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CHRISTIANS FOR
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INTERNATIONAL

Understanding Israel and world events from a Biblical perspective

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Workers prepare ballot boxes for the upcoming Israeli election. | Photo: Flash90

Israel Goes to the Polls

■ **Johannes Gerloff**
Theologian, Journalist, Lecturer and Author

The people of Israel will vote on 9 April to elect the 21st Knesset (Parliament) of the State of Israel since its establishment in May 1948.

About six million Israelis are eligible to vote. Israel has a proportional representation system. Inevitably it will be necessary to form a coalition government, so all the main contending parties are preparing for possible partnerships.

According to the website of the Central Electoral Committee of the Knesset 43 political parties are standing for election. For the first time, Labor is no longer a serious contender, and may not even meet the threshold of 3.25% of the votes required to have a seat in the Knesset.

Two new parties have recently been established challenging Likud's dominance of the political scene.

The first is the New Right Party (HaYamin HeHadash), a right-wing political party established in December 2018 by Justice Minister Ayelet Shaked and Education Minister Naftali Bennett. The party has recently been joined by Jerusalem Post columnist Caroline Glick, author of the book 'The Israel Solution', who advocates Israeli annexation of the West Bank.

The other main rival to Likud is the new 'Blue-White' party led by former Chiefs of Staff Benny Gantz, Gabi Ashkenazi and Moshe Ya'alon. 'Blue-White' has been joined by former journalist, former finance minister and leader of the centrist-party Yesh Atid, Ya'ir Lapid.

Israelis may also vote for parties with names such as 'New Horizon with Dignity', 'Responsibility for Founders', 'Social Security', 'Social Justice', 'Real Democracy', 'Hope for Change', 'Unity of the Sons of the Covenant', 'Eternal Covenant', 'the Pirates', 'Bridge', 'Identity', 'Education', 'Reform', 'Human Dignity', 'Protective Shield', 'Simply Love' and 'You and I'.

For months the main media platforms in Israel have been occupied primarily with one question: who can oust Benjamin Netanyahu? At 69 years of age, Benjamin Netanyahu is vying for his fifth term as Prime Minister. He is the longest-serving prime minister in the history of the modern state of Israel, and the most popular head of government Israel has ever had. Allegations of corruption and breach of trust threatened to topple Netanyahu but are barely an issue

any more. Although the Attorney-General has announced that Netanyahu will be charged, a final decision on indictment has been postponed until after the elections. To the chagrin of all Netanyahu-doom-prophets, all coalition partners of the Likud have announced that they would be ready to continue the coalition even if Netanyahu were charged. Under Israeli law, a Prime Minister who is charged is not obliged to resign.

Interestingly, the issue that Europeans, in particular, find so important – the relationship with the Palestinians and the two-state solution – is not really an issue in this election campaign. The positions of those parties likely to be part of a coalition government are virtually indistinguishable in this regard.

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Exodus from India



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Colophon

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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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One Nation



Photo: Reuters

Andrew Tucker

International Editor | Christians for Israel International

“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 I will bring them back into their own land. I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel” (Ezekiel 37: 21-22)

It is very interesting that the prophet Ezekiel when speaking of the restoration of the Jewish people, emphasises He will bring the Jewish people back to the land as part of the process leading to their spiritual renewal. God’s purpose is not just to bring the Jews back to the land – it is to put a ‘new heart and a new spirit’ in them, so that they will ‘follow his decrees and keep his laws’ (Ezekiel 36:27). Only when the Jewish people are restored to the land and obey God’s laws will the name of God be glorified through the Jewish people.

In the weeks leading up to the elections for the Knesset on 9 April, the Israeli political landscape is shaking. New political parties are being established; old alliances are collapsing. The debate is fierce, and the divisions are deep.

It seems Israel is going through an identity crisis, as the people wrestle with existential questions. Seventy years after its creation as a state, Israel may be the most successful economy in the world, but its identity is not yet clear. The people are asking themselves - what does it really mean to be a Jewish nation made up of Jews and Arabs?

A central theme in the political debate concerns the question how to reconcile the imperative, on the one hand, of making peace with Israel’s neighbors and ensuring equal rights for Israeli Arabs, with the right (or, some would argue, obligation), on the other hand, of Jews to live in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria.

For some Jews, the connection between the Jewish people and the land of Judea and Samaria is absolutely central to their identity – they believe that the Jewish people are called to live on this land and that their restoration to the land is an essential step in their spiritual restoration.

This explains their attachment to Judea and Samaria, including the old city of Jerusalem, referred to by the world as ‘occupied territories’. Many other Jews, however, take a different view – for them, reaching peace with the Palestinians is paramount, and this

requires them to be willing to make concessions concerning territory.

But could it be that God has another way? A couple of weeks ago, at the Christians for Israel Leaders Forum in Jerusalem, we had an inspiring session with orthodox Jewish scholar David Nekrutman and Arab Palestinian pastor Steven Khoury. Nekrutman suggested that there is a deep connection between the restoration of the Jews to the land, and the obligation to look after all who live in the land. “The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob loves Jews and Arabs, and the land is for both peoples. The Jews have a special responsibility. With a covenant land comes a covenant responsibility to look after all in the land”.

This is a big theme we will explore in coming editions of this publication. In the meantime, let us pray fervently that the Spirit of God will guide the Jewish and Arab peoples in Israel into His ways, and change the hearts and minds of Jews and Arabs alike. May the people of Israel elect leaders who are grafted in the word of God and are able to lead the nation through the challenging days ahead.

Prayer Points

By Pieter Bénard

Israel

- For the Lord, your God is the one who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies to give you victory.’ (Deuteronomy 20:4). Give thanks that God goes with Israel all the time, battles for them and redeems them.
- Thank God for this wonderful promise to Israel: ‘You will be a crown of splendour in the Lord’s hand, a royal diadem in the hand of your God.’ (Isaiah 62:3).
- ‘You will see it with your own eyes and say, Great is the Lord - even beyond the borders of Israel!’ Thank God that He holds everything in His hand and that He watches over its borders.

Israel & the Nations

- Pray for strength and peace for the Jewish communities in your country and God’s mercy on them. Pray for increasing support for the Jews, also from Christians at large.
- Give thanks for the diminishing support for the worldwide anti-Israel movement BDS (Boycott-Divestment-Sanctions) and the growing support for the pro-Israel movement BDS (Beauty-Diversity-Science).

- ‘From the Lord comes deliverance. May your blessing be on your people.’ (Psalm 3:8). Pray that the nations may know this and believe it.

Christians for Israel

- Pray for the protection of the Jewish inhabitants of Ukraine and a blessing for the work of Koen Carlier and his team in Ukraine. Pray for the food parcel distribution and the help that is being provided to olim (Jewish people who immigrate to Israel).
- Give thanks and pray for the many speakers and co-workers of Christians for Israel around the world, who work for Israel’s good day after day.
- Pray that the mission of Christians for Israel, ‘to make Christians aware of the significance of the Jewish people in God’s dealings with the world’, will be understood and supported, not only by Christians but also by non-Christians. Pray that they will become curious about what we do and the source of our inspiration and strength – the Bible.

For daily Prayer Points, go to our website:
www.c4israel.org

Peace Plan Sabotaged

■ **Yoni Ben Menachem**
Senior Middle East Analyst | Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs

The atmosphere in the West Bank is tense, and the potential for a violent escalation is growing. The crisis over the Temple Mount's Gate of Mercy could become the detonator that sets off the next conflagration, and Israel must act quickly to neutralise it.

In recent weeks, signs are growing of an imminent explosion in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip as the Israeli elections in April draws near.

Palestinian social networks have been full of mendacious propaganda calling on Muslims to come to the Temple Mount to prevent 'the settlers' from forcibly entering the new mosque at the Gate of Mercy.

Hamas has called on Muslims to demonstrate in Jerusalem, in tandem with measures announced by the Islamic Waqf to counteract Israel's decision to bar from the Mount those who were involved in the takeover of the Gate of Mercy chamber.

Israel should have drawn the right lessons from the 2017 metal-detectors crisis and internalised the fact that sensitive issues on the Temple Mount are instantaneously combustible. Jordan and the Palestinian Authority are well aware of that fact; seeking to throw a wrench in the works as the proclamation of Trump's 'Deal of the Century' approaches, they laid a trap for Israel in the form of the Gate of Mercy takeover. They likewise established a new, joint Waqf Council that includes senior PA representatives for the first time. They aimed to signal that sovereignty on the Temple Mount belongs to Jordan and the PA and not to Israel or Saudi Arabia or any other international Arab body.

Meanwhile, at the Gaza border and in the West Bank there are worrisome signs of escalation, and an outbreak on the Temple Mount could ignite these on a wide scale. Therefore, the order of the day is to calm the furies on the Temple Mount, which is of a sensitive religious nature for every Muslim.

On the Gaza border, the 'night confusion' units have been active again, attacking IDF soldiers along the border fence in the nighttime hours. Explosive-balloon and arson-balloon attacks on the Israeli communities along the border have resumed as well.

Although the Rafah crossing has already been operating for a month or so and even though Mahmoud Abbas has cleared it of PA officials, Hamas seems to want to gradually escalate the situation with the aim of putting the Gaza issue back on the international agenda.

Almost a year has passed since the start of the Great March of Return campaign, and the Hamas leadership cannot point to any significant achievements or breach of the blockade. Gaza's economic situation is difficult, there is great distress



Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu meets with security brass at the IDF's Kirya military headquarters during recent air strikes in Tel Aviv.

among the population, and Qatar announced that it would stop giving Gaza \$15 million in financial aid each month. Meanwhile, Abbas keeps withholding salaries and stipends from Gaza officials and the families of Hamas and Islamic Jihad terrorists.

Hamas is now demanding that Israel hand it a sum of \$20 million and carry out the second stage of the ceasefire understandings, which includes setting up a new electricity supply line from Israel to Gaza (known as Line 161), opening a maritime crossing to Cyprus, and building a floating maritime terminal.

In the West Bank, the Palestinian Authority is in distress as well. Israel has started to implement its law to withhold revenues equal to the stipends the PA pays to terrorists, freezing the transfer of 500 million shekels to the PA. The PA has declared in turn that it will now forgo all of the tax monies that Israel collects for it if even a single cent is deducted from them.

The Trump administration, too, has cut financial aid to the PA and its security agencies. Hence the PA's financial situation stands to get worse, and it will have a hard time providing services to citizens and paying its officials' salaries.

To this should be added the simmering anger among Palestinian security prisoners in Israel over the Prison Service's decision to install electronic cell-phone-jamming devices in the Ketziot Prison as an initial measure. This anger radiates out to thousands of families of security prisoners in the West Bank and Gaza.

In the absence of what the Palestinians regard as a political horizon and with the United States aiming to foist the Deal of the Century on them, the tension in the West Bank could

spark the outbreak of a spontaneous intifada involving vehicular ramming assaults, stabbing attacks, and an uptick in 'popular resistance.' Fatah activists are now talking about a new tactic of blocking roads leading to West Bank settlements.

The atmosphere in the territories is fraught with explosive vapours. It can gradually be calmed if it is borne in mind that the main fuse is on the Temple Mount and that if this fuse is lit, the security situation could spin totally out of control. That means the state of affairs on the Temple Mount has to be accorded the highest priority.

Jordan is the custodian of the Jerusalem holy places, and its status is anchored in the 1994 peace treaty with Israel. In the Gate of Mercy crisis, the Arab League and the PA are totally behind Jordan.

The heads of the Islamic Waqf Council accuse Israel of a deliberate escalation on the Temple Mount with an eye to Israel's election campaign. For its part, Israel must draw the full benefit from a dialogue with the Jordanian government. Israel can always resort to force and impose the law, but at present, every effort should be made to avoid an escalation on the Mount in light of what is happening along the Gaza border and in the PA.

Israel can also ask Egypt to restrain the Hamas leadership, and it can temporarily freeze the installation of the cell-phone-jamming devices in the security prisoners. Such measures will help allay the tension in the territories.

This is an abridged version of an article published by Jerusalem Centre for Public Affairs, March 6, 2019.

Yoni Ben Menachem, a veteran Arab affairs and diplomatic commentator for Israel Radio and Television, is a senior Middle East analyst for the Jerusalem Center. He served as Director General and Chief Editor of the Israel Broadcasting Authority.



The Gate of Mercy (Golden Gate) is the only eastern gate of the Temple Mount is one of only two that used to offer access into the city from that side. It has been walled up since medieval times. | Photo: Shutterstock

New Layout for Israel & Christians Today

You will no doubt have noticed that *Israel & Christians Today* has a new look and layout. There were three reasons for creating a new look-and-feel. First, we felt it was time to freshen up the newspaper. Second, we wanted to make the newspaper bigger and better by increasing the number of pages, in order to deliver more quality content and making it more readable. Third, we wanted to bring this English-language publication more in line with the design of our German (*Israel Aktuell*) and Dutch (*Israel Aktueel*) language newspapers. *Israel & Christians Today* is currently printed and viewed online in over forty countries.

We are really delighted with this new design, and hope that you enjoy it too! Of course, as always, should you have any feedback, comments or questions after reading this edition of the newspaper, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Short News

Olim



At the beginning of February 2019, eighty-three Jews from Ethiopia arrived in Israel. These Jews already have relatives in Israel. The journey to Israel was one big family reunion for most of them. It is expected that a total of one thousand Ethiopian Jews will make Aliyah this year. | Photo: Flash go

Virtual Embassy

There is no chance yet of a real Israeli Embassy in the Gulf States. That is why Israel opened “Israel in the Gulf”, a campaign with pages on social media that are frequently used in the Gulf States. Via these pages, Israel talks about herself with articles, analyses, videos and images and thus Arabs can get acquainted with Israel in their own language. No chance project? With two million visitors per day, it doesn't look that way!

Anti-Semitism in 2018

The year 2018 looks like it was a tipping point in worldwide anti-Semitism, according to a report on worldwide anti-Semitism by the Israeli Ministry of Diaspora Affairs. Islamic anti-Semitism is no longer dominant.

Anti-Semitism is being expressed by right-wing as expressed in such incidents as the attack on the Pittsburgh synagogue. In Eastern Europe, the old Jewish stereotypes are being used again in the political debate. Also, anti-Semitism is on the rise from the Left, mostly in the form of hostility towards Israel. A record number of incidents was reported.

Direct Connection to Japan



As from September, anyone who wishes to do so, can fly from Tokyo to Tel Aviv directly, or vice versa. The Israeli company Sun d'Or operates the flights. The Japanese national airline company is seriously considering setting up a direct connection with Israel as well. | Photo: Flashgo

Holocaust Revisionism on the Rise in Parts of Europe



Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán | Photo: Getty Images

■ William Echikson

Director | European Union of Progressive Judaism | Brussels

European governments are rehabilitating World War II collaborators and war criminals while minimising their own guilt in the attempted extermination of Jews.

The Holocaust Remembrance Project, a new report rating European Union countries on how they face up to their Holocaust pasts, finds Hungary, Poland, Croatia, and the Baltics are the worst offenders. Driven by feelings of victimhood and fears of accepting refugees, and often run by autocratic nationalist governments, these countries received red cards for revisionism.

Some European countries led by Austria, France and Romania have made important progress in confronting their dark pasts. They have accepted that their police or army, not the Nazis, played an important role in deporting Jews and Roma to their death. They are returning art to their former Jewish heirs. And, in an attempt to prevent a repetition of the Holocaust, they are working hard to educate their citizens, and officials about their personal and official responsibilities to disobey illegal orders and confront evil.

Unfortunately, though, history is often being forgotten or rewritten. The Hungarian government is minimising its country's participation in the genocide, rehabilitating war criminals, and introducing anti-Semitic writers into the national curriculum. According to Paul Shapiro of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, the truth is that Miklos Horthy's Hungary was the first European country after World War I to put in place

‘numerus clausus’ legislation which restricted Jewish participation in high education. Hungary passed racial laws similar to Nazi Germany in 1938 and 1939. With war came the systematic theft of Jewish property and mass murder. In 1944, Hungarian police identified and concentrated the Jews, loaded them onto trains, and delivered them into the hands of German SS units for execution at Auschwitz.

Revisionism is often accompanied by a revival of Nazi-inspired hate speech. Hungary's right-wing prime minister Viktor Orbán has described the arrival of asylum seekers in Europe as ‘a poison’, saying his country did not want or need ‘a single migrant.’ Jaroslaw Kaczyński, head of Poland's governing Law and Justice Party, has warned that migrants are ‘parasites’ that carry ‘very dangerous diseases long absent from Europe.’ In the same vein, French right-wing extremist Marine Le Pen called for the ‘eradication of bacterial immigration,’ proclaiming that immigration was causing an ‘alarming presence of contagious diseases’ in France. In his *Mein Kampf*, Hitler repeatedly refers to Jews as parasites.

In 2018, the nationalist Polish government criminalised the term ‘Polish death camps.’ The same government is waging an offensive on the rule of law and freedom of expression, imposing new repressive bills to control the media and attacking the independence of the country's courts. Anger is understandable when foreigners refer to Auschwitz and other extermination camps the Nazis set up in Poland as ‘Polish death camps.’ They were Nazi death camps. Along with three

million Polish Jews, at least 1.9 million Polish gentiles were killed.

Yet many Poles were complicit in the crimes committed on their land. When a Polish minister questions Polish participation in the murder of hundreds of their Jewish neighbours during a Holocaust-era pogrom, he is wrong. Like other countries conquered by Germany, Poland too must face up to all aspects of its World War II history – without the threat of sending historians to prison.

Amid this heated atmosphere, memories of the Holocaust are fading. According to a CNN/ComRes survey taken in September 2018, 34 per cent of Europeans surveyed said they know just a little or have never heard of the Holocaust. A third of European said Jewish people use the Holocaust to advance their own positions or goals, according to the poll, for which 7,000 people across Europe were surveyed.

Our study identifies new challenges. Germany has a growing Muslim population, with one million new migrants from Middle Eastern countries. They account for the largest group responsible for anti-Semitic incidents, according to Jewish participants in the Fundamental Rights Agency report. Will migrants adopt Germany's values of tolerance and responsibility for its past? Our research questions whether these new arrivals are receiving sufficient education about the Holocaust.

*This is an edited version of an article published by Times of Israel on 5th March 2019:
<https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/holocaust-revisionism-on-the-rise-in-parts-of-europe/>*

No New Beginnings in Sight for Ravaged Syria

■ Jonathan Spyer
Middle East Analyst, Author and Journalist

The Islamic State proclaimed by the Iraqi jihadist Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi at the al-Nuri Mosque in Mosul on June 29, 2014, is about to cease to exist. But while the demise of the brutal jihadi quasi-state is surely to be welcomed, it is also important to place it in perspective. This is so for two reasons.

Firstly, because the demise of the caliphate does not mean the end of the organisation that established it, we are likely to be hearing again from the nucleus of Iraqi Sunni jihadists who launched this enterprise.

And secondly, because for all its many and terrible cruelties, Islamic State was only a single manifestation of a larger crisis still underway across the entirety of the land area comprising Iraq, Syria and Lebanon.

This crisis is ultimately one of state fragmentation and sectarian war of succession. In this context, there is something else worth noting: The title of most brutal enterprise, at least in terms of verifiable body counts, belongs not to Islamic State but to the Assad regime and its allies.

At some point in recent weeks, the ISIS leader made his exit, almost certainly to somewhere in Sunni central Iraq. This was where the Islamic State as a movement was born. It is already clear that its leaders intend this to be the space in which it will be reborn.

ISIS came out of Iraq, and throughout the time of its existence as a quasi-state, it remained, in essence, an Iraqi entity. The core leadership of the movement was Iraqi throughout – Baghdadi himself, Abu Ayman al-Iraqi, Samir al-Khlifawi and many other names, most of them now dead.

ISIS indeed came into being, it is worth remembering, as a result of a power struggle in late 2013 in which Iraqi jihadists sought unsuccessfully to impose their own leadership on the Syrian franchise of al-Qaeda. This effort was unsuccessful, leading to the emergence on Syrian soil of two rival Salafi jihadi projects – Islamic State and the Syrian-led Jabhat al-Nusra, now known as Hayat Tahrir al-Sham.

As of now, once the final battle at Baghouz is concluded, ISIS looks set to concentrate on preserving and developing its networks of support in its heartland of Sunni central Iraq. ISIS still has around 30,000 fighters available to it across Iraq and Syria. It also does not lack for funds. ISIS has access to hundreds of millions of dollars deriving from its four-year taxation of the caliphate’s inhabitants, it’s looting of the banking system when it entered Mosul in June 2014, and its trade with both the Assad regime and rebels during the course of the war.



Photo: Shutterstock

It also has existing networks of support. Even as the global media watch the last stand of the diehards at Baghouz, ISIS has already shifted its own focus. The intention is to build an infrastructure that will then, at the opportune moment, strike again in the cities of Iraq, and Syria, too.

The reason this, or a rival Sunni Islamist project, is likely to once again emerge to prominence is that the final twilight of the caliphate at Baghouz will not settle any of the issues that led to its emergence, and of which it was a symptom.

The main butcher of civilians over the last decade in the area in question has been the Assad regime. The air strategy of the regime and its Russian allies involved the deliberate and systematic targeting of civilians. All this reveals a brutality on a level of scale and system beyond the more primitive savagery of the Islamic State.

Islamic State and the Syrian Sunni Arab rebellion are defeated. But in both Iraq and Syria, the Sunni Arab population remains. Both countries are fractious and divided. The Assad regime rules over only 60% of Syria. Even within its area of control, Iran and Russia have the final say on key issues. The Turks and their Sunni Islamist allies control 10% in the northwest. The Kurds and their Western backers control an additional 30%.

In each of these areas, a slow-burning insurgency is growing, supported by one of the other players. The regime, and Turkey, and ISIS are all active in the Kurdish-US zone. The Kurds are active in the Turkish zone, seeking to counter and

take vengeance for the crimes of the Turks and Sunni rebels against the Kurdish population in Afrin. And in parts of the regime-controlled area, in particular, Deraa province, there is simmering Sunni unrest at the regime’s closing of accounts with the population.

In Iraq, while central government authority is nominally stronger, there remains a Kurdish population in the north almost entirely in favour of separation from Baghdad and prevented from splitting away only by force. There is also a Sunni Arab population in the centre now subject to the whims of the Shia militias that are officially part of the state security forces. It is among this population that ISIS will now seek to implant itself.

Fundamental questions of borders, state legitimacy and ethnic-sectarian estrangement remain unanswered in Syria and Iraq. Add to this the penetrated nature of these spaces, with foreign powers, including Russia, the US, Turkey, Iran and Israel, active within them, and it becomes clear how little will be settled when the smoke over Baghouz clears.

Jonathan Spyer is a Middle East analyst, author and journalist specialising in the areas of Israel, Lebanon, Syria and broader issues of regional strategy. He is a Senior Research Fellow at the Global Research in International Affairs (GLORIA) Center, and a Fellow at the Middle East Forum.

This is an abridged version of an article originally published in the Jerusalem Post on 8th March 2019.



Photo: Shutterstock



Photo: Unsplash

Short News

Palestinian Exports

Exports under governance by the Palestinian Authority broke the one million dollar barrier last year. According to the PA imports from Israel dropped by twenty per cent and the quality of locally produced goods has increased.

Antiquities Disappear

Whether it is a valuable, historic or archaeologically important place or not, the Arabic inhabitants of the village Nabi Samuel just wanted a parking space. So they paved part of the archaeological garden near the Tomb of Samuel. However, the place is a national heritage site. There was no permit for the activities.

Tombstones Found




Tombstones from the Roman era were recently discovered near Beit She'an (30 kilometres south of the Sea of Galilee).


Following a particularly torrential rainfall, a woman was taking a stroll when she noticed the top of a curious marble-white head peeking through the soil. Archaeologists say the tombstones date from the third and fourth century, the Late Roman era.

Letter from Mayor

Recently, Christians for Israel sent an encouraging letter to the new mayor of Jerusalem, Moshe Lion. We were honoured to receive a reply from him.



ירושלים
עיריית ירושלים
Municipality of Jerusalem
بلدية اورشليم - القدس



ראש העיר
Mayor of Jerusalem
رئيس البلدية

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your kind words and well wishes. I am honoured that the people of Jerusalem have elected me to lead this city, the eternal capital of the Jewish people.

As Mayor, I am committed to ensuring that Jerusalem stays connected with our friends around the world. I thank you for your support to our city's populations in need.

I look forward to working together toward a better future for Jerusalem.

Sincerely,

Moshe Lion
Mayor Jerusalem

Pure Hope. Psalm 2: Part 5

■ Johannes Gerloff
Theologian, Journalist, Lecturer and Author

‘Fascinating Colourful’ is *Psalm 2*. It speaks on several levels at the same time into very diverse times and situations. ‘Scarifying Shambolic’ describes the situation of our world (*verses 1-2*). But from God’s perspective, the raging of the nations is ‘Reassuringly Ridiculous’ (*verses 3-4*). ‘Dreadfully Direct’ reveals how the Creator of the universe interferes in world affairs. He makes clear to his creatures where He begins to guide history in the tracks He intended (*verses 5 6*).

Now, in *Psalm 2*, *verse 7*, ‘the Lord’s Anointed speaks’, the One who was already mentioned in *verse 2* as ‘Messiah of the Lord’. The rioting of the united nations is directed against Him. He is the inherently visible focus of their uproar. And this Anointed One acknowledges God’s declaration of intent as personal commission: “I will tell the decree of the Lord.”

This ‘telling’ is about reporting, about passing on facts. However, the narrator does not just present what is perceived objectively or neutrally to the discussion. He has an intention and pursues a specific direction. This is shown by the unusual phrase, which literally means ‘towards a principle carved in stone.’ He wants to influence, to change something with His reporting. Based on the writings of Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch the message of the Messiah (*verse 7a*) might be paraphrased as follows: “I will talk about the fact that God has appointed His king on Mount Zion so often and so long until it becomes a life principle for the nations and their governments.”

“Through the prophets Nathan, Gad and Samuel,” explains Rashi, God let King David know, “You are my Son. Today I have begotten you” (*Psalms 2:7b*). The God of Israel reveals Himself as father. David is able to call God ‘my father’ (*compare Psalms 89:27*) because God had addressed him as ‘my son’. What is crucial in this relationship is this: “[The Anointed One] had not become king by inheritance. He had not made himself king. Nor had his kingship resulted primarily from the election of men. God Himself had chosen and appointed him king.”

It is conceivable that these words were spoken at the inauguration of the Judean kings. With the anointing ‘as king to me’ (*1 Samuel 16:1*), the Davidic king became the ‘Anointed One,’ Hebrew ‘Mashiah/Messiah,’ Greek ‘Christos/Christ.’ “That means: This king is mine. He is my son, and he is my servant. He listens to me” (Rashi). Likewise, it is said of David’s son Solomon: “I will be father to him, and he will be my son” (*2 Samuel 7:14*). David, the biological father, is no longer ‘father,’ but God Himself. Not the dynasty (his natural descent is the decisive legitimation for this royal rule), but the decision and choice of the living God.

Radak assumes that the ‘today I have begotten you’ (*Psalms 2:7*) means that “on that very day the Spirit of God was born in him, as it is written, “The Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day” (*1 Samuel 16:13*). From this Radak concludes: “From that day on David spoke songs and psalms in the Holy Spirit.”

Rashi recalls that the Son of God is not only King David, but that Israel in Egypt had

already been called by God ‘my first-born son’ (*Exodus 4:22*). Martin Luther in his interpretations of Scripture frequently refers to ‘Rabbi Solomon,’ i.e., to ‘Rashi’. Usually, however, only if he feels compelled to contradict him. In his interpretation of *Psalm 2*, Luther now also reminds his readers that ‘Israel is called the firstborn son.’ But then, almost in the same breath, he feels driven to distance himself from the Jewish people by declaring, “although many of them were idol worshipers.” It speaks volumes, if the German reformer, who otherwise so much emphasises the ‘sola gratia’ (‘by grace alone’), thinks he has to speak of merit, when the issue of Israel’s being the son of God arises.

The midrash and the Talmudic teachers (*Succa 52a*) see in *Psalms 2:7* the future Messianic King who will redeem Israel, bring them back into the Land of Israel and guide them according to the will of God. It is according to this line that the New Testament recognises in the ‘son’ of *Psalms 2:7* a prophecy of Jesus of Nazareth (*Hebrews 1:5*). Martin Luther writes: “This is the purpose (Scopus) of the whole gospel, that Christ is recognised as the Son of God.”

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews hears in the statement “Today I have begotten you” not only the coronation ceremony to the king of Israel but also a reference to the appointment of the high priest (*Hebrews 5:5*). Paul interprets *Psalms 2:7* as prophesying the resurrection, which again Luther picks up: “Therefore, as in the preceding verses the suffering and death of Christ is prophesied, so in this verse, His resurrection is foretold, though somewhat obscure.” Furthermore, Luther refers to *verse 4* and sees in the resurrection of Christ a ‘mocking of God,’ because God ‘made the Jews and the Gentiles, who killed Christ, a mockery for the whole world, raising Him from the dead.’

If *Psalms 2:7* indeed has to be seen as predicting the resurrection of the messianic Son of God, Jesus of Nazareth, the question arises, whether the statement “You are my son. Today I have begotten you” could not be understood as a prophecy of the return of the Jewish people to the Land of Israel as well? Maybe, consequently, it even has to be understood in this way?!

After all, *Ezekiel* in his famous vision of the field of dry bones describes the return of the people of Israel as a resurrection from the dead: “Thus says God, the Lord: See, I open your graves. I lead you, my people, up out of your graves. I bring you to the soil of Israel. You will realise that I am the Lord, when I open your graves and bring you, my people, out of your graves. I will give My Spirit in you. You will live! I will set you to rest on your soil. Then you will realise that I am the Lord. I say something. And then I also do it!” (*Ezekiel 37:12-14*).

The parallel between the death and resurrection of Messiah Yeshua of Nazareth on the one hand, and the fate of the Jewish people over the past two thousand years, on the other hand, is also clear when we look at *Hosea 6:2*. There the nation of Israel says: “He will return us to life after two days. On the third day, He will raise us up, so that we may live before Him.”

The Babylonian Amoreans explained these ‘days’ of the Prophet Hosea – probably concluding from *Psalms 90:4* – as ‘millenia’

(*Sanhedrin 97a*). In retrospect, these Jewish scholars seem to have been right. The worldwide diaspora of the Jewish people lasted two thousand years before they were being re-gathered into the Land of Israel at the dawn of the third day, the third millennium, i.e., in our time.

Perhaps one would have to rephrase Luther’s statement quoted above and conclude with reference to *verse 4*, that today God makes the whole world, and especially all those who have declared the Jewish people dead, a mockery, by leading His people back into the promised land despite all resistance.

Radak points out that these statements are not just valid for Israel, King David and the messianic Son of David, but “everyone who makes himself available to God as an attentive servant is called ‘his son.’ As the Son hears the Father, he is destined for service. Therefore, it says (*Deuteronomy 14:1*): ‘You are sons of the Lord, your God.’ And thus, Israel is called ‘sons of the living God’ (*Hosea 2:1*).”

Again, it becomes clear, how the different levels of understanding of this psalm merge into each other. No single level of understanding can explain the content of this prophetic text on its own. If we take seriously that this multi-faceted text is an inspired word of God and not a coincidence, then we see how closely this prophecy relates the fate of the nation of Israel, her expulsion from the Land of Israel, her worldwide dispersion, her suffering and her regathering in our days to the life, suffering, death and resurrection of the Christ Jesus of Nazareth. And both, the pilgrimage of God’s son Israel and the life of the Messiah, have a profound, crucial significance for us who today wish to be children of God. If Christ has risen from the dead, and today even the people of Israel, believed dead for two thousand years, return home from their graves, then this is pure hope.

If Messiah proclaims the principle that ‘He who sits in heaven’ (*Psalms 2:4*) has indeed ‘appointed His king in Zion’ (*verse 6*), then he expresses his agreement with his own divine calling in this context. He agrees ‘to serve the Lord, as a son honours the father’ (*Ibn Ezra*). In their remarks on these scriptural verses, classical Jewish exegetes develop and underline the biblical point of view, that the Messiah as Son of God is at the same time also the Servant of the Lord.

From the father-son-relationship between the God of Israel and His Messiah springs the commission of actively participating in God’s claim to sovereignty. The Son of God is the bearer of this divine revelation. This is true of the people of Israel and its historic King David. If we follow all levels of interpretation of *Psalm 2*, then this consequently also applies to Messiah – be He the One who has already come, the one who comes or the one who will come again. And then that is also true for all who follow in His footsteps as well as for all who are on their way to greet Him for the first time. This revelation indeed ‘makes a mockery of all attempts to eradicate it from human consciousness.’

This article is the fifth part in a series of contributions to the interpretation of Psalm 2. The full text of this article, including extensive footnotes, can be found at www.c4israel.org/teaching-articles/

Tanzania - A Wonderful Story

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

This is how you can call the birth of Christians for Israel in Tanzania. Pastor David Mbago came into contact with Christians for Israel International through Youtube a few years ago. He was so touched by it that in 2017 he attended our biennial International Forum in Jerusalem. Back in Tanzania he was convinced that he had to do something with this in his own country. His country and especially the churches should bless Israel. Instead of starting with actions he started with prayer. He asked several friends to pray for God's guidance. He still expects everything to be grounded from prayer. After a few months, he established six prayer teams throughout the country. Now there are prayer teams in 10 places. He translates the international prayer letter of Christians for Israel into Swahili which is being distributed by his teams to a growing circle of people involved. There are already 500 readers now. The prayer teams grew into teams which also develop activities. They visit pastors, organise Bible study evenings, and even visit prisons where they provide practical help to prisoners, as well as doing Bible studies on Israel. They ask prisoners to pray for Israel. Because of the openness of Christians to biblical information about Israel, the work has grown rapidly in the last year.

The church where David was a pastor was afraid that he was founding a new church. Although he strongly denied this, he was fired in 2018. This gave him several difficult weeks, both emotionally and financially. Yet he accepted this and saw it as a sign from God that he had to continue with Christians for Israel Tanzania. His wife is a secretary at an educational institution, so there is monthly income.



From left to right: Rev Cornelis Kant, Pastor David Mbago, Helen Makange, Anthony Mbago, Mark Manumbu and Kevin Nyoni

With zeal and enthusiasm, he continues to build up the work in Tanzania. He is supported in this by his prayer teams, who pray for him daily, and a team of dedicated volunteers. He mainly works in education. He has good contacts with many pastors, Bible schools and seminaries, and is frequently given the opportunity to preach about Israel in churches. This has resulted in him being able to organise a speaking tour to 10 churches in 6 cities in February 2019 for lectures and Bible studies on Israel. Many hundreds of Christians and pastors have attended these meetings where Cornelis Kant and David Mbago have spoken and taught. Several Bible schools and seminaries

have indicated that they would like to receive representatives from Christians For Israel International for a number of days for teaching to theology students and future pastors. There is an enormous growth in work and there are clearly rich blessings from God. The next step is that a booklet about Israel is about to be translated into Swahili and social media will also be used to reach Christians with the message about Israel's place in our Christian faith. There is every reason to thank our Heavenly Father. Please pray for David and his teams for: (1) God's indispensable blessing and wisdom and (2) that it will be financially possible for him to continue and expand the work.

Teachings Received with Great Enthusiasm in Uganda

■ **Jos van Westing**
Development & Special Projects Officer | Christians for Israel International

The Israel Conference in Uganda in January was, as in previous years, amazing! The conference was organised by Christians for Israel Uganda board members, Pastors Eddie Mwesigwa and Sarah Mikisa, in four churches, from the capital city of Kampala to the rural place of Hoima at the Congolese Border.

More than 1,500 enthusiastic people, including hundreds of pastors and church leaders, attended the teachings about God's plan for Israel, the Church and the Nations. In VOSO (Volunteers of Salvation Outreach) Gilgal Church, under the leadership of Pastor Sarah Mikisa, alone, we held a full 7-day Israel Conference, with four hours of teaching every morning and three hours every evening, concluding with a full-day Sunday Worship Service. At the service there were further teaching sessions and Q & A sessions, interspersed with vibrant African singing, dancing and worshipping.

During the week, 230 participants attended the Conference at Voso Gilgal Church. 480 participants came on Sunday. Pastors from distant areas sometimes travelled two days to

be part of the yearly event and slept on the floor side by side for the whole week, not to miss any of the teachings! There was an astounding spirit and hunger for the Word of God and love for the Jewish People, not easily found in civilized Western nations, but found here in Africa!

Visiting Remote Areas

Hoima is a remote area out of touch with the rest of the world; no television, a newspaper is hardly read. There is no knowledge of the existence of ISIS or the war in Syria, let alone replacement theology or evolution theory, Aliyah and the former Soviet Union's Iron Curtain.

Thanks to Pastor Eddie, who interpreted from English to the local language, the meaning of these issues was clearly explained and understood. The level of knowledge about Israel was minimal in that area, but enthusiastically received. Hunger to learn more was raised, and the local pastors can now teach their congregations about Israel as it is today and with an awareness of God's hand in bringing the Jewish people back to the Promised Land and protecting His Chosen People.

We expect next year's Israel Conference to be held in a larger venue, and welcome all attendees to gather in one central place for more extended schooling.



Exponential Growth in Austria

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

The ministry of Christians for Israel in Austria (*Christen an der Seite Israels Österreich*) has experienced a significant increase in activities over the last 10 years. The reason for this growth is due to the wonderful team of dedicated people within Christians for Israel Austria, and the extraordinarily good relationship they have with the Jewish community. The readership of their German newspaper has also increased significantly.

On Saturday 23 February, they organised a joint meeting with Isreality* Austria in Vienna. Rev Cornelis Kant spoke about the question, 'Why it is so difficult for Jews to believe in Jesus?' A delicate subject, but the purpose was to achieve more understanding amongst Christians about the serious obstacles that Jews experience when faced with the question whether Jesus is the Messiah. A very constructive conversation followed.

May the Lord bless the Austrian Christians for Israel team in the years to come.

* Isreality is Christians for Israel's Young Adults movement.



Amazement at the C4I Forum

■ Marijke Terlouw
Christians for Israel Netherlands

Amazement, this is the word that best captures the recent Christians for Israel International Leaders Forum. Amazement about what is happening in Israel, amazement about what God is doing with the Jewish people. But also amazement about what the people involved in the Christians for Israel ministry are doing in support of Israel around the world.

From thirty-five countries from all corners of the earth representatives of Christians for Israel came to Jerusalem at the beginning of March: Samoa, Nepal, Myanmar, Vietnam, Brazil, Ukraine, and many more countries. It felt like a family reunion; sometimes meeting family members whom you've never met before. We had the opportunity to encourage each other with our personal testimonies, and furthermore support and inspire each other in the tasks that we have in our own countries to bring the message about Israel into the churches.

The Forum provided a lot of information – let's call it a tool-box - that we could take home. We listened to Bible studies; had many interesting lectures; had meetings with Israeli leaders; and went on several fascinating excursions.

Rev. Willem Glashouwer pointed towards the future and carefully warned to be cautious about predicting the future. "The Bible does not contain a detailed order in events; it is not a jig-saw puzzle that you can put in a certain order. But read your Bible, in its entirety, and watch what is happening in the world. Detailed timelines of events can block your view on what is happening, and on the meaning of prophecies."

The testimony of Arab pastor Steven Khoury touched a chord with many of the participants. From practical experience, he knows that believing in the God of Israel means to struggle and attack. "I thank God for Christians for Israel. From the beginning, there was room for the Arabs. And therefore there is room for the message of love and mercy. It is very important for the Arab community that you are in contact with Arabs and work together. This disproves the impression many have that people who love Israel hate the Arabs."

Steven Khoury was joined in an inspiring session by Rabbi David Nekrutman (Director of the Centre for Jewish-Christian Understanding and Cooperation), with whom he closely works to build Jewish-Christian cooperation and strengthen the Christian communities in Israel and the disputed territories. Together they testified to the importance of standing firm on God's covenant faithfulness to the Jewish people, while remembering that the covenant of the land carries with it a responsibility to care for the non-Jews in the land.

Christians for Israel International's new Executive Director Cornelis Kant provided an insightful overview of 'replacement theology' - how and why the early church developed the idea that God had turned His back on the



The Christians for Israel 2019 Forum

Jewish people and the church replaces Israel as God's favoured people. This kind of thinking underlies the theology of many mainstream Christians today, and has inspired the proponents of Palestinian Liberation Theology.

Christians for Israel's International Advisor Andrew Tucker spoke about the legal and political battle for Jerusalem and ended with a warning. "In 1922 fifty-one nations in there League of Nations ratified the decision of the Principle Allied Powers in San Remo, Italy, in 1920, that the Jews were allowed to reconstitute their national homeland in what was then known as Palestine. A safe homeland was promised to them, but for the last hundred years, the nations have been doing everything possible to try not to keep that promise. God will judge the nations about this."

Anemone Rüger gave a moving account of her work caring for holocaust survivors in Ukraine together with our team Christians for Israel in Ukraine, and raising awareness of their plight in other countries, especially Germany. Today, many Jewish survivors of the massacres carried out on Ukrainian soil in WWII are living in poverty, too old to travel to Israel, and without family or loved ones to care for them.

Bible teacher and scholar Johannes Gerloff led a tour to Ramallah and the Biblical heartland of Samaria.

Many of the participants of the Forum gazed in amazement while our bus passed the 'border' of the 'disputed

territories', Judea and Samaria, without any problem. The media paints a picture of endless queues, but the reality is more positive. Our Israeli bus was by no means the only Israeli vehicle in Samaria. It is hard to understand that there is a refugee camp in the middle of the city of Ramallah. Amidst their Palestinian brethren, but still no part of the society.

The Forum was closed with prayer, a special time of intercession for each of the continents. For the challenges that people face in their countries. We all went home inspired and armed with lots of information and useful resources which we can share with Christians in our own countries: readers of the newspaper, people who come to listen to our lectures, conferences or other events in the time to come. Full of wonder we are waiting for what God will work in people's hearts. And we pray that love for God's people may continue to grow worldwide.

The participants visit Ammunition Hill in Jerusalem



Delegates from Ivory Coast, Germany, Ukraine and Uganda meet with Dr Lilian Glaser (centre) during the reception held for relations in Israel. Dr Glaser is Director of the Organisation of Holocaust Survivors in Jerusalem. | Photo: Ralf Hermann.



A recent Olim who has only been in Israel for three months, sharing her experience of emigrating (making Aliyah) to Israel | Photo: Ian Worby

The Relevance of Israel for Brexit

■ James E Patrick

National Representative | Christians for Israel UK

Brexit has stirred up strong emotions throughout the UK. As we watch and pray, we can take lessons from Israel's ancient history and legal principles recorded in Scripture, from Jewish minorities in Britain, and the example of the modern State of Israel.

Government and National Unity

Brexit has exposed deep divisions in the UK and highlighted the importance of Scotland and Northern Ireland particularly. Israel's ancient history as recorded in the Bible has important lessons to teach modern states also, about how to preserve internal national unity between regions divided by geography, culture, history, ethnicity or language. The most pertinent example is the competition between the northern and southern tribes, represented by Ephraim and Judah respectively, which endured throughout the monarchic period. The relevant stories can be found in the books of Judges, Samuel, Kings and Chronicles. King David went to great lengths to unite his divided nation by means of politics, religion, infrastructure, military and economy. Although his son Solomon followed David's example to an extent, his imposition of unfair burdens on the northern tribes led to their rebellion and subsequent independence (*1 Kings 11-12*). Solomon's failure is also connected to his personal accumulation of economic, military and diplomatic power (*1 Kings 10:11-25, 25-29; 12:1-4*). These are warned against by the Law of Moses, lest leaders lose touch with both their countrymen and their common spiritual heritage (*Deut 17:16-20*).

Legal Foundations

The foundation of British common law, which sets apart the legal system of the UK and related nations from other legal systems in the rest of Europe, can be traced back to King Alfred the Great's Doom Book in the late ninth century AD. This English legal code was prefaced with Alfred's own translation from Latin into English of the Ten Commandments and *Exodus 21-23*, the core of the ancient Jewish law code of Moses. Britain's law is underpinned by Israel's law. The current widespread British resistance to unelected EU lawmakers can also be understood as a direct consequence of the distinctive legacy of Magna Carta, signed by King John in 1216. One of its most influential principles, that even kings are subject to the law of the land, was inspired by explicit statements to this effect in the Law

of Moses (*Deut 17:14-20*). Yet equally, the concept of universal human rights, established partly in response to the horrific anti-Jewish events of the Second World War, is also ultimately based on the principle from *Genesis 1:26-28* and 9:6 that mankind and individual humans are created 'in the image of God'. Jewish biblical texts have contributed much to the values of justice and accountable government that underpin the British legal system.

Ethnic Minorities

The Jewish people are the most longstanding and emblematic minority group in the British Isles, and it is to our shame that we were the first European nation to expel them officially in 1290, welcoming them back only after the civil war under Cromwell in 1655. It is therefore vital that we recognise their huge contribution to the flourishing of this nation past and present. Not only that, but they are a model of thorough integration into their host country ('Seek the welfare of the city' – *Jer 29:7*) while at the same time maintaining their distinctive and precious traditions in a thoroughly respectful way towards others. We have a duty to resist strongly all racist and xenophobic behaviour in the wake of Brexit, and this must begin above all with the Labour Party, whose struggles with widespread antisemitism even at the highest levels have repeatedly hit the headlines over the past few months and years.

Managing Immigration

The modern state of Israel offers a very valuable example of a nation that has been inundated with vast waves of immigrants at different times in its recent history, and yet

has managed to create a remarkably cohesive and resilient society and infrastructure, especially through mandatory national service. At the same time, it has preserved and gone to great lengths to integrate the ethnic and religious minority groups that make up more than one-fifth of its total population and does so under more intense scrutiny than any other country on earth. It faces continuous pressure from citizens who advocate terrorism and from vocally disloyal minority members of parliament, as well as from some of the majority population with strong personal prejudices or religious aversion to unity. Yet Israel's determination to integrate both immigrants and minorities within its own recognised territory, and its methods of creating a surprisingly homogeneous society from such diverse elements, have much to teach the UK.

International Relations

In terms of international trade, Israel offers an instructive illustration of a nation in a decidedly marginal situation within its own geographical region, which has consequently been able to establish trade deals independently with nations and common markets all across the world. Its emphasis on start-up companies, innovation, and research makes it an influential player in the global markets far out of proportion to its size and population. Like the UK, it too has connections of history and culture with people in many other nations widely separated by geography, and it ensures that these connections are strengthened and celebrated in every way possible. In the current period of uncertainty, as the UK strives to define a vision of hope for its future, it would be well advised to look to Israel and the Jewish people for instruction.



Israel to New Zealand: We Stand With You

The State of Israel conveyed its condolences to New Zealand following the massacre of 50 Muslims worshipers at mosques in Christchurch by a white supremacist.

Following news of a horrific massacre at two mosques in New Zealand, Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu responded, "Israel mourns the wanton murder of innocent worshipers in Christchurch and condemns the brazen act of terror in New Zealand."

"Israel sends its condolences to the bereaved families and its heartfelt wishes for a speedy recovery to the wounded," he said.

Foreign Minister Israel Katz stated that "Israel expresses condolences to the government and the people of New Zealand and to the families of those killed after the hate crime in the mosques in the city of Christchurch."

"We condemn all forms of terrorism, hatred and violence. The harm to innocent people in a prayer house is unacceptable," he added.

The Israeli Embassy in New Zealand tweeted: "Our thoughts and prayers are with the victims of the terror attacks in Christchurch. A tragic and sad day for New Zealand. Our hearts go out to all those affected by this terrible event."

Israel's Foreign Ministry Spokesman Emmanuel Nahshon stated that Israel's "thoughts are with the families of the victims of the terrible shooting against mosques in Christchurch. We express full solidarity with New Zealand and its people. We should never let hatred, violence and terror win."

Ata Alian, a software engineer from the Abu Dis neighborhood in Jerusalem, was one of the victims in the massacre. He was married



Photo: Getty Images

and had a two-year-old daughter. His father, Dr. Muhammad Alian, was also injured in the

shooting and is still being treated in an intensive care unit while in serious condition.

Jewish Festivals

Ta'anit Bechorot

Fast of the First Born

19 April 2019

A unique fast day in Judaism which falls on the day before Passover. The fast is broken at a Siyum celebration (the completion of Torah study after morning services), creating an atmosphere of rejoice that overrides the requirement to continue the fast. Unlike most Jewish fast days, only firstborns are required to fast on the Fast of the Firstborn.

Passover/Pesach

The Feast of Unleavened Bread

20 - 27 April 2019

Passover (*Hebrew: Pesach*) commemorates the story of the Exodus, in which the ancient Israelites were freed from slavery in Egypt. Passover begins on the 15th day of the month of Nisan in the Jewish calendar, which is in spring in the Northern Hemisphere, and is celebrated for seven or eight days. It is one of the most widely observed Jewish Holidays.

Yom HaShoah

Holocaust Memorial Day

2 May 2019

Yom HaShoah is observed as Israel's day of commemoration for the six million Jews and five million others who perished in the Holocaust as a result of the actions carried out by Nazi Germany and its accessories, and for the Jewish resistance in that period. In Israel, it is a national memorial day and public holiday.

Yom HaZikaron

Israeli Memorial Day

8 May 2019

Yom HaZikaron is Israel's official remembrance day, dedicated to fallen soldiers and civilian victims of terrorism.

Yom HaAtzma'ut

Israeli Independence Day

9 May 2019

Commemorates the declaration of independence of Israel in 1948.

Pesach Sheni

Second Passover, one month after Passover

19 May 2019

Some men were ritually impure from contact with human corpses, and were therefore ineligible to participate in the Korban Pesach (Passover lamb). Faced with the conflict of the requirement to participate in the Korban Pesach and their ineligibility due to impurity, they approached Moses for guidance, which resulted in Pesach Sheni, celebrated one month after Passover.

Lag BaOmer

33rd day of counting the Omer

23 May 2019

A Jewish holiday celebrated as a symbol for the fighting Jewish spirit.

7th Thesis: Repentance

Kees de Vreugd

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

In this article, we continue our discussion of the 'Twelve Theses of Faith on Israel' published by Christians for Israel.

Thesis 7: We believe that the Church should repent for all deeds of anti-Semitism committed in her name, and should show her true repentance in acts of love and solidarity with Israel and the Jewish people.

Elaboration: By understanding what has happened during centuries gone by, we as a part of the corporate body of the Church, will always be aware of our collective guilt, which will always lead to an attitude of repentance and humility instead of pride towards the Jewish people. This will lead to and show itself in bringing forth fruits worthy of repentance: acts of love and solidarity with the Jewish people and with Israel. We therefore will actively go against all kinds of anti-Jewish and anti-Semitic attitudes, religious and non-religious, both within and without Christianity.

Clarification: There is a difference of opinion among Christians and churches about the question whether we should confess guilt for what was done to the Jewish people over the centuries. In our culture we tend to think almost exclusively from an individual perspective: I am responsible for what I did, or do with regard to the Jewish people. I am not responsible for what someone else did in the past or does now. But the Bible teaches us to think collectively (*Psalms 106:6; Nehemiah 1:5-11; Daniel 9:5-11*). Of course, not everybody was involved in the atrocities that were committed to the Jewish people throughout history and especially in the concentration camps. However, true repentance identifies with the sins of one's people, even of one's forefathers and even of Christianity at large

over the centuries. God sees us not just as individuals but also as a group with a corporate identity. There is no reason whatsoever for pride in the notion that I personally, or my family, or my church or denomination was not involved in anti-Jewish theology or actions. Paul tells us: "Do not be arrogant, but tremble" (*Romans 11:20*). And *verse 18* says: "Consider this: You do not support the root, but the root supports you!" True repentance will not just show itself by solemn declarations at special occasions. True repentance will show itself in producing fruits worthy of repentance in acts of love and solidarity with the Jewish people and with Israel.

Conrado D. Lumahan

Director | Christians for Israel Philippines

Thesis 7 states: "We believe that the Church should repent for all deeds of anti-Semitism committed in her name and should show her true repentance in acts of love and solidarity with Israel and the Jewish people."

Anti-Semitism is both a past and present problem. Anti-Semitism has led and still leads to shedding of Jewish blood. Pharaoh shed the blood of the innocent Hebrew boys and even adults. Haman wanted to annihilate the Jewish race. Thank God for Esther and Mordecai, whose courage and faith foiled Haman's scheme. In the Middle Ages, the church coerced the Jews to convert to Christianity. Defiant ones were sometimes expelled or exterminated because of their religion. During the 1930s and 1940s, the devilish scourge of anti-Semitism gave rise to both Kristallnacht and the Holocaust based solely on Jewish identity. Now, the blood-thirsty Hamas and Hezbollah, and many truth-opposing Palestinians and jihadists want to eradicate the Jewish people and take over Israel, the land which God promised would belong to his chosen people, Israel, forever.

Why was anti-Semitism made possible within religious circles? There is both Christian anti-Semitism and Islamic anti-Semitism. The seeds of Christian anti-Judaism and later anti-Semitism had been sown by some of the Church Fathers in the early centuries of the Christian era. Many Church Fathers, Chrysostom being one of the most prominent, promulgated the teaching of replacement theology, by which the church has conceitedly claimed to have replaced Israel as God's chosen people and the new recipients of God's covenants. The church had cut its Jewish roots and stolen its fruits. This new theology opened the church to a spirit of anti-Semitism.

Christian churches were deeply influenced and affected by replacement theology. This led to tragic and inexcusable events and attitudes in which Christians disavowed biblical principles. Those who participated in many cruelties against Jews and those who remained silent when they could have intervened, betrayed their own humanity, orthodoxy and orthopraxy.

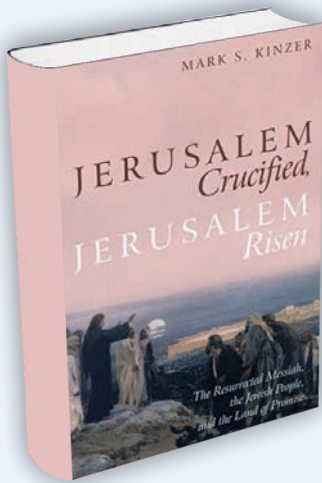
Such errant theology with its resultant antipathy to the Jewish people calls for repentance to God and to the Jewish people. True repentance not only requires consciousness of having done wrong, but requires resolve to correct that wrong and transformation of one's attitude and relationship to the offended ones and to God. When people truly repent, they abandon the sin, and resolve in their heart never to repeat it. True repentance, then, is to 'turn' and 'return' to God forming a new self, a new path, and a new direction that refuses to repeat past atrocities and injustices. True repentance always causes life transformation. Transformation is a miracle. Transformation is impossible without God. And transformation is now.

Book Review

By Kees de Vreugd

Jerusalem Crucified, Jerusalem Risen

by Mark S. Kinzer



Mark Kinzer is an American Messianic-Jewish theologian and a prolific writer. In his last book, *Jerusalem Crucified, Jerusalem Risen*, Kinzer gives a careful and detailed reading of *Luke* and *Acts* within the overall canonical structure of the New Testament.

His book is, as the author puts it: "A quest to recover the Jewish character of the euangelion (Greek: the good

message) as good news for Israel". The message of the gospel is not only – and even not mainly – a message of forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

It is the message of the restoration of Israel. Kinzer shows that not only the suffering and death of Jesus at the cross is inextricably connected to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD, but that His resurrection also entails the restoration of Jerusalem and the nation of Israel.

When Jesus suffers and dies on the cross, bearing in advance the wrath or Rome that his people would face a generation later, entering into the depths of Israel's exile, his action is not an isolated event but the culmination of an entire life. Jesus recapitulates Israel, and thereby human story as a whole, as this was Israel's vocation from the beginning.

The euangelion, therefore, is a message for all people, but its implications are different for Jewish and Gentile

audiences. Israel remains the covenant people. Jesus has been raised from the dead not just to 'save' individual Jews, but to accomplish 'the redemption of Jerusalem'.

The judgment on Israel as experienced in 70 AD confirms rather than annuls the enduring covenantal bond between God and the Jewish people. The question the apostles ask Jesus in *Acts 1:6* may very well be the core question of the New Testament: Lord, are you in this time restoring the kingdom to Israel?

Again, Kinzer has provided us with a rich study, challenging traditional ecclesial views of the Jews, the land and the city of Jerusalem.

Mark S. Kinzer, *Jerusalem Crucified, Jerusalem Risen. The Resurrected Messiah, the Jewish People, and the Land of Promise*. Wipf and Stock Publishers 2018. Paperback ISBN: 978-1-5326-5337-7; hardcover ISBN: 978-1-5326-5338-4; E-book ISBN: 978-1-5326-5339-1

Passover - A Joyful Time for Family

■ Kees de Vreugd
Theologian | Christians for Israel International
& Editor | Israel and the Church

Pesach (Passover) may well be the most central feast on the Jewish calendar. It celebrates the exodus from Egypt (*Exodus 12*), not just as something that happened in the history of Israel, but as a reality of life. In the *Haggadah* (the Passover liturgy), it is said that everyone should celebrate Pesach as if he, or she, at this moment is leaving Egypt. That is a core Jewish understanding. By remembering the exodus, you participate in it, experiencing yourself the liberation from Egyptian slavery.

Like all Jewish feasts, it is first and foremost celebrated in the family. The children play an important role, not just during the family meal on the eve of Pesach, but also in the preparations before the feast.

Preparations start right after Purim. One of the central features of the feast is that, for seven days, one is allowed to eat only unleavened bread, the *matzah*. Anything leavened (bread or beer) is banned. After Purim, which is four weeks before Pesach, everybody starts to clean the house, to do away with all leaven. On the last day before Pesach, the children search the house with a candle and collect the last little crumbs, which are then burnt. Of course, this has a deeper meaning: to clean yourself and your life from sin (*1 Corinthians 5:6,7*).

Pesach means to pass over. The Bible tells that in the night of the exodus, all firstborn males of Egypt were killed. But the angel of death passed over the houses of the Israelites that had the blood of the Passover lamb on the doorposts. The Passover lamb was eaten by the family. Today, according to Jewish tradition, since there is no temple, it is no longer possible to slaughter the Passover lamb.



An Israeli family seen during the 'passover seder' on the first night of the 8-day long Jewish holiday of Passover. | Photo: Flash90

On the *seider* table, there are only references to the sacrifice in the temple.

The central event is the Pesach meal on the eve of Pesach. It is called the *seider*, meaning 'order', since it follows a fixed order. Special foods are eaten, and the story of the exodus is recounted and discussed in all its various aspects. The recounting is called the *Haggadah* (meaning 'telling'). Over the centuries, the Haggadah has grown and developed into a fixed text. The basic structure, however, dates back to the time of the second temple and has also left its traces in the

New Testament account of the last supper. At the seider table, though, each one can share his or her own experience of liberation.

Important elements are the four cups of wine, each marking a stage in the celebration, the *matzah*, and bitter herbs, recalling the bitterness of slavery. The youngest child asks the important question of what is different this night from all other nights, as we do so many unusual things. Father answers: we were slaves in Egypt, but now we are free. The celebration concludes with the wish: next year in Jerusalem!

Israel is Heading Towards a Glorious Future



■ Rev Willem Glashouwer
President | Christians for Israel International

Although the 'birth pains' in the end times will be intense and painful, according to the words of Jesus in *Matthew 24* the outcome will be glorious for Israel. Because these 'birth pains' ultimately will lead to the birth of the 'baby': the Kingdom of Peace and Righteousness on earth led by the King of kings and the Lord of lords, the Messiah of Israel. All the prophets of the Bible speak about it.

Simeon prophesied in *Luke 2:25-31*: "Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Messiah.

Moved by the Spirit, he went into the Temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for Him what the custom of the Law [Thora] required, Simeon took Him in his arms and praised God, saying: "Sovereign Lord, as You have promised, You may now dismiss Your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen Your salvation, which You have prepared in the sight of all nations: a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to Your people Israel." All is well that ends well. *Revelation 11:15* triumphantly says, when looking towards the future: "The kingdom of the world has become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Messiah, and He will reign for ever and ever." The 'Kingdom of Heaven' on earth - meaning the Kingdom on earth, given by the Heavens, given by God, *Matthew 3:2; 4:17; 6:10* - develops in stages.

First the signs of the Kingdom in Israel performed by Jesus the King Himself, as pockets of light in a surrounding darkness. Then the signs of the Kingdom in the whole world by the power of the Holy Spirit during the preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom to all the nations of the earth, *Matthew 24:14*. Again, signs and wonders, as pockets of light in a surrounding darkness. And ultimately the Kingdom of peace and righteousness worldwide, when the Messiah King will again be among us and will sit on the throne of His father David and rule over the House of Jacob - Israel - and peace will flow forth from Jerusalem into the whole world and the nations will train for war no more, *Luke 1:31-33* and *Isaiah 2:2-4*. And of His Kingdom there shall be no end, because He was resurrected from the dead and lives forever.

All Covenants made with Israel will have their final fulfilment in that Kingdom to come.

Then all the Promises made to Abraham will be fulfilled.

Then the Promised Land will have its Promised borders.

Then the Priesthood of Levi will function again.

Then the Kingship of the House of David will be established forever.

Then Jerusalem and the Temple will be the centre of the world.

Then the New Covenant will be fully implemented for Israel.

Then the Covenant of Peace will be fully operational.

Then the wisdom of Torah will be the guiding light for all nations.

Israel on Trial

■ Andrew Tucker
International Editor | Christians for Israel International

There is no other state that continues to be the target of so much negative attention as Israel. Some refer to this as ‘lawfare’: the use of international law to undermine or attack the legitimacy and credibility of a state. The use of lawfare against Israel is a deliberate strategy adopted by those who deny its legitimacy, and it takes various forms.

It is important to emphasise that Israel is not, and should not be, immune from criticism or challenges based on law. Like all states, Israel is subject to international law and should comply with the law. Lawfare, however, is the discriminatory, deliberately false or unfair application of the law, or the instrumental use of law to achieve what in fact are military goals – the destruction of the state in its current form.

One means of ‘lawfare’ is proceedings (directly or indirectly) against Israel in international courts and tribunals. Other ways in which law is used to attack Israel include initiatives instigated by non-governmental organizations (NGO’s) using international law to challenge Israeli leaders visiting other countries; the use of international institutions, such as the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC), to investigate and make allegations that Israel is breaching international human rights law; the ‘Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions’ (BDS) movement, which calls on governments and private companies to boycott Israel or Israeli companies or divest from investments in Israel; and ‘soft law’ initiatives to delegitimise Israel, for example by calling it an apartheid state.

The first of these is perhaps the most dangerous because decisions of courts and tribunals are seen as authoritative and binding. Currently, Israel is the subject of proceedings in the two main international law institutions in The Hague.

The International Criminal Court

The International Criminal Court (ICC) was established in 2002 in order to prosecute individuals for war crimes and crimes against humanity. In a way, it is a global manifestation of the Nuremberg trials against Nazi war criminals after World War II. Like the USA and several other states, Israel has never signed the Rome Statute which established the ICC and is thus not bound by the ICC. Nevertheless, Israeli leaders can be charged for war crimes committed on the territory of a state that is a party to the ICC Statute.

In 2015 the ‘Government of the State of Palestine’ purported to accede to the ICC statute, and lodged a declaration accepting the jurisdiction of the ICC over alleged crimes committed in ‘Palestinian’ territory. Since then, the Prosecutor of the ICC Fatou Bensouda has been undertaking a ‘preliminary examination’ of whether to open investigations against Israel for crimes committed on ‘Palestinian’ territory. The Prosecutor’s approach is disturbing for many reasons. One is that the Prosecutor is adopting a wide definition of statehood that seems to go



The International Court of Justice (ICJ). | Photo: Shutterstock

beyond the intention of the ICC Statute. Under international law, a state only exists when it manifests the legal characteristics of statehood, the most important being that it must have an effective governing authority that actually governs a specific territory. ‘Palestine’ hardly fits that definition, because the Palestinians themselves argue that their territory is controlled by Israel.

The Prosecutor is examining two issues. The first concerns the question of whether Israel committed war crimes in the course of the 2014 Gaza hostilities (Operation Protective Edge). The second concerns the question of whether Israeli ‘settlements’ and other activities in the ‘Occupied Palestinian Territories’ constitute war crimes or crimes against humanity within the meaning of the Rome Statute. The latter claim is based on the view that (a) East Jerusalem and the ‘West Bank’ constitute occupied territory under international law, and (b) Israel has ‘deported or transferred’ its population into those territories since 1967. Both those views are highly controversial and problematic.

Notwithstanding the fact that there are many other allegedly ‘occupied’ territories in the world, and blatant cases of population transfer (e.g. Turkey in Northern Cyprus and Russia in Eastern Ukraine) no other leaders have been prosecuted for transferring their population into occupied territories. This is a clear case of singling out Israel for special treatment. It is not yet clear whether the Prosecutor will open an investigation into these issues, or - if she decides to do so - when this will happen.

The International Court of Justice

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) is the highest judicial body in the United Nations organisation. The ICJ can hear and make decisions on disputes between states when all the states in question submit to its authority (so-called

‘contentious’ cases). The ICJ also can issue an ‘Advisory Opinion’ when asked to do so by a UN body, such as the General Assembly or the Security Council. One of the court’s most famous Advisory Opinions was the Opinion issued in 2004 when asked to do so by the UN General Assembly on the legality of the security barrier erected by Israel to defend itself against terror during the second intifada.

One of the proceedings currently before the ICJ concerns the city of Jerusalem. Following the attack of Israel by its neighbours in 1948, East Jerusalem, as well as Judea and Samaria (the ‘West Bank’), were illegally occupied by Jordan. When Israel took back control of these territories in 1967, it decided to apply Israeli law to the whole of the city. In 1980 it declared Jerusalem to be the undivided capital of the State of Israel. The Security Council denounced this move as illegal and demanded that all states remove their embassies from Jerusalem, which they did.

In 2017 President Trump announced the intention of the USA to move its embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv back to Jerusalem. The US embassy was actually moved in 2018.

‘Palestine’ has brought proceedings alleging it has a dispute with the USA under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, under which diplomatic missions (i.e. embassies) must be located ‘in’ the host state’s territory. ‘Palestine’ alleges that Jerusalem is not ‘in Israel’. The Palestinians argue, amongst other things, that Jerusalem is a ‘corpus separatum’ pursuant to the UN General Assembly’s 1947 Partition Plan. This, of course, is a false claim, because that plan never came into effect. But first, the court must decide if Palestine is a state, as the court can only determine disputes between states. The court is expected to make a decision on this question in early 2020.

Israel's Story in Maps

Map 2 | Map of Israel Today

Israel’s demarcated borders, reached following peace agreements with Jordan and Egypt, and the internationally recognised border with Lebanon. NB: This map does not show the 1949 Armistice Lines (‘the Green Line’). Sovereignty over the territory between the Green Line and the Jordan River (the recognised border with Jordan) is disputed.



Map 3 | Map of Biblical sites Judea & Samaria - The Land of the Bible

The ‘Derekh Ha’avot’, or ‘Road of our Patriarchs’, runs along Israel’s central mountain range from Beersheba in the south through Hebron, Jerusalem up to Shechem and other Biblical sites. Abraham walked along this road on his way to sacrifice his son Isaac.

More than 80% of the Biblical events took place in areas along this road.

The major cities and towns in Judea and Samaria have existed for over 4000 years, since Biblical times.



Palestinian Schoolbooks Worst Chapter

■ Itamar Marcus
Director of Palestinian Media Watch

If you want to know why Palestinian children believe that killing Israelis is model behaviour, all you have to do is look at what might be the worst chapter in all their schoolbooks.

Schoolbooks of the Palestinian Authority (PA) have been criticised ever since Palestinian Media Watch wrote the first report in 1998. However, one chapter published in 2017 stands out in its toxic message. This chapter appearing in the 5th grade Arabic Language book serves as a window to understanding the PA leadership’s fundamentally twisted values.

Heroes

The chapter starts innocently by stressing the importance of heroes to national identity and national pride: “Heroes have an important position in every nation... the people – even if they are divided over many things – they all agree regarding the pride in their heroes...”

The Palestinian child learns that all Palestinians - though they might disagree about politics - all agree about ‘pride in their heroes.’

The schoolbook continues by stating that feeling pride is not enough. The PA takes numerous active steps to honour its heroes: “[We] sing their praise, learn the history of their lives, name our children after them, and name streets, squares, and prominent cultural sites after them...”

PA society assures children that heroes are never forgotten. They might have lived in the past, but by naming streets and squares after them and singing their praise, those heroes remain in the people’s consciousness.

The next message is probably the most important. The children are taught that those heroes are to be role models: “Every one of us wishes to be like them.” Palestinian children are instructed to want to become like PA society’s heroes.

Role Model

While so far this messaging is not problematic, all that changes when the schoolbook presents the ten people who PA educators promote as role models who Palestinian children should ‘wish to be like.’ The list has no scientists, no doctors, no engineers, no singers, no athletes, nor any artists. There have been three Muslim winners of the Nobel Prize in science and two in literature - but they are not on the list of Palestinian heroes. Who are the Palestinian



Palestinian children march with thousands of activists in support of Palestinian rights | Photo: Shutterstock

heroes? 10 Muslim combatants from the first century of Islam (the 7th century) through to the 21st century.

Moreover, the most horrific name on this list of role models is terrorist murderer Dalal Mughrabi, who led the hijacking of a bus in 1978 and murdered 25 adults and 12 children. Among those murdered by Mughrabi was a young Israeli woman Rebecca Hohman and her two sons Ilan age 3 and Roi age 6 when Mughrabi threw a hand grenade at the bus they were travelling in. Murderer Mughrabi is the person Palestinian educators are telling children to see as a role model, someone ‘everyone wants to be like.’

Martyrdom

After naming the ten heroes, the PA schoolbook stresses that there is no one better than these fighter killers: “These heroes are the crown of their nation, they are a symbol of its glory, they are the best of the best, the best of the noble people.”

And that’s not all. There is one additional horrific message for the kids. Mughrabi was killed during her terror attack and others on the list were killed in battle. The PA schoolbook focuses on their deaths and glorifies their willingness to die: “They took their lives in their hands and threw them at the dangers, without losing their determination and without weakening and surrendering.

Some of them died as Martyrs, some of them died on the way to fulfilling their obligations, as heroes.”

Palestinian children are taught that ‘heroes’ are willing to die as martyrs. In the final sentence of the chapter they are informed exactly what this means for them if they don’t want to die as a martyr: “Bravo to the heroes, and scorn to the cowards!”

‘Kill an Israeli’

This is the depraved value system that Palestinian leaders have lived by since the PLO’s founding in 1965, and upon which they have indoctrinated PA children since 1994. It is not surprising that so many of the Palestinian terrorists in recent years, including the recent murderer of Ari Fuld, were teenagers. The Palestinian leadership has been transmitting its ‘kill an Israeli - be a hero’ message for decades. Now it is clear: tragically Palestinian children have been listening.

And so, the sum total of the message Palestinian children have been internalising is: ‘If I, a Palestinian child, am willing to be a Martyr and kill Israelis, I will be ‘the best of the best, the crown of my nation, streets will be named after me’ and I will be a Palestinian hero. And if not I am a coward.’

If you were a Palestinian child which path would you choose?

Shin

The 21st letter of the Aleph-Beit is the shin/sin. In most cases, it is pronounced as a ‘sh’ (like in shalom), but in some words it is a sharp ‘s’ as in Yisrael, or sameach (joyous). The difference can be marked by putting a dot on top of the right-hand side of the letter for the ‘sh’ (שׁ), and on the left-hand top for the ‘s’ (שׂ). The original sign is associated with a tooth – shin means ‘tooth’. From this original letter the later shin developed, as well as the Greek sigma (Σ) and our ‘S’. The numerical value of shin is 300.

The letter shin is depicted on the tefilin, the phylacteries that are worn on the head in two forms: on one side the ordinary shin with three lines, on the other side with an additional fourth line. The phylacteries on the arm, too, are knotted into the form of the shin. This refers to Shaddai, meaning the Almighty God, one of the names of God.

In the ‘Aleph-Beit song’ in the Talmud, the shin represents the Hebrew word

sheqer, meaning a lie. If you pay close attention, you see that the letters of this word in the Aleph-Beit follow each other: qof, resh, shin. Unfortunately, all too often we encounter lies and deceit. The shin also contains positive aspects, some of which are as follows: The three lines of the shin remind us of the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, whilst the four lines of the other shin on the phylacteries bring to mind the four matriarchs, Sarah, Rebecca, Leah and Rachel. When you look closely, you see the letter shin also appears between the four lines, according to Jewish tradition, the Ten Commandments were engraved on the stone tablets. The shin also represents shuva – penitence, return to God. Thereby we think of Yom Kippur, the day of Atonement. The numerical value of the word kapper (atonement) is 300 (shin). Penitence is a change for the good. Change in Hebrew is shinnuy, with a shin! It is a return to the ways of the patriarchs, who each embody a specific connection with God: Abraham (love), Isaac (awe), and Jacob (mercy).

Tel Aviv Ranked Top City

Tel Aviv was ranked as the best city in the Middle East and the 21st best in the world by the Time Out magazine.

Time Out magazine surveyed 34,000 city-dwellers to rank the best cities in the world and presented a list of its 48 best cities in the world for 2019.

The cities were graded for their ‘food, drink, culture, nightlife, community, neighborhoods, overall happiness and other factors, such as their city’s beauty, affordability and convenience.’

“Welcome to the city that never stops. Tel Aviv – the contemporary hub of Israel, the cultural capital, a culinary mecca and a beach bliss,” Time Out writes.

The magazine also wrote that Tel Aviv “has a notorious reputation” as a “non-stop city with a great nightlife and music scene.”

New York was ranked the best city in the world, followed by Melbourne and Chicago. Turkey’s Istanbul came in number 48.



Photo: Flash90

Short News

Kibbutzim Innovating



The original Israeli ‘kibbutz’ was designed for simplicity and communal living. There are still many kibbutzim where this is still the case. But most kibbutzim today allow for private ownership of property and have exchanged socialist principles for economic ones. In 2018 the kibbutzim in Israel invested substantially in Israeli start-ups: around twenty-seven million euros. That is 45% more than the previous year. | Photo: Flash 90

Motorcar Calls Ambulance

The first motorcars in Israel are equipped with a system that not only calls an ambulance itself but also reports the severity of the accident. What was the speed, is the car upside down and how severe are the passenger’s injuries.

So far the system is 100% accurate in detecting accidents and 92% accurate in predicting the severity of accidents. The system uses already built-in sensors in new motorcars. The application comes from an Israeli start-up, together with Magen David Adom.

Hope for Coral



Global warming has serious consequences for coral reefs worldwide. Warmer seawater is more acidic causing coral to die off. In numerous places, formerly colourful underwater life has faded as a result of dying coral.

But not in the Gulf of Aqaba, near Eilat. Israeli scientists have discovered that the coral in the Red Sea can better resist warmer water temperatures and a higher degree of acidity. They hope that the results of their research can be applied in other places to protect coral and save it. | Photo: Flash90

The Valley of Shiloh



The contemporary village of Shiloh | Photo: Flash90

■ Rev Henk Poot
Christians for Israel Netherlands

In this article, Rev Henk Poot continues his journey through Judea and Samaria - the Biblical Heartland.

We leave Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal behind us and continue the trail of the patriarchs. It is an age-old route that winds south through the hills of Israel’s heartland.

Near the crossroads, at Kfar Tapuach you can make a left turn and descend towards the Jordan Valley. We drive through a couple of Arabic villages and see a couple of farmers coming home from their fields, a school going out and children walking home along the road. This is ‘B-area’. Israel watches the security of the road, and on both sides of the road, autonomous Palestinian territory is extending.

Tabernacle

And then we arrive in the valley of Shiloh. We read the names of the Jewish villages scattered across the hills: Re’im, Ma’ale Levona, Givat Har-El and Shiloh of course. We see fields and olive trees and rich and ripe vineyards. Besides modern Shiloh, we can also visit the ancient place we know so well from the Bible. A couple of years ago visitors were still welcomed in a wooden structure with a wobbly table with a replica of the tabernacle on top of it and a short film that related the tabernacle’s story. That has changed.

Major archaeological excavations have been

carried out at the foot of the hill of Tel Shiloh and tourists are now finding this to be a wonderful place to visit. You can now drink coffee and buy wine and oil, as well as view a beautiful film that tells everything. On the site of the ancient town of Shiloh, we can see the outline of where the tabernacle was located”.

Samuel

The tabernacle stood there for 369 years. This is where Elkanah and his wife Hannah went every year. In their time the number of pilgrims diminished because the sons of the high priest desecrated the sanctuary and people didn’t value the ceremonial service (*1 Samuel 2:18*). But Elkanah’s family went up. Here Hannah prayed intensely for a child. And still, following Hannah, women come here and pray exactly that. Here, where I walk right now, once Samuel walked. Here he heard the voice of the Lord and grew up into one of Israel’s greatest prophets and judges.

Witnesses

On the way back from the Tel (hill) you find a small exhibition of potsherds. Thousands of them were found on the slopes around the sanctuary, silent evidence of the thousands of pilgrims who celebrated their feasts here and had their meals. Here in Shiloh, Joshua called on the seven remaining tribes to get possession of their heritage, make haste with it and to rely on God (*Joshua 18*).

God’s loyalty

Ultimately the Philistines would destroy Shiloh. War was on its way, Hophni and Phinehas were cut down in battle, and the ark they took with them in the battle was robbed. Eli fell off his chair and died when he heard the moaning in the city and learned what had happened.

Shiloh fell into oblivion, and with Shiloh, the valley became a wilderness. And yet, also here we realise God’s loyalty. The prophets would speak of new vineyards (*Jeremiah 31:5*) and about a time when the valley would bloom again. And if you now look around you at the place of the tabernacle you see the vineyards. They haven’t been there very long yet.



New vineyards in the valley of Shiloh | Photo: Flash90



The museum at the archaeological excavations near Tel Shiloh | Photo: Flash90

Tending a Mass Grave

■ Marijke Terlouw & Carmen Ullersma
Christians for Israel International



Rita Schweibes (pictured left) was born 30 August 1936 in Tulchin, Ukraine. Many people who have travelled to Ukraine with us have met her and heard her story about how she survived the hardships of the Holocaust in the ghetto of Pechora. You can read more about her life in this interview.

“I remember the first time Christians for Israel visited with food parcels ten years ago. The buses drove up and stopped in front of the museum. The busses were packed full of food parcels, humanitarian aid, toys and clothing. Ten years ago there were a lot more Jews than there are now. More Holocaust survivors were still living.”

Before the War

“I can’t remember much of the period before the war. I was just five years old when it started. There was a large Jewish community in Tulchin, in addition to the Polish and Ukrainian communities. There were ten synagogues in total. My mother stayed at home, and my father worked in the sewing factory. I had two brothers. One joined the army, and one went to the Pechora ghetto with us. Life was different in the Soviet period. There was no place for religion. But at that time, before the war, people were kinder to Jews. Right before the war started, my parents were able to acquire their own apartment. They didn’t even have time to furnish it. The bombardment of Tulchin started, and they bombed the building where my parents had the apartment. Part of the building survived and the other part was completely destroyed. After that, we stayed in other people’s foyers, hallways or storage rooms. Each day we stayed somewhere else. People took turns feeding us: someone else every day.

Return to Tulchin

“When the war started, my father helped with the evacuation of the Jewish community. Because of this, we were the last to leave. We hired a horse and wagon and my parents, brother, grandmother and I left in the direction of Dnepropetrovsk. Six kilometres before the city we saw that the road was blocked off by German and Italian soldiers. We had to turn around. When we got back, we saw that the house we had left from was empty. The table was gone, the



The mass grave at Pechora | Photo: Christians for Israel

beds were gone; everything had been stolen. I was five years old at the time. I saw that the neighbour girl had my doll. I started to cry and said, ‘Give my doll back.’ I can still remember that.”

In December 1941 Rita and many other Jewish children were driven together into the Jewish school. The Romanian occupiers and the Germans gave the children injections. The injections did not contain vaccines against diseases, but the diseases themselves, so that the children got tuberculosis and typhus. Afterwards, the prisoners had to walk forty kilometres through the freezing cold to the concentration camp in Pechora. Many died due to the extreme hardships.

Rita was imprisoned in Pechora for years. The conditions were horrendous. There were no gas chambers, but the prisoners were tortured, raped, and systematically starved. Rita’s father was murdered by the German soldiers. One month later her mother died of sickness, hunger and sorrow. As a young girl herself, Rita cared for her younger brother who became crazy with sorrow and suffering.

Tending a Mass Grave

“The mass grave is a wound that always aches. Sixty-two thousand Jewish people are buried there. They were not only Jews from Tulchin but also Moldavia, Romania, Mogolov-Podolski and other places. As long as I live, I will care for it. I make sure that someone mows the grass there. I am thankful for the people who have helped me to place a monument for my mother on the mass grave. Now I can walk to her grave. It was a difficult time, our life during and after the war. I wouldn’t wish it on anybody. I am thankful

to the Almighty that despite everything I survived. The Almighty gave me the strength to continue. Now I have a family, children [of my own].

Indifference

“It seems like more and more people are indifferent towards what happened during the war. My children and grandchildren know what happened. They know the whole story. But that is not always the case with outsiders. I have two neighbours. They know that I am an elderly woman and they know about my past. One of them helps me when needed, but the other doesn’t and is indifferent.

Regardless of when or where you live, there are always some people who are very selfish. There is a lot of jealousy. But I thank God for everything. I have a place to live in. I am not hungry. Praise God. All that I ask of God is health. I don’t want to be a burden to anyone. As long as I can stand on my own two feet, I’m alright. I do have someone who helps with cleaning around the house. She is a kind, honest woman.”

His Blessing

“God is everything to me. There was a time in my life when I thought, ‘This is the last day of my life.’ But God has blessed me with another seventy years. I live for Him and love Him. We are all sinful, but one day I promised Him something. If He keeps me alive, I will tell people about the past. And that is what I am doing now. I have kept my word to Him. This is my calling and that this is what brings me to the mass grave. My mother and the other Jewish people are buried there.”

A Quiet, Safe Place to Socialise

There he is, sitting at one of the tables eating his dinner, as he does every day. Calmly. He is not in a hurry. “I am here for the sake of company”. Quietly he continues to eat. He is here to be sociable, and occasionally he will speak about his life experiences. His story speaks of poverty that calls for his appeal to Hineni’s soup kitchen.

“I was working in the computer business in those days when I lived in America. I was keen on going to Israel.



I didn’t know the language, but I thought everybody speaks English, don’t they?

And I am well educated. But once in Israel it actually proved to be really different. Everything causes problems here. Everything is expensive. An ordinary connection for heating that is just not ‘ordinary’. Everything is complicated, takes a long time and demands another approach – usually more impudence – than I am used to.”

Later, Benjamin Philip (left), Hineni’s director in Jerusalem, tells us that this man – his name is Dan - is really poor. “He says he can afford to pay, but the fact of the matter is that he is poor – and too proud to admit it. You think you can manage in Israel, but the workaday reality is hard. Quite often people from western countries just wait too long to call in help. We from Hineni are there for these people too.”

Christians for Israel supports the work of Hineni in Jerusalem. If you would like to support Hineni, you can fill out the coupon on the back page.



Special bonds are created between volunteers and patrons in the restaurant

Exodus from India



Bnei Menashe arriving at Ben Gurion Airport in Israel | Photo: flickr

Michael Freund

Founder and Director of Shavei Israel

More than 3,300 years after the Lord delivered the Israelites from Egypt, a modern-day Exodus from India is coming to pass, as thousands of lost Jews prepare to make Aliyah.

In the farthest regions of northeastern India, along the borders of Burma and Bangladesh, reside the Bnei Menashe (Hebrew for ‘the sons of Manasseh’), descendants of the tribe of Manasseh, one of the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel who were exiled from the Land by the Assyrian empire (2 Kings 17:6). Despite their dispersion for so many centuries, the Bnei Menashe remained faithful to the ways of their ancestors, observing the Sabbath and Festivals, keeping kosher and longing to return to Zion. The Lord is rewarding that faithfulness by fulfilling their dreams and bringing them home.

In recent years, Christians for Israel has supported the efforts of Rabbi Michael Freund, the founder and Chairman of Shavei Israel, an organisation which has brought more than 4,000 Bnei Menashe to the Jewish state. Shavei Israel has recently received permission to bring an additional 722 Bnei Menashe on Aliyah in 2019, and they need our assistance to facilitate this miraculous homecoming.

The Hoakip Family

Among those waiting to make Aliyah are Batya and Akiva Haokip, and their three children: Rakhem, Dina and Dalia. The Haokip family lives in the Indian state of Manipur, where Akiva is one of the leaders of the Bnei Menashe

community. Both he and his wife are college graduates, and Akiva worked until recently as a project manager for the Life Insurance Corporation of India, the oldest and largest in the country. He recently resigned his position to prepare for his upcoming Aliyah. Batya, his wife, runs a medical clinic, and she is anxious to be reunited with her father, sister and brother, whom she has not seen since they moved to Israel. Akiva will be the first from among his family to make Aliyah, and he looks forward to raising his children to be proud Jews and Israelis.

Special Opportunity

The first group of 250 Bnei Menashe is supposed to make Aliyah right after the Passover festival in late April or early May, but the timing of their move depends on funding. The cost per immigrant is US \$1,000, which covers airfare and transportation from India to Israel as well as some of the initial absorption costs. For every \$1,000 that is raised, another Bnei Menashe will be able to make the long journey home to Zion.

This is an opportunity for Christians and Jews to stand together and fulfil the Divine Will by bringing His children back from exile. We must all rise to the occasion and give generously so that we may merit to see the words of the prophet Isaiah (51:11) come to life: “And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and enter Zion with singing and everlasting joy shall be on their heads”.

Christians for Israel helps Bnei Menashe to make aliyah. If you would like to support Bnei Menashe, you can do so by filling out the coupon below.



Volunteers distributing food parcels in Ukraine

Making a Difference in Ukraine

Koen Carlier

Christians for Israel Ukraine

The harsh Ukrainian winters are tough times for the poor and elderly Jewish people in Ukraine. During the long winter, the food parcels of Koen Carlier and his team were a basic necessity. Thanks to your support we were able to distribute 7050 food parcels so far.

A problem for most elderly Jewish people are the housing costs that went up thirty per cent since November last year. So with an average pension between 50 and 70 euros per month, more than half is spent on housing costs. You can imagine that our food parcels are a big help.

We will continue our food parcel distribution in the coming months, and we plan a special action during Pesach! We also sent out teams to visit the elderly lonely Jewish people, many of them Holocaust survivors and listen to their story.

We often hear: ‘Thank you for not forgetting us.’



YES! I Want to Support Christians for Israel

CHRISTIANS FOR ISRAEL MINISTRY

☐ My donation for ministry costs, print & post

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SOCIAL WELFARE PROJECTS

- ☐ Hineni - Soup Kitchen \$.....
- ☐ Holocaust Survivors - “I’m not Alone” Café Europa \$.....
- ☐ CFOIC - Christian Friends of Israeli Communities \$.....
- ☐ Emergency Food Parcels Ukraine - €10 per parcel \$.....
- ☐ First Baptist Church Bethlehem & Holy Land Ministry \$.....
- ☐ Jaffa Institute - Children at risk \$.....

ALIYAH - BRING THE JEWS HOME

- ☐ One person (Ukraine) - US \$170 \$.....
- ☐ One family (5 people) (Ukraine) - US \$850 \$.....
- ☐ One busload (25 people) (Ukraine) - US \$5250 \$.....
- ☐ First Home in the Homeland \$.....
- ☐ Bnei Menashe (1 person) (India) - US \$1100 \$.....

TOTAL DONATION \$.....

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)
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- ☐ Why End Times? (BOOK, DVD & STUDY GUIDE)

To order these and other resources, go to www.c4israel.org/webshop



TO MAKE AN ONLINE DONATION:

Go to our website: www.c4israel.org/projects



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