment of its global position, the United States is negotiating with Saudi Arabia in the hope of achieving an 'Abraham

Accord' between the Saudi monarchy and Israel. Israel is being pressured to accept the establishment of a Palestinian state as a condition for 'normalisation' of relations with the Saudis.

However, the idea of a fully-fledged Palestinian state living in peace side-by-side with Israel is an illusion. Ever since the 1970s, the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) has received billions of dollars in foreign aid to establish an independent, viable and peaceful Palestinian state and has failed to do so.

To this day, the PLO continues to refuse to recognise Israel as a legitimate state and to engage in normal diplomatic cooperation with it. This attitude of rejection was the main reason that the various attempts to negotiate a final status agreement since the Oslo Accords (2000/2001, 2008 and 2014) failed. The PLO and PA participate actively with UN member states in initiatives through United Nations institutions, such as the UN Human Rights Council, to delegitimise the Jewish State of Israel to condemn Israel as guilty of human rights violations and war crimes and as being racist and apartheid in essence. All Palestinian organisations (including the PLO) claim that the Jewish State of Israel is illegitimate, that Palestine (including Israeli land west of the Green Line to the Mediterranean coast) must be 'liberated', and that they are legally entitled to use force to achieve these claims.

Palestinian society is based on strong families and clans, mostly bound to a traditional religious Islamic and Arabic culture of honour on local and regional levels, which generate patronage as a general model of authority. Leadership is constructed from the top down without republican or democratic elements through politically centralised organisations. The Palestinian way of life in the West Bank never included state-building in the sense of a state along Western lines based on freedom and the rule of law.

The reality is that the heartbeat of Palestinian politics throbs with the wish to destroy Israel. This is stimulated by the UNRWA system's promise of a 'right of return' and the ongoing insistence of international anti-Zionist actors that Israel is illegitimate. The common core element of the various groups constituting the PLO (Fatah, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and others), Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad and similar groups is their declared political program to annihilate the State of Israel. This is evidenced by their political charters, deliberately ambiguous and conflicting territorial claims, education of children, TV programmes, newspapers, military organisations, and political declarations in Arabic language. Hamas, governing the Gaza Strip since 2006, attacked Israel in 2008/2009, in 2012, in 2014, in 2021 and in 2022.

The Palestine National Charter (as amended in 1968) denies the existence of the State of Israel and calls on 'armed Palestinian revolution' to liberate the whole of Palestine. For more than 30 years, polls have shown that Palestinian majorities believe the destruction of Israel will be achieved in the future and even within a matter of years. A common thread runs through the anti-Jewish massacres one hundred years ago, the antisemitic actions of the Mufti of Jerusalem cooperating closely with German National Socialism, the 1948/9, 1967 and 1973 wars against Israel, and thousands of terrorist attacks against Israel since the 1950s, to the present-day attacks on Israeli citizens by young radicalised Palestinian terrorists.

Palestinian political culture is driven by a heroic ideal of fighting against real or imagined humiliation. It is rooted in the accusation of injustice and dispossession and holds close to extremist religious traditions.

The political aims of the Palestinian majority have been documented in numerous polls since around 1990. In every



Israeli and Saudi Arabian flags. | Photo: Shutterstock

poll, those wishing to destroy the state of Israel gain a strong majority; more than 60% of the Palestinians in the West Bank say that the destruction of Israel is their preferred political outcome. Those preferring peace and acceptance of Israel gain percentages between 6% and 35%. In general, Palestinians reject the right of Jews to live in the West Bank and in a Palestinian state. Jews shall have no place, just as there are none today in the Gaza Strip.

All of this means that as long as the political basis of Palestinian society remains the destruction of Israel, there will never be a peaceful Palestinian state in the West Bank alongside the Jewish State of Israel.

Under these circumstances, Israel cannot be expected to tolerate the coming into existence of a Palestinian state overlooking its longest border and main population centres, poised to destroy the Jewish population.

Instead of insisting that Israel accept Palestinian statehood as the price for Saudi normalisation of relations with Israel, Western nations like the US, the EU, Australia and New Zealand should insist that the Saudis first require the Palestinians to cultivate a legal and social culture-based on personal liberty and equality and normalisation of relations with Israel.

For further information, and to make a donation directly to *thinc.* [www.thinc-israel.org](http://www.thinc-israel.org)

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# Joshua's Altar, One of Many Archaeological Sites Facing Destruction in Israel



■ **Luke Hilton**  
Marketing Director | HaYovel

Joshua's Altar, a heritage site in Israel, and the location of a groundbreaking recent archaeological discovery, is in danger of being destroyed. The Palestinian Authority, with no regard for history, the Judeo-Christian heritage, or respect for archaeology, was recently caught attempting to clear the site of Joshua's Altar, located on Mt Ebal in central Samaria. Inside the cab of the bulldozer that was confiscated were found municipal plans from the Arab town of Asira Ash-Shamaliya, to build 32 houses at the site of the altar.

Unfortunately, because the site of Joshua's Altar is designated as Area B under the Oslo Accords, Israel does not have as much control over the site as it should. Some think that Prime Minister Yitzchak Rabin was on the verge of changing the site's designation just days before he was assassinated in 1995, at the same time that Oslo II was being finalised.

The reality however, is that it shouldn't matter what designation the land is under. Jew, Muslim or Christian—should all have the same position towards heritage sites, especially when considering an archaeological site of these proportions.

### The History of Joshua's Altar

Joshua's Altar was originally excavated by Professor Adam Zertal in the 1980s. At that time, even though he was an atheist, Zertal discovered an altar on the mountain of Ebal, in central Samaria, which fit the specifications of an ancient Israelite altar. His team also discovered thousands of bones, nearly 100% of which were from young kosher animals.

In 2019, and after a team of HaYovel's staff and volunteers had assisted in removing a discarded pile of dirt from Professor Zertal's excavations in the 80s, Scott Stripling, a senior archaeologist who has been working in Israel for decades, found a lead tablet by putting the discarded dirt through a process known as wet sifting. This tablet contains ancient Hebrew writing with the name of God written twice, and several phrases that have to do with God's promised curses in the event of Israel's disobedience. If you read the account of Joshua bringing the children of Israel into the land of Canaan, you'll discover that six tribes stood on Mt Ebal and six tribes stood on Mt Gerizim, the blessings and curses of God's covenant were read, and all the people answered "Amen".

Not only did the discovery of this tablet, which was peer-reviewed by the archaeological community world-wide, affirm that this is indeed the site of Joshua's Altar, but the Hebrew writing on the tablet predates any other Hebrew writing by at least 200 years. The tablet is still under review, but it also has the potential to shed light on the date of the children of Israel's exodus from Egypt.

### Thousands of Sites in Judea and Samaria are in Danger

This extraordinarily significant discovery however, could very well just be the beginning. There is still much more to be excavated from the site of Joshua's Altar, and the discovery of the lead tablet has archaeologists excited to continue researching the site.

While several groups in Judea and Samaria are doing all they can to protect the site of Joshua's Altar from impending destruction and vandalism, the danger is still great. Unfortunately, this is only one heritage site among thousands that are in danger.

According to Regavim, an Israeli NGO dedicated to the protection of Israel's national lands and resources, there



Joshua's Altar on Mount Ebal, Samaria, Israel.

are 6,000 sites of historical and archaeological importance in Judea and Samaria that are recognised by the scientific community, but only 2,300 have been officially declared protected archaeological sites.

This means that 3,700 sites are exposed to constant vandalism, theft and destruction. Even though these sites should be protected by explicit international treaties, Arabs are constantly caught vandalising and stealing artifacts from sites all over Judea and Samaria.

Preserving the Eternal, an Israeli organisation dedicated to protecting archaeological sites in Judea and Samaria, conducted a survey of 150 random archaeological sites in this region, and found that 80% of them have been severely damaged and vandalised.

Thanks to many of you, our team was able to purchase a drone to help patrol the site of Joshua's Altar in the face of impending destruction. For the last week, we have kept up daily drone patrols, and on Shabbat and festivals, we will be flying every hour during the daytime to ensure that the Arabs do not take advantage of the holidays to bring a bulldozer to the site and begin clearing it for their newly planned neighborhood.

This is one small step in the face of thousands of sites all across Israel's Biblical Heartland that are continually in danger of being destroyed.

These sites are not just of historical or archaeological

importance. Rather, they are the bedrock of the Bible's veracity, the Jewish people's existence in the land of Israel, and our shared Judeo-Christian heritage. More than 80% of the Bible was written or occurred in the place that the world calls the West Bank. Wine and olive oil presses are embedded in the rocks in this region, grave sites of the Jewish people's ancestors, ancient synagogues and churches, altars, pottery shards, biblical footprints, and many more such sites are all to be found in Judea and Samaria. They are all in danger of being erased.

**Jew, Muslim or Christian—should all have the same position towards heritage sites...**

The bottom line is simple. The enemies of Israel, and the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are attempting to erase the faith of millions of Jews and Christians by destroying the physical evidence that dots the landscape of Israel's Biblical Heartland. As believers in the Bible, we know that these enemies of God will not ultimately win. However, our job in the meantime is to stand strong with Israel's right to be sovereign in their homeland, including Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, Israel's very Heartland.

## No More Fake News



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# Important Conditions for Experiencing the Amazing Blessing of Our God—Part 3



**Keith Buxton**  
Former National Director |  
Bridges for Peace Australia

This is the third of four articles sharing some thoughts from the *Torah* portion, or *parsha*, named *Ekev* - *Deuteronomy* 7:12 - 11:25 - in which we read how Moses brings to the Israelites a series of important

messages as they prepare to cross the Jordan into the Promised Land after forty years in the wilderness. As they face the challenge of conquering and settling the land, Moses encourages them to put their trust wholeheartedly in God, and to discover how in His abundant goodness He will lead them into His best for them if they faithfully listen to and obey Him.

*Deuteronomy* 7:13-16 gives us an appreciation of the immense blessings that the Lord desires to pour out upon His people. But as we have seen, their experience of these many promised blessings is dependent upon a number of important conditions that we discover in our text.

We looked at *Psalms* 24:3-5 to learn about these conditions. We recall that it was true for the children of Israel - and true for every believer - that "He shall receive blessing from the Lord" who (1) holds fast to the Word of God, (2) displays true humility, and (3) demonstrates obedience to our Lord.

Our *Torah* passage develops these three important conditions for experiencing the amazing blessing of our God. We considered earlier the importance of holding fast to the Word of God, and of possessing a truly humble heart.

We focus now on the clarion call to the Israelites to be a people who obey their God. In the very first verse (*Deuteronomy* 7:12) we read: "Then it shall come to pass, because you listen to these judgments, and keep and do them, that the Lord your God will keep with you the covenant and the mercy which He swore to your fathers." Moses, the mouthpiece of God, tells His people that their possession of the land will have nothing to do with anything virtuous about them (another reminder about humility), but rather is due to the wickedness of the people to be dispossessed and to God's faithfulness to His covenant promises:

*Deuteronomy* 9:4-6: "Do not think in your heart, after the Lord your God has cast them out before you, saying, 'Because of my righteousness the Lord has brought me in to possess this land'; but it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the Lord is driving them out from before you.



Moses makes new tablets for the Ten Commandments - *Deuteronomy* 10:1-8. | Photo: Free Bible Images

"It is not because of your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart that you go in to possess their land, but because of the wickedness of these nations that the Lord your God drives them out from before you, and that He may fulfill the word which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Therefore understand that the Lord your God is not giving you this good land to possess because of your righteousness, for you are a stiff-necked people."

**The contrast often drawn between Christianity as a religion of love and forgiveness and Judaism as a religion of law and vengeance simply doesn't hold up. Our loving and all-powerful God never changes!**

Moses then goes on to catalogue the many instances of the rebellious nature of this 'stiff-necked people' during their 40 years in the wilderness. Time and again Israel failed the obedience test. *Deuteronomy* 9:7 puts it starkly: "Remember! Do not forget how you provoked the Lord your God to wrath in the wilderness. From the day that you departed from the land of Egypt until you came to this place, you have been rebellious against the Lord." Verse 24 is perhaps even starker: "You have been rebellious against the Lord from the day that I knew you." But these verses only serve to underline the mercy and grace of their God and our God.

repairing relationships with our fellow human beings." Some people draw a thick black line between the two testaments in our Bible, implying that the God of the former is different entirely to the God of the Christian Scriptures. Nothing could be further from the truth! At an individual personal level, recall for a moment the account of Joseph forgiving his brothers for selling him into slavery. That's a wonderful story that speaks powerfully to people today about forgiving those who wrong us.

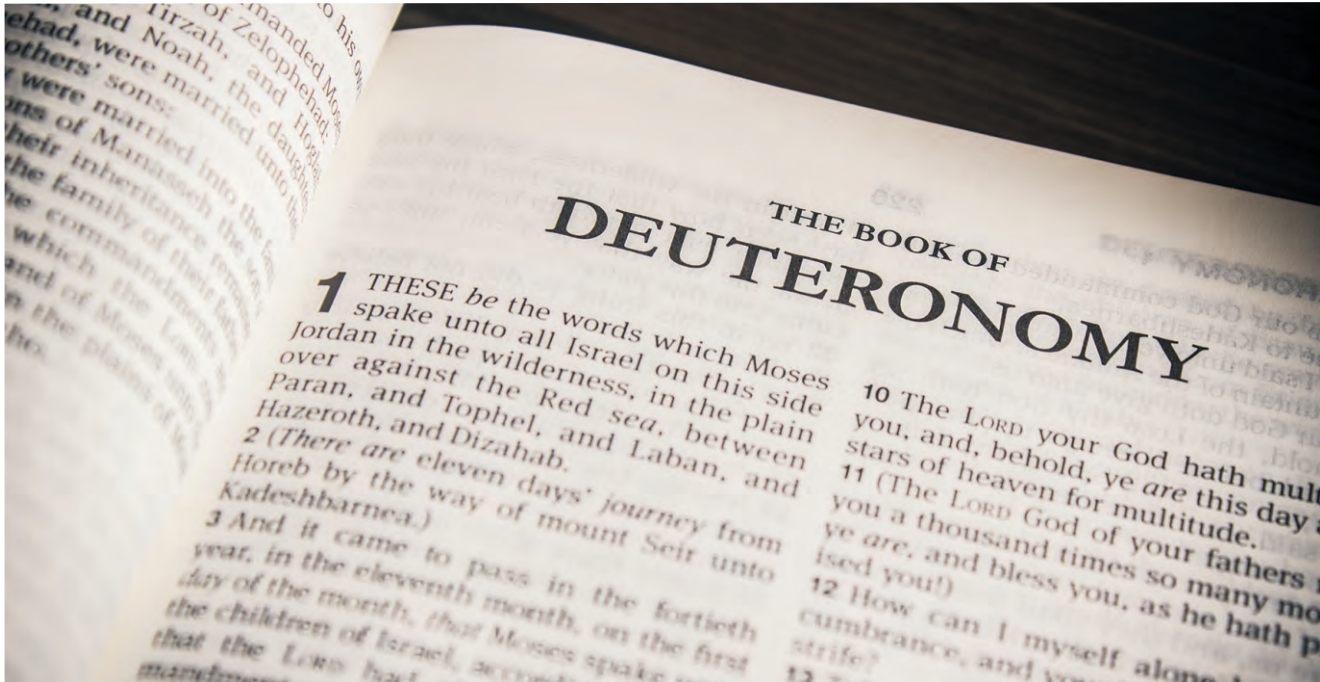
Now listen to this statement of God's forgiveness in *Deuteronomy* 10:10-11: "As at the first time, I [Moses] stayed in the mountain forty days and forty nights; the Lord also heard me at that time, and the Lord chose not to destroy you. Then the Lord said to me, 'Arise, begin your journey before the people, that they may go in and possess the land which I swore to their fathers to give them.'"

What an amazing God we serve! As philosopher Simon May puts it in his book, *Love: A History*: "The widespread belief that the Hebrew Bible is all about vengeance and 'an eye for an eye,' while the Gospels supposedly invent love as an unconditional and universal value, must therefore count as one of the most extraordinary misunderstandings in all of Western history."

The contrast often drawn between Christianity as a religion of love and forgiveness and Judaism as a religion of law and vengeance simply doesn't hold up. Our loving and all-powerful God never changes!

To be continued.

Keith Buxton is an ordained pastor. He currently serves on the Christians for Israel (C4I) Australia management committee and is a liaison with C4I Oceania Island affiliates.



| Photo: Lightstock



# The Jubilee and Jesus’ Return



■ **Ps Enoch Lavender**  
Director | Olive Tree Ministries

“When these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.” *Luke 21:28*

I once watched a really frightening movie about the End

Times. The 90-minute feature film focused its attention almost exclusively on a truly evil person coming to power and dominating the world, viciously persecuting anyone who stood in his way. A mere three minutes at the end of the movie brought some hope as Jesus appeared in blinding light.

Considering this dark portrayal of the End Times, is it any wonder that many Christians and churches today shy away from the topic of Bible Prophecy? The only comfort offered by this view is that we believers will one day ‘be out of here’ and that this dark world is not ‘really our home’ anyway.

While there will certainly be trouble ahead in the End Times, Jesus spoke of a great hope that far outweighs that time of trouble. That hope is known as the coming redemption, also known as the Jubilee.

What is it about the Jubilee that brings such great hope and anticipation of Jesus’ Return to Earth?

## The Trumpet of the Jubilee

Then you shall cause the trumpet of the Jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month (*Lev 25:9*).

Life in the ancient world was tough, and many lived as farmers who were completely dependent on the produce of their fields. Those finding themselves in severe financial hardship could temporarily sell their land and even themselves into slavery. The laws of the Jubilee then stipulated that a friend or relative could ‘redeem’ or buy back the land and set those who had become slaves free. If no redeemer was found, God Himself decreed that the debts of the poor were to be cancelled, the slaves set free and His people restored to their ancestral inheritance in the 50th year, the year of Jubilee.

Can you imagine the joy that the sounding of the Jubilee Trumpet would have caused in ancient Israel? At this once in a generation trumpet blast, slaves were set free across the nation and the poor were released from their long-held debts. In the streets of Israel long lost loved ones would be tearfully embracing and rejoicing together in the redemption of God. Could this ancient joy at the sound of the Jubilee Trumpet be a foretaste of the much greater joy to come at Jesus’ Return?

For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. (*1 Thes 4:16*)



Jewish man blowing the shofar. | Photo: Lightstock

Let’s explore a further link between Jesus’ Return and the Jubilee, found in the book of Exodus.

## The Glory and the Trumpet

The twelve tribes of Israel had gathered at the foot of Mount Sinai only three months after being set free from Egypt. In Egypt and at the Red Sea they had dramatically witnessed the power of God delivering them from bondage. Yet even the crossing of the Red Sea paled into insignificance compared to the encounter with the Glory of God which they were about to experience in its full manifestation on Mount Sinai.

Moses describes a thick cloud enveloping the mountain, thunder, lightning, smoke and the entire mountain shaking as the Lord Himself physically descended. Many scholars view this dramatic appearance of God as being a powerful prophetic preview of the day when Jesus Himself will physically descend from the heavens. It is crucial then to note that God’s awesome descent on the mountain was marked with an exceeding long and loud trumpet blast:

When the trumpet sounds long, they shall come near the mountain.....

And when the blast of the **trumpet** sounded long and became louder and louder... Then the Lord came down upon Mount Sinai (*Ex 19:13, 16-20*, emphasis added)

The word used here for trumpet is the word *Yobel* or Jubilee. In other words, the long blast on the mountain signifying God’s descent was also at once a Jubilee Trumpet. Israel itself was truly in the midst of an amazing Jubilee experience, being set free from slavery and being on their way to inherit the promised land.

This amazing foreshadow of Jesus’ Return, teaches us to expect the trumpet of the Jubilee, the trumpet of great

joy and restoration, to also mark Jesus’ Future Coming.

## The Restoration of all Things

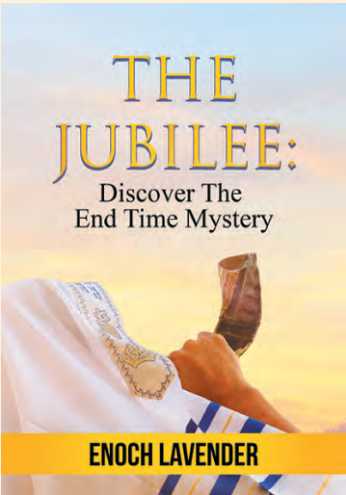
In Jesus’ day, there was a great expectation that He would bring the Jubilee. After His death, the broken-hearted disciples spoke openly of their disappointment as they thought it ‘was He who was going to redeem Israel’ (*Luke 24:21*). To their surprise and amazement, Jesus was risen from the dead, and spent the next 40 days speaking with His disciples about the coming Kingdom. It is in this context that the disciples eagerly asked, “Lord will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” (*Acts 1:6*).

So, when will the Jubilee come? A few chapters later in Acts, Peter picks up on the topic of the Jubilee explaining that Jesus “has to remain in heaven until the time comes for restoring everything, as God said long ago... through the holy prophets” (*Acts 3:21, CJB*). In other words, Peter has come to understand that while the full Jubilee restoration did not take place in Jesus’ ministry here on Earth, there is coming a day when He will return. That Day will be the Jubilee, the restoration of all things as the prophets had foretold.

In that great day, not only will one person rise from the dead, but all the dead in Him will rise, their bodies made new and healed of all sicknesses and infirmities. In that day of restoration, Israel will return to her land, the Messiah will rule as King upon the throne of His Father David and the whole earth “will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.” (*Hab. 2:14*)

What a day it will be!

For more on the topic of the Jubilee, see Enoch Lavender’s new book ‘The Jubilee: Discover the End Time Mystery’ available from Vision Christian Media [vision.org.au/store](http://vision.org.au/store)



## The Jubilee: Discover the End Time Mystery Book

BY PASTOR ENOCH LAVENDER

In this ground breaking book, join Pastor Enoch Lavender as he uncovers key elements of the End Times from a fresh Messianic Perspective. The message of the Jubilee offers an exciting and uplifting perspective on the End Times through its original Jewish context. The Apostle Peter speaks of the Jubilee as “the restoration of all things... spoken by mouth of all His holy prophets” (*Acts 3:21*).

In this book we are going to discover that the Jubilee offers a message of hope in the midst of darkness, of new life out of death, of entering one’s God-given inheritance, of the wicked being deposed from power and the meek entering the Kingdom.

### Topics covered include:

- A fresh understanding of the word ‘Gospel’
- Jesus’ miracles as a foretaste of the greater to come

- The Jubilee Trumpet and its links to Jesus’ return
- The tremendous hope of the resurrection
- The final ingathering of God’s people
- The kingdom to come
- The restoration of all things

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# Believing Without Israel

## Enlargement or Fulfilment Theology—Part 7

■ **Rev Cornelis Kant**  
Executive Director | Christians for Israel International

In this series of articles Rev Cornelis Kant explains how it happened that the role of Israel was seen as insignificant in the development of our Christian faith and in the history of Christian theology.

People who no longer consider that Israel and the Jewish people have a special role in our Christian faith, no longer like to speak of replacement theology, preferring instead to speak of enlargement or fulfilment theology. Israel has not been replaced, but God’s people have been broadened. Every person who believes in Jesus Christ, Jew or Gentile, may call himself a child of God and now belongs to God’s people. The term ‘replacement theology’ retained the negative connotation of medieval anti-Judaism. ‘Enlargement’ or ‘fulfilment’ theology, on the other hand, sounds more sympathetic and inclusive. Jews still matter, too. But do they really? Has anything really changed in this kind of theological consideration about Jews and Israel?

**Old Wine in New Wineskins**

A closer look reveals that, in fact, very little appears to have changed. It turns out to be old wine in new wineskins. Israel as a land and people no longer has any significance in a theology of enlargement or fulfilment. Jews only belong to the new people of God when they have converted to Jesus. The only difference from classical, medieval replacement theology is that it is now often respected and appreciated when these Messianic Jews continue to adhere to the Jewish way of life, such as celebrating the Sabbath and Jewish festivals. There has been a rediscovery and appreciation of the deep Biblical value of Judaism, but the vast majority of Jews, who do not yet recognise Jesus as the promised Messiah, do not belong to God’s people in this renewed theology. So, in fact, despite the changed terminology, little has changed. In fact, neither the Jewish people as a whole nor Israel as a country any longer play a significant role in God’s plans. Only the Christian church is, and remains, the centre of God’s people in this renewed replacement theology. The question that arises is how these theologians deal with the abundance of biblical testimony to the continuing significance of Israel and the Jewish people. Let us take a closer look at such testimony through a number of topics and Bible texts.

**Old and New Covenant**

In the faith experience of many Christians, God’s covenant with Israel is the ‘old covenant’, and the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the ‘new covenant’. The Old Testament is the book of the old covenant, the New Testament is that of the new covenant. The term ‘old’ then still has the connotation of being obsolete or having passed away. The new covenant holds the future. However, that perspective is absolutely at odds with the Bible. God’s covenants with Abram, Isaac and Jacob and, in fact, with the entire nation of Israel, are eternal and unceasing. To

Abram, the Lord God says: “I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you” (*Genesis 17:7*). At the establishment of the covenant, words such as ‘everlasting’ and ‘throughout their generations’ are evident. He remains their God forever. This is repeated and confirmed by Paul in the New Testament when he says: “Who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons, and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promises” (*Romans 9:4*). At the end of his letter, he even says that Jesus came “to confirm the promises given to the fathers” (*Romans 15:8*).

There is, however, an old covenant to be renewed or replaced by a new covenant. This refers to the covenant that God made with the people of Israel on Mount Sinai when He gave them the law: the 613 commandments, prohibitions and statutes. The people of Israel had just been delivered from centuries of slavery in Egypt. They had lived from generation to generation in pagan Egypt with all its gods and goddesses and a pagan way of life. In the Promised Land, too, they would face Canaanites and Philistines, with numerous gods and goddesses and their likewise pagan way of life. So, the people of Israel needed a large set of precepts and commandments. But throughout the Bible, it becomes evident to us that Israel would never be able to perfectly observe them all. So then, God makes it clear through the prophets that there will be a new covenant. In the perception of most Christians, this is Jesus’ new covenant with the church, as opposed to the old covenant with the people of Israel. But that is incorrect. The prophet Jeremiah confirms that the new covenant will also be made with Israel: “Behold, days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them,” declares the Lord. “But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” declares the Lord, “I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it, and I will be their God, and they shall be My people” (*Jeremiah 31:31-33*).

When Jesus celebrated the Passover with His disciples centuries later, He said, when passing the cup of wine: “This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood” (*Luke 22:20*). At that moment, He was alone with His Jewish disciples, and they were



| Photo: Shutterstock

celebrating the Jewish Passover. The new covenant is, therefore, established with the people of Israel and is brought about through the suffering and death of Jesus as the Messiah and King of Israel, announced by the Old Testament. Only with the missionary command after His resurrection and with the conversion of the Roman Cornelius and his entire house (*Acts 10*) does it become clear to everyone that through faith in Jesus, conversion and being filled with the Holy Spirit, a Gentile too can become a child of God and receive eternal life. We, too, can share in the blessings of God’s new covenant with Israel. Paul describes it this way: as Christians from the Gentiles, we are grafted in as ‘wild branches’ onto the tree of Israel. So, as Christians, we do not coincide like two drops of water with the Jewish people, but we are deeply connected to them and may share with them the blessings and living water of the new covenant, in which Jesus plays the key role.

The old and new covenant will co-exist for now. Jeremiah clearly says that the new covenant will involve the full restoration of Israel and the return of all Jews to the land of their fathers. This is a promise that will be fully fulfilled in the end times. In that same end time God will pour out His Spirit on all His people, and they will see who their Messiah is. The writer of the letter of Hebrews clarifies the meaning of the new covenant, which is referred to in *Jeremiah 31*: “By calling this covenant ‘new’, he (God) made the first one obsolete, and what is obsolete and outdated will soon disappear” (*Hebrews 8:13*). So the old covenant still exists and is gradually going to disappear and make way for the new or renewed one: “For the law of Moses has been preached in every city from the earliest of times and is read in the synagogues on every Sabbath” (*Acts 15:21*). So it is evident that the simple classical contradiction: old covenant is with the Jews, new covenant is with Christians, is a thoroughly false contradiction.

## Washing Hands

In this series, ‘Signs of Faith’, objects, procedures and concepts that express Jewish faith are explained and discussed.

Washing your hands before eating or when you have been to the toilet—it is simply a matter of hygiene and the most normal thing in the world. And in corona times, we have become accustomed to doing it a bit more often. It has almost become a ritual.

In addition to ordinary hygiene, ritual purity is also important in Judaism. That is why it is also a precept to ritually wash your hands. You do this, for example, when you get up in the morning, before you eat bread or after you have been to the toilet and dried

your hands. You pour some water from a bowl over both your hands and pronounce the blessing that goes with it. Hands are also washed before prayers. There are also other times when it is obligatory, such as when leaving a cemetery. Before the *kohanim* (priests) pronounce the priestly blessing in the synagogue service, the Levites ritually wash the *kohanim*’s hands and feet.

This is actually also where the origins of ritual hand washing lie. Before their service in the temple, priests had to ritually wash their hands and feet (*Exodus 30:17-21*). Moreover, the Bible (*Leviticus 10:10*) distinguishes between holy and unholy, pure and impure. In daily life, you come into contact with various degrees of impurity at all sorts of times. It

has to do—in a nutshell, we cannot go into it too deeply—with the presence of death in life.

The Pharisees in ancient times longed to elevate themselves and all Israel to a nation of priests. Every Israelite is a priest, and every table is an altar. That is why, among other things, they wanted to introduce ritual hand washing, which was actually only obligatory for priests in the temple, for all people. Of course, this was not without controversy. We hear an echo of this in *Matthew 15* and *Mark 7*.

Washing hands before eating bread is an expression of obedience to the commandment to be holy before the Lord. Moreover, it expresses the expectation of the Messiah so that Israel will be able to eat in a state of ritual purity when the temple is rebuilt.



Recommended Reading

Israel in the Biblical Worldview, An Introduction

By Perry Trotter

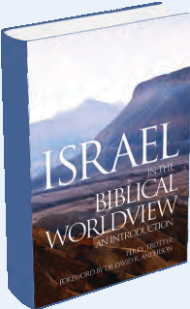
In an era where any keyboard warrior, albeit safely hidden behind a computer screen, can claim an opinion as fact, authoritative and yet approachable scholarship remains surprisingly rare. When ‘research’ is done in seconds, and the findings of a search engine held as incontestable truth, relatively few take the time to test and verify information before holding it as an indubitable certainty. Perry Trotter respects time. Having clearly invested a considerable amount of his own in the preparation of this text, Trotter forgoes much of the story-telling and entertainment often used to woo the reader, favouring a focussed and deliberate structure. Valuing the reader’s time, Trotter launches directly into each chapter quickly and efficiently—straight to the point. Concisely yet masterfully, Trotter brings a remarkable depth of understanding without engaging in the emotive storytelling so often hurled by those professing expertise in—and usually opposed to—Israel.

Framed as an ‘introduction’, the material is delivered in two parts.

The first part delivers a map, a summary of the Creator’s design for Israel and the Jewish people. Handling the biblical data deftly but expertly, Trotter traces Jewish history and demonstrates an intrinsic intertwining with the identity and mission of the Messiah. Inevitably, this leads to a study of the foundations of antisemitism and the miraculous survival of the Jewish people through some two thousand years. Although skillfully delivered in a manner that makes such biblical ideas accessible to those without theological honorifics, this is no lightweight sermon. Before the reader assumes that the ugly thread of antisemitism winds only through the long-established kingdoms and empires of the northern hemisphere, Trotter analyses an uncomfortable history in his homeland of New Zealand with characteristic honesty and objective scholarship.

Part two focuses in on the prevalence of replacement theology, analysing the substance—or lack thereof—of each ‘popular’ replacement technique. Aptly titled ‘turning the text on its head’, this section deals with the distortions and manipulation required to support a replacement theology. Faithful theology, it is argued, must embrace Israel’s place in the biblical worldview. Trotter asserts that “failure to adequately distinguish between the two entities, Israel and the church, is a cause of deep confusion.”

This work comes complete with glowing endorsements from a variety of scholars and educational practitioners, one of whom offers a poignant recommendation: “...buckle up—you’re in for a ride!”



Those Who Bring Good News



| Photo: Shutterstock

■ Johannes Gerloff  
Theologian, Journalist, Lecturer & Author

This is part thirteen in a series of articles based on the book *Rejoice, You Nations, with His People*, by Johannes Gerloff.

Unconditional love (*Romans 9:1-3*), awareness of the privileges of God’s people (*9:4-5*), accepting God’s absolute sovereignty (*9:6-33*), and an exclusive way of salvation (*10:1-13*) are the basis of the Apostle Paul’s theology regarding Israel.

From these presuppositions, the Apostle now constructs—in a truly rabbinical way—a chain of conclusions that flow into the quotation of the prophet Isaiah: “How pleasing are the feet of them that proclaim good news of peace and bring glad tidings of good things!” (*Isaiah 52:7*).

It is all about preaching. The focal point of *Romans 9-11* is Israel. At the beginning of his letter, Paul introduces himself as having received “grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all Gentile nations” and reminds his readers immediately, “to whom you belong” (*Romans 1:5-6*). In the more immediate context of our passage, he emphasises: “I speak to you Gentiles” (*11:13*). Note that at the beginning of *Romans 9*, he did not write about ‘our brethren’ but rather emphatically about ‘my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh’ (*verse 3*). Talking in this way about Israel, he included himself but not his readers. The same can be observed in the beginning of *chapter 11*.

Paul addresses Gentiles about preaching to the Jewish people. According to my observations, *Romans 10:14-21* is the only text in Holy Scripture which is explicitly addressed to non-Jews dealing with the preaching of the gospel to Israel. Therefore, this passage and its context perform a key function in answering the question of whether the Gentile Church has a calling to preach to the Jewish people and what that calling is. At the beginning of our chapter, Paul revealed what drove him, without leaving any room for doubt: “Brothers, my heart’s desire and prayer to the (one, true) God for (Israel is), that they may be saved” (*Romans 10:1*). In the subsequent verses he then states that, according to biblical doctrine, only those who “call upon the name of the Lord” will be saved (*10:13*). Now, the Apostle begins to build on that foundation:

**But, how can they call on someone, in whom they do not believe? (*Romans 10:14a*)**

How shall they turn to the only one who is really able to save if they do not have a relationship with him? This ‘calling upon’, this key to salvation, is conditional upon a relationship that is built on trust and faithfulness, which the Bible calls ‘faith’. Only faith trusts the Saviour fully. And exactly this is the precondition for salvation—crying out to the Saviour from a desperate heart.

**How are they to believe in somebody, of whom they have never heard? (*Romans 10:14*)**

A faith-relationship does not come automatically. It, too, has a precondition, namely, hearing. Actually, this is a truth which the Apostle explicitly states again in *verse 17* of our chapter: “Faith comes from hearing.” Without getting to know what the object and substance of our faith is, it cannot grow. Listening to the revelation of the Word of God—and continuing to listen—is an indispensable foundation of our trust-relationship with the heavenly Father. ‘Blind’, ‘uninformed’ or even ‘stupid’ faith is totally unknown to biblical thinking.

Certainly, Jesus promised the kingdom of God to children in a special way. “Out of the mouths of children and babies”, the Creator has established praise to himself (*Psalms 8:2; Matthew 21:16*). These statements, however, are not an excuse for laziness in studying Scripture. Our Creator created us as a unity of spirit, soul and body. He looks for a total commitment, including that of our mind. Furthermore, even a little child knows why it runs trustingly into the outstretched arms of his own father, whereas he will intuitively harbour a healthy distrust towards a foreigner. Biblical statements about the advantage of receiving the Word like little children in no way nullify the words of Jesus, that there is a special blessing for those “that hear the word of God and preserve it” (*Luke 11:28*).

Facts Speak

Israel Tourist Statistics

TOURISTS TO ISRAEL

25% Visit Israel as part of a tour

75% Visit Israel alone

TOURISTS PURPOSE

5% Other

25% Sightseeing

8% Business

14% Leisure

19% Visit for pilgrimage

29% Visit family and friends

Tourism & Israel's Economy

Tourism accounts for 2.8% of Israel's GVA as of 2018

3.6% of the Israeli workforce are directly employed in the tourist industry



# Times of the Gentiles

## The History of Jerusalem—Part 5



Mosaic Map of Jerusalem, 542-570, 6th Century AD. | Photo: Lightstock



Jerusalem at the time of Christ. | Photo: Lightstock



### Kameel Majdali

Director | Teach All Nations Inc.

And they shall fall by the edge of the sword and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. *Luke 21:23*

It is the most famous city in the world with a long, illustrious, and troubled history.

Four thousand years in total, with its second millennium being under Israelite rule. The ministry of Jesus of Nazareth was the watershed; from the point of His rejection and crucifixion by and at Jerusalem, the city would enter into a turbulent period called the "Times of the Gentiles." In any case, before Messiah rules from Jerusalem, the city will be subjected to a variety of Gentile imperial occupiers for the next two millennia. If you visit the holy city in the future, you may hear some of their names.

Volumes have been written about Jerusalem after the time of Jesus. The city has been invaded and occupied dozens of times. Our main purpose is to give you a general overview from the time of Christ to the eve of the Crusades. You will better appreciate the present when you understand the past.

#### Roman Rule: Three Stages

**Stage One from 63 BC–70 AD:** Jerusalem's central position, geographically and theologically, gave it a front-row seat to a grand imperial parade: Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, and now Rome. The first stage of Roman rule in the holy city commenced in 63 BC with the entry of Pompey. It was characterised by a pagan Rome over a Jewish city. The first Jewish revolt of 66–70 AD commenced against the empire. Stage One continued until the city's destruction by Titus, son of Emperor Vespasian, in the year 70 AD. The city and Herod's temple were completely obliterated, and its smouldering rubble served as a camp for the Roman X Legion. It remained in its devastated condition for the next sixty years.

**Stage Two from 130–312 AD:** In 130 AD, Roman Emperor Hadrian decided to build a thoroughly pagan city on the ruins of Jerusalem. He called it Aelia Capitolina. This action lit the fuse of a second Jewish revolt led by Simon Bar Kochba. He was proclaimed 'The Messiah' by Rabbi Akiva. The Jews under Bar Kochba retook Jerusalem, offered sacrifices on the temple mount (minus the temple), and decimated the Roman troops. It took the empire three years under Sextus Julius Severus to brutally crush the revolt.

With Bar Kochba's defeat and death, Aelia Capitolina was established, and the second stage of Roman rule began: a pagan Rome over a pagan city. The Romans built a temple to Jupiter on the Temple Mount and a temple to Venus on the site of Calvary. Though meant to overwrite Judaeo-Christian sacred memories, this sacrilege inadvertently made the future identification of these sacred sites easier.

**Stage Three from 312–638 AD:** Stage Three of Roman rule began in 312 AD when the faith Rome once tried to destroy was adopted by its Emperor, Constantine. Now we had a Christian Rome ruling over a Christian city: Heathen Aelia was transformed into Christian

Jerusalem. Constantine's mother, Helena, went on a well-known pilgrimage to the holy city. She 'discovered' Calvary, the 'true cross,' a 'holy tunic' and 'holy nails.' Helena ordered the destruction of the temple to Venus, thus making room for the construction of Christendom's most sacred shrines: these included The Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the Church of the Eleona (Ascension) on the Mount of Olives, and the Church of the Nativity in nearby Bethlehem. Two of these churches still stand today.

#### First Muslim Period: 638–1099AD

The Christianised Eastern Roman Empire ruled Jerusalem for three centuries, except for a brief occupation by the Sassanid Persian Empire (614–629 AD). During this torrid period, the Persians destroyed many buildings and massacred many residents. The Roman Christians at Constantinople recovered Jerusalem in 629 AD, only to lose it for good nine years later.

Islam came to Jerusalem early in its history. The city, under the leadership of Patriarch Sophronius, peacefully surrendered to Caliph Omar in 638 AD. It became part of the Jund Filastin province of the Arab Caliphate.

Though Jerusalem was under Muslim rule for the coming centuries, as you are about to see, the actual Muslim regimes and their capital cities changed.

**638–750 AD:** Jerusalem was ruled by the Ummayyad dynasty out of Damascus. During their tenure, two famous Muslim sites were constructed on Mount Moriah: the Dome of the Rock in 691 AD and the al Aqsa Mosque in 702 AD. Both buildings still exist.

**750–877 AD:** Abbasid Empire, based in Mesopotamia and the new city of Baghdad. At one point, the Abbasids governed all the way to Spain.

**877–1071 AD:** Egyptian/Fatimid rule out of Cairo. It was their Caliph al-Hakim who made it his mission to entirely destroy the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which he did in 1010 AD. His action helped spawn the Christian Crusades decades later.

**1071–1099 AD:** Seljuk Turks—the Turks migrated from Central Asia westward. Originally adherents to Shamanism, they adopted Islam en route to settling in Asia Minor. They replaced the four-hundred-year Arab leadership of the Muslim community and dominated the Islamic world for nearly a millennium. Their harassment of Christian pilgrims en route to Jerusalem provided another pretext for the Crusades.

While the Ummayyads adorned Mount Moriah, known as al-Haram al-Sharif (the noble sanctuary) and the Temple Mount, with their famous buildings, Jerusalem did not prosper for many centuries. It was never the capital of any entity except for the Crusader Kingdom (1099–1187) and the British Mandate (1922). While one could argue that it was trodden down by the Gentiles over the years, it also remained on the map by attracting Jewish and Christian pilgrims from all over the known world.

In the next article, we will learn about Jerusalem from the time of the Crusades to the beginning of the twentieth century.  
*To be continued.*

*'Some scholars begin this period with the Babylonian captivity around 586 BC. That's when Nebuchadnezzar conquered and destroyed Jerusalem and Solomon's temple.*

### Biblical Roots

By David Nekrutman

#### More Jewish Voices in Advocating Pro-Life Options Needed



Orthodox Jewish law permits abortion when the unborn child is putting the mother's physical life at risk. For some rabbinic authorities, the dispensation has been extended to consider the mother's emotional and psychological state as factors before making a final decision. Although abortion on demand is prohibited, it is my belief that most Jews within the Orthodox community, and certainly those of other denominations within Judaism, advocate or passively accept pro-choice legislation throughout the mother's pregnancy.

For Jews who do not follow the tenets of Orthodox Jewish law, many rabbis and Jewish leaders have happily adopted 'my body, my right' as some type of Jewish value. As an Orthodox Jew, I find this position repugnant and twisting of the sacred text to be accepted within the general society. I feel that Jews who take these types of counter-Jewish law positions are suffering from our collective PTSD deriving from 2,000 years of living in exile. We would rather be loved by the general society than be stewards of God's law.

For the Orthodox Jewish community, the option of having pro-choice legislation ensures that if a mother's physical life is at stake at any point in the pregnancy, one may terminate the baby. The problem with this stance is that tens of millions of unborn babies, who never endangered their mother's life, have paid a severe price for such legislative acceptance. Furthermore, Jewish law also advocates to ensure that non-Jews uphold God's law.

Over 94% of abortions have nothing to do with any medical complications with the mother. Besides issuing an occasional organisational statement and a few clergy appearing in the media to discuss the topic, many Orthodox rabbis and institutional leaders have passively stood aside on this issue.

The world should not think that the only Jewish voice out there is the one who is okay with on-demand abortions. With the Day of Atonement around the corner, it is a time of deep personal and collective introspection and reflection over our walk with God. Part of the eighty formal confessionals declared during the Day of Atonement service include: *We have committed iniquity! And for the sin, we have sinned before You by desecrating Your name!*

Regarding the first confession, the Hebrew term for 'iniquity' is *avon*, crooked. In the context of this confession, we admit to God that we have used convoluted reasoning to persuade ourselves to sin. The second confession is an admission that we have brought discredit to our people or faith and thus about God Himself.

We must go beyond issuing statements and work with our Christian brothers and sisters in providing alternatives to abortion by working on banning on-demand abortions as well as funding pregnancy centres. Millions depend upon us!

*David Nekrutman is an Orthodox Jewish theologian with over two decades experience in the calling of Jewish-Christian relations. He currently serves as the Executive Director of The Isaiah Projects and is the Jewish Adviser to The Chosen.*



# Sukkot, the Most Beautiful Time of Year

## ■ Kees de Vreugd

Theologian | Christians for Israel International & Editor | Israel & the Church

“Why don’t you build a *sukkah*?” The amazement of my neighbour on Mount Zion, Rabbi Goldstein of the Diaspora Yeshiva, puzzled me a little. As far as he was concerned, the fact that I lived in Jerusalem and sought an encounter with the Jewish people would have been reason enough for me to put up my own booth in the garden. And wasn’t it also the intention of the Eternal One that the nations should celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles with Israel (*Zechariah 14*)? On the other hand, he could appreciate that I still found it somewhat presumptuous for a Gentile to build such a booth—and besides, I was alone at the time. But of course, I gladly accepted his invitation to visit him in his *sukkah*. And so there I was one afternoon in 2004, sitting in a *sukkah* on Mount Zion after all.

### Guests

It was not the first time, and certainly not the last that I would sit in a *sukkah* in Jerusalem. From the gigantic structure next to the centre of one of the major Chassidic movements (the Belzer Chassidim, if I remember correctly) to the *sukkah* in the car park near a friend’s apartment, everywhere the *sukkah* is open to receive guests. I learned in the *sukkah* that there is a tradition in Jewish mysticism that the *sukkah* is visited by Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, Joseph and David. They are called the seven shepherds of Israel, and during *sukkot*, they are the *ushpizin*, an Aramaic word meaning ‘guests’. They take turns coming in, a different one every day. But they do not come when there are no guests in the *sukkah*. Hospitality is one of the core values of Judaism and certainly of the *sukkah*.

### Living in a Sukkah

What is a *sukkah*? What does it mean to live in the *sukkah*? The Jewish oral *Torah* (the *Talmud*) answers these and similar questions. The oral *Torah* makes practical what is assumed in the written *Torah*. Living in the



A Jewish man praying during *Sukkot* (Feast of Tabernacles) in Jerusalem. | Photo: Shutterstock

*sukkah* means at least sleeping during the night and eating the main meal during the day. Besides, you spend as much time there as possible.

The Hebrew word ‘*sukkah*’ is related to a verb that means ‘to cover’. So, what is really important is the rooftop. The *sukkah* recalls the forty years that Israel was living in the desert under God’s care. The *sukkah* is also a symbol of the transience of existence. The used materials all have a temporary quality. One week a year, you leave the safe and solid environment of your house to live in the booth.

The rooftop (Hebrew: *schach*) consists of plant material, like branches, leaves or bamboo stems, but so sturdy that it will hold for a week. When is the rooftop fully-fledged?

If you have more shade than the sun inside the *sukkah*. But through the rooftop, you must still be able to see the open sky. The *sukkah* should not be under a canopy or a tree or something similar. The *sukkah* must have at least two solid walls, one partial wall and a door. But mostly it is built with four walls. Contrary to the rooftop, the walls can be made of anything, like boards or canvas, provided the canvas is attached properly and doesn’t flap in the wind.

### Joy

Indeed, the first time I sat in the *sukkah* was in that large Hasidic *sukkah* during a study tour in the early 1990s. My father and I were invited in amidst the festivities and seated at a small table, where immediately a Jewish man with his beautiful *shtreimel* (fur hat) on his head came to sit with us and began to explain half in English, half in Yiddish using the *gematria* (the numerical value of words and letters) that joy (see *Leviticus 23:40*) was the essential commandment of the feast that was reflected in everything.



Fabric *sukkah* decorated with printed pattern and Hebrew text of blessing. | Photo: Shutterstock

In the years I have been in Jerusalem, I have consistently experienced the period of *Sukkot* as the most beautiful time of the year. Why is that? Perhaps because of the special atmosphere that prevails in the city then, an atmosphere that takes possession of the city even days in advance because everywhere, in the gardens, in the car parks, the balconies and sometimes just in the middle of the street, huts of foliage are being built; because everywhere in the market and in the shop the *etrogim* (the *etrog* is a musk lemon, the fruit of the splendid tree mentioned in *Leviticus 23:40*) and the palm and other branches are for sale, where buyers carefully inspect them with a magnifying glass to see if they are completely flawless. Perhaps because of all those people, Jews and Gentiles, who come to Jerusalem from all over the world to celebrate the feast, making it vibrant and sizzling.

Perhaps, because at such times, Jerusalem offers a momentary glimpse of its eternal destiny, where God will dwell with man and Israel and the nations will worship Him in unison. May it be so, soon and in our days.

## CHRISTIANS FOR ISRAEL VIDEO ON DEMAND

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[www.c4israel.org/video-on-demand](http://www.c4israel.org/video-on-demand)

## IDF Prepares for Ground War in Gaza after Murdering Israelis

Continued from page 3

That was followed by 12 rockets fired at the area of Mount Hermon and the Naftali Mountains in northern Galilee around two in the afternoon.

A first infiltration attempt was then reported an hour later. Four Hezbollah terrorists tried to infiltrate Israel from Lebanon. Two of them were shot dead by the IDF and the other two fled back to Lebanon. A short time

later, Israeli Air Force Apache helicopters carried out retaliatory strikes in southern Lebanon. So far, Hezbollah has refrained from launching large-scale attacks against Israel. This could soon change when the ground war in Gaza begins.

### Kidnapped

Finally, among those kidnapped by Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad are many women and children. Qatar is now trying to reach a deal with the United States whereby Israel releases female Palestinian terrorists in exchange for the release of Israeli women and children.

Egyptian officials further revealed that they are trying to get more clarity on the fate of the abductees. Hamas earlier informed that they would be used as human shields against Israeli attacks.

Yochanan Visser made Aliyah to Israel from the Netherlands where he founded ‘Missing Peace’, a bureau for investigative journalism to discover the reality behind the one-sided media reports about Israel. His thorough research has refuted many a fable about Israel. After some years working as a Middle East correspondent at Western Journalism—one of the fastest growing news sites in the United States—he was appointed analyst with Israel National News (Arutz 7) and Israel Today. His focus is aimed at explaining the situation in Israel as a result of the fast changing Middle East to the biggest possible audience.



# PNG Opens Embassy In Jerusalem

■ **Tony Davenport**  
Vision Christian Media | Australia

Papua New Guinea’s prime minister James Marape says his nation’s strong Christian faith was one of the reasons for opening an embassy in Jerusalem this week. PNG is only the fifth country to open an embassy in the Israeli capital. It’s effectively a symbolic move, underwritten by the Israeli government which will pay for the running costs of the office for the first three years.

At a ceremony attended by Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Mr Marape said: “Today is a milestone moment for my country Papua New Guinea. We are here to give respect to the people of Israel to the fullest.” The Times of Israel quotes him as saying his country subscribes fully to the teachings of the Bible.

Mr Marape added that Papua New Guinea opened its embassy in Jerusalem “because of our shared heritage, acknowledging the creator God, the Yahweh God of Israel, the Yahweh God of Isaac and Abraham. Many nations choose not to open their embassies in Jerusalem but we made the conscious choice. For us to call ourselves Christians, paying respect to God would not be complete without recognising that Jerusalem is the universal capital of the people and nation of Israel.”



PNG prime minister James Marape and Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu. | Photo: Facebook

“You have been the great custodian of the moral values that were passed for humanity,” the PNG leader said to Mr Netanyahu.

Mr Marape told the ABC that: “For the first three years, the nation of Israel is paying for the cost of the embassy. But going forward they’ve indicated land available for us and we look forward to proceeding, setting up our permanent mission there.” Israel’s affairs in the Pacific

country will continue to be managed by its embassy in Canberra, Australia. PNG established diplomatic ties with Israel in 1978 and has previously maintained a consulate in Tel Aviv. It is one of the Pacific nations that regularly vote with Israel at the United Nations and has told Israeli leaders it would continue to do so. Most nations have their embassies in Tel Aviv because of the Palestinians’ claim to Jerusalem as their capital.

## Short News

### Mass Redundancy by Abbas



At the beginning of August, PA Chairman Abbas dismissed nearly all regional mayors: thirteen out of sixteen, of whom four were in Gaza. What caused this mass redundancy is not clear. The Palestinian news service Wafa reports that Abbas is going to put together a committee with important persons who will advise him on candidates for the created vacancies. But whatever the reason may be, it is clear that Abbas is old and in poor health, and his control of power over the cities in Judea and Samaria is waning and risky. | Photo: Flash90

### Faster Diagnosis of Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s

Aviv Mesika’s LacriScan diagnostic test uses a patient’s tears to diagnose Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s disease at a very early stage. The new test, which is still in the initial stages of development, is more sensitive than previous tests and checks for multiple chemical markers in the brains of patients with the mentioned diseases. While there is currently no cure for the diseases, swift detection can allow for more effective management of them, graduate student Mesika says.

### No More Sore Feet

Actic Medical is the creator of the Hybrid+ insole. This insole has bio-sensors that can measure the pressure, temperature and movement of the foot so as to inform the wearer of impending foot ulcers. The patient can then redistribute the pressure of the insole on their own.

### Tel Aviv Light Rail



Mid-August, the time had come: the inauguration of the Tel Aviv light rail. The so-called ‘red line’ is 24 kilometres long and will visit five municipalities. From Bat Yam in the south of the Tel Aviv region to Petah Tikvah in the eastern part. When completed, the three light rail lines and three subway lines are expected to transform Tel Aviv, long served solely by buses and shared taxi vans. | Photo: Flash90

# Israeli President Unveils Plaque

■ **Marie-Louise Weissenböck**  
Christians for Israel Austria

As part of his state visit to Vienna, Austria, Israeli President Isaac Herzog unveiled a plaque honouring the Jewish Austro-Hungarian pioneer, publicist and journalist Dr Theodor Herzl on Tuesday, 5 September 2023. This commemorates the main founder of political Zionism on the facade of the house in Berggasse 6, where Herzl lived at the time of the First Zionist Congress (1896-1898). Here he published his book *The Jewish State*, paving the way for the political Zionist movement, which

was completed with the founding of the State of Israel in 1948. Herzl died on 3 July 1904, and was buried in the Döblinger Cemetery in Vienna. His remains were transferred to Jerusalem decades after his death in 1949, where they were reburied at the Herzlberg.

Present were the mayor of Vienna, Michael Ludwig, Minister of Europe and Constitution Karoline Edtstadler, members of the World Zionist Organisation, representatives of politics and culture and guests of honour.

In his speech before the unveiling, Herzog declared that “the friendship between

Israel and Austria has never been closer.” He also praised the fight against antisemitism. “The uncompromising fight against antisemitism waged by the Austrian government should serve as an example to many nations and countries, and we greatly appreciate it.”



President Isaac Herzog delivers his speech before unveiling the plaque. | Photos: Marie-Louise Weissenböck



The President of the State of Israel, Isaac Herzog and his wife, Michal Herzog, unveil the plaque to commemorate Theodor Herzl, which was placed on the house where he lived in Berggasse, Vienna.



# A Story of an Anthem

■ Tal Hartuv  
Israeli Tour Guide | Author | Cartoonist

I am convinced that *HaTikvah*, our Israeli national anthem, is the most beautiful in the world. I confess I am biased, but even though I have my personal reasons (please read on), I am not alone in thinking it is the best in the world.

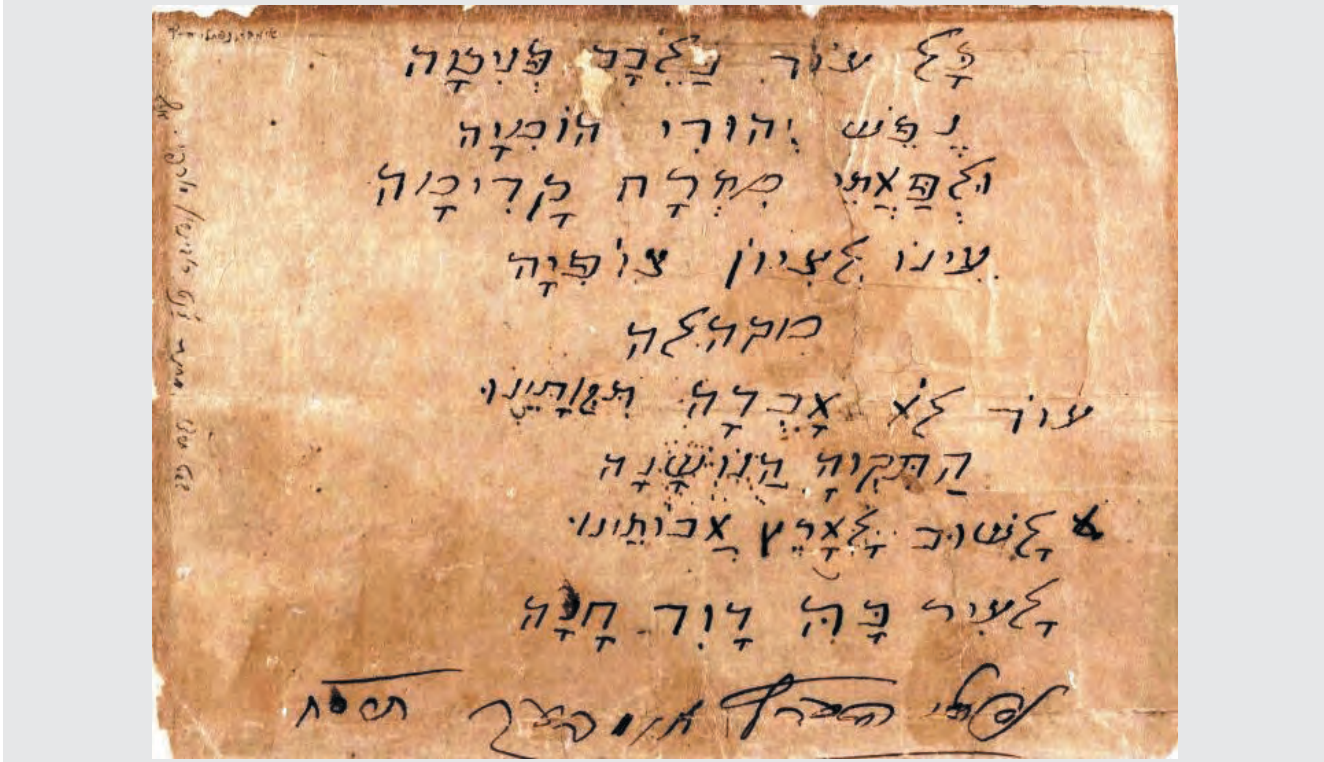
On that rare occasion when Israel wins a gold medal at a sporting event, and the flag is raised to the tune of *HaTikvah*, footage of those three minutes is shared by millions of Israelis on social media. Truth be told, most don't know, or care, or will even remember, who won what; what is important is that our anthem is being played to the world.

Israelis are known for being tough, yet *HaTikvah* never fails to bring a tear to even the toughest and roughest of them all. This applies to those who have defended our land in many a war. No matter how tough, all will unashamedly dry a tear from their eye when they hear our anthem. Some would argue that the tears are because the melody is in a minor key. Of over 200 national anthems, only about a dozen are in a minor key. Most are joyful, party-going and march-like. But *HaTikvah* is not. Yet *HaTikvah* moves people, not because it is in a minor key.

“Israelis are known for being tough, yet *HaTikvah* never fails to bring a tear to even the toughest and roughest of them.”

The words to our extraordinary anthem were penned by Naftali Herz Imber, a Jewish Hebrew-language poet who was born in today's Ukraine. Written in the 19th century, it was not intended to be a tune. It was simply a poem about the Jewish hope of a future Israel and the hope of returning to our land after two thousand years. But the poem became an anthem and one which tells of an endless history and espouses an eternal future. *HaTikvah* is a declaration of facts. It rises to its name by the existence of our past, present, and future. *HaTikvah* is a statement that the people of Israel live, and against all odds, we are still here.

While the author of the words is not disputed, the origin of the tune has caused speculations for years. There were those who claimed that the tune came from the Czech composer Bedřich Smetana from his piece, *Die Moldau*. Others were sure that it found its genesis in a work of the Finnish composer Jean Sibelius. But neither is true. Thirteen years ago, due to the historical research of Israeli-born pianist and musicologist Astrith Baltsan, the mystery was solved, and the enigma of where the tune came from was finally laid to rest.



Original text of *HaTikva* by Naftali Herz Imber. | Photo: Wikimedia Commons



Israeli President Shimon Peres sings *HaTikva* with young Israelis during the opening of the Israeli Presidential Conference at the International Conference Centre in Jerusalem 13 May 2008. | Photo: Flash90

Through her pedantic research, Baltsan discovered that the melody has been a journey that fittingly mirrors that of the Jewish people in the diaspora. Both melody and nation

have travelled the world for centuries. Baltsan discovered that the melody goes back 600 years to a Sephardi prayer for dew. In Hebrew, dew is *Tal*. *Tal* is in our daily prayers. *Tal* is the consistent, unseen, yet nourishing moisture of God on our land and souls, without which we would die.

That is my extra reason for loving *HaTikvah*. In my very name, it reminds me there is always hope and continued healing.

Songs today by various artists are familiar all around the world. What is true now was true then. Melodies travelled then and travel today. After the Jewish people were expelled from Spain and Portugal (these are the Sephardim), they took with them their melody for the prayer for dew. The tune lulled its way across land and sea, hummed by people here and there until it eventually found its way to Italy, where the tune was set to words. The tune to the Sephardi prayer for dew soon became a popular Italian love song, *Fugi, Fugi, Amore Mio*, which can still be found on YouTube today.

The tune was a hit! It spread and ended up in today's Moldova, where it was set to a new set of lyrics. This

time, the original tune for the prayer for dew now hosted the words of a Moldovan gypsy folk song about a cart and oxen.

A Jewish melody in danger of being lost to the Jewish people did not stay lost. Unknown to the Jewish people themselves, that tune for the prayer for dew, which became about an ox and a cart, was restored to the Jewish people. Hope was born again. It arose as *HaTikvah* when 17-year-old Moldovan Shmuel Cohen immigrated to the land of Israel. When Cohen, who knew the Moldovan folk song, came across Imber's poem in Israel, he decided that there would be no better tune to set it to music than the Moldovan tune he had heard at home.

It was a perfect fit. Thus, unknown to everyone, the melody had travelled the world mirroring the Jewish journey of the exodus, the dispersion after the destruction of the Temple, the banishment from Spain and eventually the journey of the Jewish remnant who came to the land after the Holocaust.

Like any Jewish story, even a Jewish melody needs a bit of persecution to emphasise the hope. During the 1930s, when the British were ruling the land of Israel, they pettily forbade the Jewish radio station to play *HaTikvah*. Undeterred and familiar with the similar sounding Smetana's *Die Moldau*, the radio played that instead. The British could not blacklist a work of classical music, and there was not a Jew in the land who did not read between the lines.

Most moving of all was when *HaTikvah* was played at the end of World War II. A British Jewish chaplain named Leslie Hardman led Bergen-Belsen Holocaust survivors in a Kabbalat Shabbat ceremony, which took place outdoors in the middle of the horror. It was none other than a choir of human skeletons who found it in them to reach beyond the depths of their despair and sing of hope from the depths of their brokenness. That gutting performance was recorded by the BBC yet lay undiscovered for years in the Smithsonian Institute.

But our eternal history has proved that not the British mandate, the BBC, the mighty Smithsonian Institute, or the Romans, Babylonians, Egyptians or any other adversary has ever extinguished our hope or our gratitude to God for the *Tal* (dew) of the morning where *HaTikvah* is always found.



Portrait of Jewish poet Naftali Herz Imber. | Photo: Wikimedia Commons



Emotional Farewell



**Rev Cornelis Kant**  
Executive Director | Christians for Israel International

It is half past five in the morning: 26 Jewish teenagers (aged 13-16) say goodbye to their parents in the Ukrainian city of Lviv. What an impressive and emotional moment. These teenagers are part of Israel's *Naaleh* programme, which means that they will go to Israel for their high school education. After that, they go to college, and once they are settled, they hope their parents and grandparents will also come to Israel permanently.

The Jewish Agency in Israel asked our Christians for Israel team in Ukraine if we could take these young people with our bus to the airport in Warsaw, Poland. We met the teenagers and their parents after they had travelled to Lviv from all corners of Ukraine. I spoke to a 15-year-old boy and his mother. He shared: "I was not raised religiously, but together with my mother, I have been exploring our Jewish roots for some time now. We already eat kosher, celebrate the Jewish holidays and pray every day." His mother was visibly happy that her son could leave for Israel to build a new future.

During the farewell between parents and children on the bus, the air raid alarm sounded. This added an extra dimension to the already emotional farewell. At the border crossing with Poland, we had to wait no less than eight hours for all luggage, documents, and the bus itself to be checked. It gave us the opportunity to interact with the teenagers and to record this event. They all made a cheerful and lively impression, and they came well-prepared and motivated. We sensed that they were really looking forward to going to Israel. "I want to go to a religious school in Jerusalem to get to know my Judaism even better," said a 14-year-old girl. Another teenager mentioned: "I'm not religious yet, but I really feel like a Jew. And in Israel, I want to learn more about my Jewish

religion." A 14-year-old girl told us that in Israel, she wants to do something meaningful in Israel. "My reason for going to Israel is that I really want to contribute to Israeli society." Overall, it was very inspiring and impressive to get to know these Jewish teenagers from Ukraine a little better. We hope they will all have a blessed future in the promised land.

**Aliyah in the Bible**

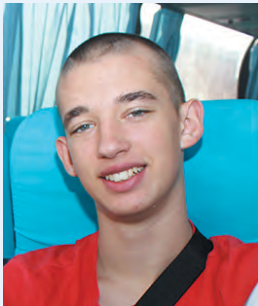
Rev Cornelis Kant: "The prophets speak at length about the fact that God will bring back His people at the end of time, in preparation for the coming of His kingdom. During this particular trip with so many young people going to Israel, I often was reminded of these prophecies. For example, in *Ezekiel 37:21 and 22*, we read: "This is what the Sovereign Lord says: 'I will take the Israelites out of the nations where they have gone. I will gather them from all around and bring them back into their own land. I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel. There will be one king over all of them, and they will never again be two nations or be divided into two kingdoms.'" And if you read *Isaiah 49:22*, you also notice how this links us as Christians to the return of the Jewish people: "See, I will beckon to the Gentiles, I will lift up my banner to the peoples; they will bring your sons in their arms and carry your daughters on their shoulders." Knowing this and being involved in it humbles me, but I also find it a privilege.

Scan the QR code to view the video report of this trip, or go to the website: [www.c4israel.org/lviv-israel](http://www.c4israel.org/lviv-israel)



**Sofia**

My name is Sofia, and I'm from Odessa in southern Ukraine. I came to Lviv because I am leaving for Israel this week. My mother, my sister and my grandmother stayed behind in Ukraine. In Israel, I hope to study, but my dream is to do something meaningful in Israel when I finish school. I am very excited and happy that I can go to Israel. Once I am there, without my mother, I believe I will mature faster. An uncle, aunt and niece already live in Israel. My plan is to settle in Jerusalem. I would like to thank you for your support; you really helped me a lot!



**Vladyslav**

My name is Vladyslav, and I am 14 years old. I come from Odessa. It was five years ago that I visited Israel, and then I fell in love with the country, the people, the culture and the food. I wanted to go back and study there. So when I heard about the *Naaleh* programme and saw presentations from schools in Israel, I knew I wanted to study in Israel, become an Israeli citizen and then find a good job. I do leave my family here in Ukraine, and that is sad. But I have a good feeling about this step. An aunt of mine lives in Israel, and she showed me a lot of the country five years ago. I was not raised religiously, but I want to learn more once I am in Israel. Christians for Israel gave me good support while making *Aliyah* and I would recommend the organisation to others.

Overview of our projects

Part of our mission is to comfort Israel and the Jewish people through prayer and action. If you would like to support one of our projects you can complete the coupon on page 16 or make an online donation. Thank you very much for your support!

Aliyah

Aliyah is the Hebrew word for the return of the Jewish people to Israel. We support Aliyah mainly from Ukraine (and the former Soviet Union), but also from India and France. Furthermore, we help new immigrants (in Hebrew: olim) to integrate into Israeli society.



Hineni Soup Kitchen

We help the poor of Israel, by providing them with food. We do this in partnership with the Hineni Center in Jerusalem, headed by Benjamin Philip. Your gift for the soup kitchen goes directly to the purchase of food.



Holocaust Survivors

We support impoverished Holocaust survivors in Israel and Ukraine through various projects which provide assistance to survivors of the Holocaust. Those survivors are elderly and will not be among us for long, and there is a growing demand for practical assistance.



Christian Friends of Israeli Communities (CFOIC)

You can support the Jewish communities in Judea and Samaria, the heart of Biblical Israel. The main purpose is to encourage the people in the Biblical Heartland and to show them that there are Christians throughout the world who support them and share the belief that the areas of Judea and Samaria are part of Israel's inheritance.



Food Parcel Campaign Ukraine

We distribute food parcels amongst Jewish people in Ukraine. These parcels are handed out to Holocaust survivors, needy families, and the sick. Those food parcels are a sign of friendship that demonstrates your support for our Jewish brothers and sisters and that they are not alone.



Arab Christians

Life for Christians in Bethlehem is often not easy. Christians for Israel supports the First Baptist Church of Rev Naim Khoury in Bethlehem and Jerusalem. The members of this church spread the gospel among Arabs and share their love and heart for Israel and the Jewish people.



For country-specific or further information on our projects, go to our website, [www.c4israel.org](http://www.c4israel.org)





Emergency Aid Israel

Israel has been brutally attacked. As Christians for Israel, we want to provide help where ever it is needed. That is why we initiated an emergency campaign for Israel. From all over Israel, we receive requests for emergency assistance. We want to stand with Israel in this time of great need.
Will you help? Any amount is welcome.

- Organizations we've supported so far through our emergency fund:
• Jewish Agency for Israel: evacuation of new migrants from the south, assistance to traumatized victims, food and medicine for poor elderly and Holocaust survivors, assistance to soldiers without families in Israel, assistance to children and families remaining in southern Israel
• Yad Ezra: extra help for meals



- Or Ami: an organization headed by Nati Rom. We helped with protection for the population in Judea and Samaria
• Home of Jesus the King Church: the congregation of Arab pastor Saleem Shalash, to provide emergency kits for Israeli soldiers
• ZAKA: the Israeli organization that helps identify victims in disasters
• Jaffa Institute: provide accommodation for refugees from southern Israel
• Christian Friends of Israeli Communities (CFOIC): assistance to families in which men and/or women have been called up as reservists
• Jerusalem Foundation: assistance to the elderly who cannot or dare not go out into the streets
• The Society for Advancement of Education: care for displaced residents of the kibbutzim around Gaza, in a safe environment somewhere in Israel
• Kibbutz Alumim: assistance to new oilm from Ukraine who are now in distress in southern Israel



- Golan Community Center: security measures for families in the Golan
• Technion: assistance to students drafted into the army
• Chasdei Naomi: additional food aid for poor families and singles
• ADI: extra help for multiple disabled children, reservists have been called up, and some of their staff cannot come to work because of situation at home
• Bead Chaim: extra help for pregnant women who are alone or whose husbands must serve in the military
• Towards the Horizon: protective vests for rescue workers
• Kibbutz Reim: a kibbutz that was destroyed, a fund for survivors
• Hineni: 1000 backpacks for basic necessities for reservists, such as soap, food, underwear and other small necessities
• Colel Chabad: assistance to poor families, including those who had to flee from the south.
• Israeli Christian Aramaic Association: assistance to soldiers from the Aramaic community from northern Israel.
• Itamar Hakeren Lior Chesed: protection of the population



Photos: Flash90

YES! I Want to Support Christians for Israel

CHRISTIANS FOR ISRAEL MINISTRY

My donation for ministry costs, print & post

ALIYAH - BRING THE JEWS HOME

- One person from Ukraine - € 135 | US \$150
One family (5 people) - € 675 | US \$750
One bus (25 people) - € 4500 | US \$5000
First Home in the Homeland - € 450 | US \$465
Bnei Menashe (India) (1 person) - € 950 | US \$1000
Aliyah Ethiopia

SOCIAL WELFARE PROJECTS

EMERGENCY FUND ISRAEL

- Food Parcels in Ukraine - € 15 | US \$15 each
Children at Risk - Jaffa Institute
Hineni Soup Kitchen - € 7,50 | US \$7.50 per meal
Holocaust Survivors
Christian Friends of Israeli Communities (CFOIC)
Arab Christians

TOTAL DONATION

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TEACHING RESOURCES

- Israel on Trial (Book) by Andrew Tucker
70 Questions About Israel (Book) by Chan Siew Fong
Israel 70 Years (One-off Collector's Magazine)
Jerusalem 50th Anniversary (One-off Collector's Magazine)
Israel: Covenants & Kingdom (Book) by Willem JJ Glashouwer
Why Israel? (Book) Why Jerusalem? (Book) Why End Times? (Book)
Why Israel? (Trilogy Book Set)
Why Israel? Study Guides (Trilogy Book Set)
Why Israel? (DVD) Why Jerusalem? (DVD) Why End Times? (DVD)
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