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INTERNATIONAL

Understanding Israel and world events from a Biblical perspective

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A Jewish man praying on the Dead Sea shore. | Photo: Flash90

Standing with Israel in Prayer

■ **Roger F. van Oordt & Rev Cornelis Kant**

Christians for Israel International

Israel is going through a time of crisis. The population is deeply divided, and polarisation only seems to be intensifying.

On Monday, 24 July, the Knesset voted in favour of the government's proposed reforms concerning the powers of the Supreme Court. Anyone who reads the analyses and comments carefully gets the impression that this is actually more of a battle for or against the person of Netanyahu. Israel has lived in an environment of enmity and threat since its re-establishment in 1948. Also, in international politics, Israel is often isolated. However, because of the current internal divisions, it seems as if Israel no longer needs enemies, one political commentator wrote. This is certainly disastrous for a country and people like Israel. After all, the people of

Israel are still called to be 'a kingdom of priests and a holy nation' (*Exodus 19:6*) to the God of Israel.

In the Bible, we also read that the people of Israel sometimes went through a period of internal division and strife. At the time of Nehemiah, the Jewish people returned from the Babylonian exile and the walls of Jerusalem and the temple were rebuilt. However, it was not an easy task. The Israelites faced opposition from the outside, as well as internal divisions. It was an extremely dangerous situation that made the people even more vulnerable. It is striking how many similarities there are between the situation of Nehemiah and Ezra then and the situation in which Israel finds itself today. At the time of Nehemiah, the problems were revealed in an impressive way: the people as a whole confessed their guilt and humbled themselves before God (*Nehemiah 9*). They also promised to live according to the Word of God from then on.

As Christians for Israel, it is not appropriate to choose sides. The Jewish people have their own government and parliament. We have told the Jews for almost 2,000 years what they should and should not think and do. Although everyone will have his or her opinion, we always want to stand with the people of Israel because the God of Israel has made an everlasting covenant with the Jewish people as a whole. What we can do is pray for Israel. To add our supplications and humiliation to the supplications of Israel so that the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob may have mercy on His land and people.

"But You, O Lord, abide forever, and Your name to all generations. You will arise and have compassion on Zion; For it is time to be gracious to her, for the appointed time has come." (*Psalms 102: 12-13*)

We would like to encourage you to read and meditate on the entire Bible book of Nehemiah in your quiet time with God in this period.

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Upgrade for the Ancient Tower of David



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Colophon

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

Mission

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

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The Battle for Jerusalem is Intensifying

■ Andrew Tucker

International Editor | Christians for Israel

The current crisis in the ‘Palestinian territories’ is evidence that things are moving and shaking in the spiritual realms. We live in a time when good and evil are coming to their fullness and the judgment of the nation’s approaches.

This war in heaven is having its impact on earth—including in the political domain. Satan is mobilising the enemies of Zion to oppose His purposes with Israel and the Church.

The United Nations has become a stronghold of Babel. The tsunami of anti-Israel propaganda is engulfing the nations. Political and legal institutions are being mobilised to destroy the Jewish state, thus undermining all that the Lord has achieved over the last century in restoring His people in accordance with His word.

In other words, the world is on a collision course with God.

Deceived by the enemy, the nations of the world are encouraging the hostile elements in Palestinian society to use violence to exercise their ‘right of self-determination’. Behind the scenes, Iran is financing and mobilising them to advance the revolutionary agenda of the regime in Tehran, which established the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) in 1979 to ensure the integrity of the Islamic Republic. A massive organisation involved in almost every aspect of life in Iran, the IRGC is Iran’s vehicle to carry out its international revolutionary operations. The IRGC is mandated by Iran’s constitution to pursue “an ideological mission of *jihad* in the way of Allah, that is, extending sovereignty of Allah’s law throughout the world.”

Recently, Israel was engaged in a furious fight in Jenin and is still engaged in other hotbeds of Palestinian jihad in order to confront and eradicate the IRGC-sponsored terrorism.

Israel has no choice. It’s an existential battle.



Dark clouds over Jerusalem. | Photo: Shutterstock

What are we, the church of Christ, called to do in this situation? We are not a political organisation nor a worldly institution. We do not fight with earthly weapons. No, the identity and calling of the church is heavenly and spiritual. Essentially, we are called to fight a spiritual war and to be a prophetic witness to the nations about the redemption of the world achieved through Christ and the hope of the coming Kingdom.

In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul explains the ‘mystery’ of the restored and redeemed relationship between Jews and Gentiles, achieved through Jesus Christ:

“Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God’s people and also members of his household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In Him, the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in Him, you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.” (*Ephesians 2:19-22*)

“This mystery is that through the gospel,

the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.” (*Ephesians 3:6*)

Later, he explains, “the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things. His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to His eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence.” (*Ephesians 3:9-12*)

So, we have spiritual work to do - to fight against all principalities and powers and to declare God’s will.

But, of course, this has a practical application. We must, amongst other things, intercede, support, comfort and defend the Jewish people as the Lord plants them in the land.

Given the growing opposition in the world (and within the church), this work is more important than ever.

Prayer Points

Israel

- This year marks not only the 75th anniversary of the State of Israel but also of the Israeli army. It was officially established a few days after Israel declared its independence. Give thanks for all those times when the army has successfully defended Israel.
- In recent times, a number of Israeli citizens have been killed in terror attacks. Many times they leave a family behind. Pray for comfort for the bereaved families in this intense grief.
- “There has never been a day like it before or since, a day when the Lord listened to a human being. Surely the Lord was fighting for Israel!” (*Joshua 10:14*). God listens to Joshua when he asks for the sun to stand still so that Israel can continue fighting. Give thanks that God fought for Israel then and that He still does today because they are His beloved people.
- ‘The wonderful thing about praying is that you leave a world of not being able to do something and enter God’s realm where everything is possible’ (Corrie ten Boom). The prayer for peace for Israel, sometimes seems like a

prayer too big to pray. But with God, all things are possible. Pray for peace between Israel and the Palestinians and pray for the peace of Jerusalem.

Israel & the Nations

- It is very difficult for Jews from certain countries to emigrate (make *Aliyah*) to Israel; think of countries like Iran and China. Pray that these Jews will nevertheless manage to move to Israel.
- In recent months, antisemitism on Twitter has increased. It mainly involves tweets with conspiracy theories about Jews. Antisemitism is also rife on other social media. Pray for people to stand up to this and for antisemitic posts to be blocked.

Christians for Israel

- “The unfolding of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple” (*Psalms 119:130*). Pray that more and more Christians will understand God’s continued faithfulness towards Israel and that they will support and love Israel. Give thanks for God’s prophetic Word.

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

The New Iranian Front in Israel's Heartland

■ **Yochanan Visser**

Correspondent in Israel

Israel is facing a new Iranian front in Judea and Samaria, the heartland of the Jewish state.

This new front is, in fact, an old one, as Israel has been coping with never relenting Palestinian terror emanating from towns and cities under the control of the Palestinian Authority, ever since the late PLO leader Yasser Arafat was allowed to set up camp in Ramallah.

The current wave of terror that is plaguing Israel started at the end of March 2022 when what then was thought to be 'lone-wolf' terrorists staged deadly terror attacks in Israeli cities such as Beer Sheva and Tel Aviv.

The wave of terror attacks resulted in a new comprehensive IDF operation that was dubbed Wave Breaker. This operation focused on the arrest of terrorists in various Palestinian cities and villages, mostly during nightly raids, and on completing Israel's security fence.

knees, and this course must be continued."

Hossein Salami, the commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps, furthermore, admitted his organisation had found ways to supply weapons to the terror groups in PA-controlled territory under the noses of the Israeli security services.

The weapons mostly enter Judea and Samaria via the Jordanian border, as the arrest of a Jordanian diplomat with his car full of firearms recently made clear. In another instance, a Jordanian doctor was caught with more than a thousand bullets in the trunk of his car at the beginning of July.

Theft of firearms and other military items from IDF bases is another source for the delivery of weapons to the various terror groups.

After another IDF operation in the town of Jenin which ended up in an hours-long gun battle and saw PIJ using tactics that it had copied from Hezbollah, such as the use of powerful roadside bombs, the

organisation to form the new terror groups.

During al-Nakhalah's recent visit to Tehran, he and Hamas leaders had been told by Iran's leaders that there was a strong need to "better organise and arm the resistance" in Judea and Samaria.

Today, Palestinian terror groups in Israel's heartland can produce lighter weapons locally, the PIJ leader added.

Shortly after al-Nakhala gave his speech, the IDF, together with the Israeli Border Police and in cooperation with the internal security service Shin Beth began an operation in Jenin that had the hallmarks of the last mini-war against PIJ in Gaza.

The operation, dubbed Bayit VaGan, unexpectedly started with airstrikes carried out by drones against 20 selected targets in Jenin.

Thereafter huge D9 bulldozers sprang into action ploughing through the verges of access roads.

The bulldozers were used to detect and

political echelon, together with the security brass realised the strategy had to be changed.

As in Gaza, during the last mini-war against PIJ, the Israeli security services had to deliver a devastating blow to the terror groups in Jenin and had to dismantle the terror infrastructure in the town of 49.000.

The decision to change the strategy against the Iranian proxies was no doubt also inspired by what two Palestinian leaders had said about the Iranian build-up in the territories under PA control.

First, there was an anonymous PA official who said that the Iranians "are already here" in the PA-controlled areas.

Then there was a speech by PIJ terror group leader Ziyad al-Nakhalah that made it clear Israel should take decisive action against Iran's growing influence in the PA-controlled cities.

The Secretary General of PIJ said his group was "establishing battalions of fighters in all Palestinian cities in the West Bank."

Al-Nakhalah especially praised the Jenin battalion, which had lost many members through IDF actions or terror attacks.

The PIJ leader also revealed that there was close cooperation with Hamas and that some newly established battalions had a mixed PIJ/Hamas cadre.

The terror groups in Samaria and Judea are controlled by the joint Hamas/PIJ war room in Gaza, Nakhalah said, while he also revealed Iran gave instructions to his

destroy mines and roadside bombs after, during the previous IDF action in Jenin, IDF soldiers were injured when a powerful roadside bomb was detonated under their armoured vehicle.

Thereafter troops entered Jenin, accompanied by airborne fighter jets of the Israeli Air Force that circled in the skies above Jenin.

The IDF soldiers and Border Police knew exactly where the weapon storages and the laboratories that produced weapons and even crude rockets were located, some of them underground.

The Israeli show of force apparently overwhelmed the roughly 300 Palestinian terrorists in Jenin who decided to go into hiding or fled the town.

The Israeli operation may have led to a (temporary) halt of the terror emanating from Jenin but inspired others to step up their attacks elsewhere.

Shortly after the end of the Jenin incursion, rockets were launched at Israel from Gaza and from southern Lebanon as Palestinian terrorists stepped up their attacks against Israelis in both Samaria and Tel Aviv.

It has become clear that the so-called Iranian 'Resistance Axis' was not deterred and would continue the war of attrition against Israel in preparation for the long-anticipated multi-front war against Israel.

Short News

Israel's Firefighting Efforts in Greece



In July, Israel assisted firefighting efforts in Greece for a number of days under extreme temperatures, exceeding 45 degrees Celsius. Over two days, Israeli aircrafts conducted numerous sorties in coordination with Greek counterparts, dropping substantial quantities of water on raging blazes. Israeli National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir said: "The firefighting planes of the 'Elad' squadron operated with great professionalism and completed their operational activity. The pilots and ground crews of the Fire and Rescue Services and the Israel Police have enabled the State of Israel to assist Greece during critical times." The fires in Greece caused severe damage, mainly to forests and buildings.

| Photo: Israel Police Spokesperson's Unit.

Netanyahu Successfully Undergoes Pacemaker Surgery

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu underwent a cardiac pacemaker implantation procedure in July. Doctors at Sheba Medical Center in Ramat Gan said the operation was successful and the 73-year-old Netanyahu was discharged a few days later. During the operation, which was carried out under general anesthesia, Justice Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Yariv Levin acted in Netanyahu's place.

Festival for Bookworms



Books, books, books: the Hebrew Book Week took place in Israel in June. This annual week-long event celebrates Hebrew literature. Large open-air book fairs in cities such as Jerusalem and Tel Aviv are a veritable feast for bookworms. Young and old alike cannot resist the attraction of the markets. It attracts thousands of visitors. Books are often offered at a reasonable price, and there are special offers at bookstores. Besides the book fairs, there are also various literary events, such as lectures, meet-and-greets with authors and workshops.

| Photo: Flash90

The current wave of terror that is plaguing Israel started at the end of March 2022 when what then was thought to be 'lone-wolf' terrorists staged deadly terror attacks in Israeli cities such as Beer Sheva and Tel Aviv.

It's Time to Dismantle the United Nations

■ Melanie Phillips

The moral corruption of this global body has knocked the free world off its compass.

The malevolent scapegoating of Israel by the United Nations has long been a scandal.

These abuses are regularly highlighted by tireless UN watchdogs such as Hillel Neuer, the executive director of UN Watch, and Anne Bayefsky, president of Human Rights Voices and director of Touro's Institute on Human Rights and the Holocaust.

Last week, Neuer testified before the US House Foreign Affairs Committee. He described how Israel is routinely demonised by the UN General Assembly, the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) and the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Neuer also revealed that, in retaliation for exposing this bias, the head of UNHRC Eric Tistounet has been running an antisemitic dirty tricks campaign against him.

After hearing this, the chairman of the hearing, Rep Chris Smith (R-NJ) expressed outrage and promised to take up this harassment with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres in order to put a stop to it.

Last year, the UN General Assembly condemned Israel in no fewer than 15 resolutions compared to 13 for the rest of the world together...

The problem with the United Nations, however, is far more fundamental.

In May 2021, after Israel took military action in Gaza against Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), which had been firing thousands of rockets at Israeli civilians, the UNHRC created a commission that targeted not the attackers but their Israeli victims.

The commission's scope is vast and one-sided, covering the 'root causes' of the Middle East conflict and alleged 'systematic discrimination based on race.' Unprecedentedly, it has no end date—because the UN's animus towards Israel is never-ending.

The UNHRC appointed Navi Pillay as head of the commission. Pillay had previously called for sanctions against 'apartheid Israel'—the signature big lie of Israel-haters. The second commissioner, Miloon Kothari, had ranted about 'the Jewish lobby.' The third commissioner, Chris Sidoti, had said that "accusations of antisemitism are thrown around like rice at a wedding."

The commission has now released a report that widens its scope still further, attacking not only Israel but also its defenders, including private individuals and non-governmental organisations 'worldwide.'

The UN's campaign of double standards against Israel, ignoring or sanitising attacks against it while damning it falsely

as a human-rights abuser, goes on week in, week out.

The UN's resident representative in Jerusalem, Norwegian diplomat Tor Wennesland, recently made a series of willfully distorted, inflammatory and disgusting statements. Ignoring the barrages of rocket attacks from Gaza directed at Israeli civilians earlier this year, Wennesland condemned Israel's remarkably precise military strikes against PIJ leaders as 'unacceptable' because of the few civilian deaths that were unavoidably involved.

In an even more egregious attempt to avoid referring to Palestinian Arab terrorism, Wennesland referred to Lucy, Maia and Rina Dee, who were shot dead at point-blank range in their car by Palestinian terrorists, as having been killed "by perpetrators in a car with Palestinian plates."

Last December, Wennesland tweeted that he was 'horrified' that a Palestinian terrorist, who had attacked an Israeli soldier and border police officers, was killed in what he called a 'scuffle.' He sent 'heartfelt condolences' to the terrorist's 'bereaved family.'

Recently, the United States, United Kingdom and 25 other UN member states objected to the Pillay commission, which

they said was "further demonstration of long-standing, disproportionate attention given to Israel in the council, and must stop."

That was a welcome move. However, the United States and the rest of the free world should be going much further. They should be saying that the United Nations itself isn't fit for purpose.

This is because the world body contained the seeds of its own corruption right from the start.

The United Nations was created after the Second World War as an institution that would bring the world together to promote peace and justice. Yet most countries are not democracies and do not uphold human rights. So, by definition, any such world body was unlikely to promote peace and justice and more likely to promote the opposite.

So it has proved.

Last year, the UN General Assembly condemned Israel in no fewer than 15 resolutions compared to 13 for the rest of the world together, with just one resolution on Iran, one on North Korea and one on Syria.

As Neuer observed, the UN gives most of the world's worst human rights abusers a free pass. More surreal, abusers such as China, Cuba, Qatar and Pakistan actually sit on the UNHRC.

Last month, the UNHRC appointed to the



View of the General Assembly Hall of the United Nations. | Photo: Flash90

chairmanship of its social forum the Islamic Republic of Iran, the world's most dangerous terrorist state, which beats women to death for failing to wear approved head coverings and hangs gay people from cranes.

Yet the only country with a standing agenda all to itself at the UNHRC is Israel—the sole upholder of human rights and democracy in the Middle East. From 2006, the council has adopted more resolutions on Israel than on Iran, North Korea and Syria combined.

Last year, the UNHRC appointed Francesca Albanese as a special rapporteur on 'Palestine' with a mandate to investigate only Israel's supposed violations.

Albanese is not an honest broker. She has repeatedly equated Palestinian suffering with the Holocaust, falsely accused Israel of war crimes and genocide, and in 2019 wrote that America was "subjugated by the Jewish lobby." Last year, she told Hamas, "You have a right to resist."

In May the UN commemorated 'Nakba Day,' the propaganda term the Palestinian Arabs have given to the date on which the State of Israel was founded. It invited the head of the Palestinian Authority Mahmoud Abbas to address it.

He used that platform to repeat the PA's murderous lie that Britain and the US had decided "for their own colonialist purposes" to establish "another entity in our historical homeland" because they "wanted to get rid of the Jews and enjoy having them in Palestine—two birds with one stone."

As for the WHO, Neuer observed that every year its annual assembly deviates from surveying global public health to hold a special debate singling out Israel. There is no such focus on Syria, where hospitals are repeatedly bombed by Syrian and Russian forces; nor on North Korea, which has one of the worst health systems in the world. On the contrary, the WHO recently elected North Korea to its executive board.

As ever, the deranged onslaught upon Israel stands proxy for the endangerment of the world itself.

A WHO mission to study the Covid pandemic's origins in China announced in February that the possibility that the virus had escaped from a laboratory needed no further investigation. The mission had been put under pressure to reach that conclusion by Chinese scientists who made up half the team.

The United Nations has been impotent over China's systemic abuses of its population and over Russia's war against Ukraine. Who can be surprised? Both China and Russia have places on the UN Security Council with veto power. The United Nations places foxes in charge of its hen house.

In a similar vein, Iran, which is racing towards developing nuclear weapons to further its war on the US and its intention to wipe Israel off the map, has been made vice president of the General Assembly.

Even more grotesquely, Iran has been made rapporteur of the General Assembly's Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Committee. This is despite its persistent violations of the Security Council resolution banning its ballistic-missile programme and its refusal to cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The United Nations isn't just anti-Israel. It is morally corrupt at its very core. As a result, it doesn't just victimise Israel and empower its attackers. It doesn't just betray its charter commitments by endangering the wider world.

By supposedly promoting global peace and justice but actually promoting those dedicated to war, terror and tyranny while demonising their victims, the world body has also knocked the free world off its moral compass.

That world will only stand a chance of regaining its balance if it walks away from the United Nations and creates an alliance of democracies instead.

Melanie Phillips, a British journalist, broadcaster and author, writes a weekly column for JNS. Currently, a columnist for The Times of London, her personal and political memoir Guardian Angel has been published by Bombardier, which also published her first novel, The Legacy. Go to melaniephillips.substack.com to access her work.

Originally published at www.jns.org. Republished with permission.

“I Bear the Insult ‘Goebbels’ as a Badge of Honour”

■ Sara van Oordt-
Jonckheere

Christians for Israel Netherlands

Palestinian Fatah leader Jibril Rajoub called Itamar Marcus the ‘Goebbels of the 21st century,’ referring to the Nazi propaganda minister during World War II. Itamar: “Rajoub accuses us of spreading lies, but we only expose the shocking truth. I bear his insult like a badge of honour. We reveal things about the Palestinian Authority they prefer to keep hidden.”

“Every child wants to be a martyr.” “The Jews are the descendants of monkeys and pigs”. “We love death as others love life”. These are not statements by fringe fanatics, but they are statements—in Arabic—on the official media outlets of the Palestinian Authority, often made by leaders of the same authority.

Itamar Marcus is the founder and director of ‘Palestinian Media Watch’ (PMW), a research institute that monitors Palestinian Authority-controlled media: radio, television, newspapers, textbooks and online broadcasts. A team of PMW Arabic translators spends many hours a day monitoring, translating and analysing various media from the Palestinian Authority, Fatah and Hamas. The translated material is published by PMW and used to expose the abuses worldwide. They do this because Palestinian leaders use different messages to the international community in English than to their own citizens in Arabic. PMW notes that the Palestinians are lied to and brainwashed on a large scale by their own leaders. The PA tells its people that the Jews are so evil and racist that the whole world hates them. Children are urged to become martyrs for Allah, for the ‘Palestinian cause’. PMW brings these practices to light and raises the issue in international politics and media.

Recently PMW exposed another shocking example of the Palestinian Authority’s glorification of terror. Two Palestinian terrorists murdered an Israeli woman, Lucy Dee, and her two daughters, Maia and Rina, in April this year. A month later, when the terrorists were caught and killed in a shootout, PA Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh posted pictures of the two murderers on his Facebook page with the words, “Glory and eternity to our righteous martyrs.” The PA sees the murder of three innocent women as a glorious way to achieve eternity. Fatah posted a video on its Facebook page of a 10-year-old girl reciting a poem: “You are not made for happiness but for martyrdom.” Itamar: “Inciting children to martyrdom is pure child abuse. It is crucial for the future of Israeli and Palestinian children that we bring this to light.”

Why did you start PMW?

Itamar: “We have to go back thirty years in history to answer this question. In 1993, the Oslo Accords were signed between Israel and the PLO (Palestinian Liberation Organisation). The Palestinian Authority



Itamar Marcus, founder and director of Palestinian Media Watch (PMW)

(PA) was created as the official representative of the PLO. For a moment, there was hope for a peaceful solution. But barely a year later, Palestinian suicide bombings began. I hired two Arabic translators, and from my parents’ house in Jerusalem, we watched Palestinian television broadcasts. No one in Israel had the faintest idea that the PA’s messages in the international media were very different from what they presented to their own people.”

“I decided we should focus on what the Palestinian leaders are teaching their children. Palestinian children on TV called on other children to become martyrs, to murder Israelis with machine guns. Religious leaders were already calling for a genocide of the Jews.”

“When I started PMW in 1996, we had no idea where this would lead to. As early as 1998, we published a report on incitement in Palestinian textbooks. The information was there, but before PMW started, nobody was aware or took it seriously. I kept hoping that politicians and journalists would listen and wake up. Clearly, the Palestinian leadership never had the intention of genuinely pursuing peace. Most Israelis realise this now. But because the government did not take the signals seriously at the time, we had to pay an incredible price for our naivety: 2,000 deaths.”

How do the Palestinian leaders react to what you are doing?

“They have nicknames for us. Jibril Rajoub (a prominent Fatah leader) once called me Goebbels, referring to the Nazi propaganda minister. The comparison is, of course, bizarre because Joseph Goebbels spreads lies while we expose the lies. It’s sad, but coming from his mouth, I take this insult as a badge of honour. Hanan Ashrawi (a prominent Palestinian MP) once said: “PMW waits until a Palestinian opens his mouth, and then they pounce on it.” The PA once wrote in an article about us: The fact that the PA is not happy with us proves to me that we are on the right track, that we are doing something right, revealing what they prefer to keep hidden.”

What is the impact of your work?

“I speak in parliaments all over the world. Recently I was in Norway, Sweden, Spain, the Netherlands and Belgium. Soon I will

be speaking in the US Congress and in Ireland. Everywhere I go, I meet government leaders and members of parliament and point out the shocking facts of Palestinian indoctrination and their child abuse. And that regularly leads to changes in foreign policy and condemnations of violence.”

You have been doing this work for almost thirty years now. When is your work done?

“When the world recognises that the PA is not a peace partner. Leaders around the world make the crucial mistake of fighting the symptoms rather than the cause. For example, they say: “Is there incitement in Palestinian schoolbooks? Then we will correct those books.” But this does not solve the underlying problem. These are not isolated mistakes of the Palestinian leadership; it is a reflection of their policy. If they change the books because we force them, they will teach hate elsewhere. They encourage terror, they give bonuses to terrorists, they raise their children in hatred, and they proclaim that Israel will be destroyed. They really believe this. There must be a new leadership, enforced by the international community.”

What can people do to support your work?

“PMW is a non-profit organisation; we live on donations. You can support our work financially. But you can also do more. I meet people all over the world who tell me that they have been using and distributing PMW materials for years. My call is: go to our website www.palwatch.org and sign up for our newsletter. Study our material and forward it to journalists and politicians. If you read articles accusing Israel, please contact these journalists and forward our material to them. Not every journalist who writes negatively about Israel hates Israel. Many of them are simply misinformed. The same goes for many politicians and ministers. Every time you inform someone, you make sure the truth comes out. This is the best way to help Israel.”

Watch the full interview here:

<https://www.c4israel.org/news/interview-itamar/>

Or scan on the QR code.



Short News

The Israel Antiquities Authority



The Israel Antiquities Authority
The Antiquities Department of Israel has launched a major campaign to gather archaeological finds owned by private citizens. Citizens regularly take-home special finds, often unaware of the historical value of their discovery. In many cases, these are coins, metal tools and books. Heritage Minister Eliyahu said: “The antiquities that are returned help compile Israel’s historical narrative.” | Photo: Shutterstock

Antisemitic Cartoon

British daily *The Guardian* has apologised for posting a cartoon depicting Jewish and outgoing BBC chairman Richard Sharp. Some say it was a typical antisemitic caricature of Sharp. The cartoonist drew him with a mean-looking grin and a strikingly large nose. It also depicted a squid, which is often used to portray that Jews are supposedly in control of all parts of society. After much criticism, the cartoon was removed.

Israel’s Population Nears 10 Million

Israel’s population nears 10 million. This represents a 12-fold increase in the population since the state’s founding in 1948. The Central Bureau of Statistics published the figures to mark the country’s 75th Independence Day. There are 9,727,000 people living in Israel. Of those, about 73.5 per cent are Jewish, 21 per cent are Arab, and 5.5 per cent belong to one of the minorities.

Extraordinary Mural



Mexican artist Julio Carrasco Bretón created a huge mural which is 44 metres long and five metres high. The mural entitled ‘Am Yisrael Chai’ depicts the history of the Jewish people, from the creation of the first human being to the establishment of the state of Israel. The mural adorns the arrivals hall at Ben-Gurion Airport and was unveiled on 20 June. It was gifted by Mexico in celebration of the Jewish state’s 75th Independence Day.
| Photo: Flashgo



Israel Leverages Abraham Accords to Become ‘Global Communications Power’

(12 June 2023). Israeli government ministries on Sunday approved a plan to lay fiber-optic cables along the oil pipeline between Eilat and Ashkelon.

The creation of an international communications corridor along the Europe Asia Pipeline Co. (EAPC) would allow for the transmission of digital data between Asian countries, with an emphasis on Abraham Accords nations, to Europe and the West, said Israeli officials.

Israel believes this will lead to investment by international companies, the establishment of server farms, economic growth, the creation of jobs and more, and “catapult Israel’s economy to new heights.”

“Today we are reaping more fruit of the historic Abraham Accords that we brought. We will connect fiber-optic cables from Asia, Arab nations, from Eilat to Ashkelon and the rest of the world. This will attract investors and turn Israel into a global communications center. This will jump-start the Israeli economy,” said Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

The Trump administration-brokered Abraham Accords normalised relations between Israel and four Arab countries—the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Morocco and Sudan.

“This is certainly major news, mainly for the South and the cities of the periphery,” said Communications Minister Shlomo Karhi, adding: “In [Saturday’s] *Torah* portion, we read (*Numbers 13:17*): ‘Go up here into the Negev, and go up into the mountains.’ Together, we have already conquered the summit of this mountain and, with God’s help, we will yet conquer more mountains.”

In its statement, the PMO referenced the Spice Route, one of the most well-known and important trade routes of antiquity, extending from the southern Arabian Peninsula to the Mediterranean Sea coast. It was part of a network of trade routes between Europe and the East, along which goods such as spices, silk, precious stones, dyes and exotic animals were transported.

“Today, in the modern digital world, the products are information, knowledge and



From left: UAE Foreign Minister Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyani, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, US President Donald Trump and Bahraini Foreign Minister Abdullatif bin Rashid Al-Zayani at the signing of the Abraham Accords at the White House, 15 September 2020. | Photo: White House

technology. We are again turning the State of Israel into the vital route of the world through which will pass knowledge and bits along fiber optic cables that will

link Asia and Europe,” said a statement from the Prime Minister’s Office.

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Morocco Cancels Hosting Negev Forum

■ Joshua Marks

(21 June 2023). Rabat reportedly made the decision in response to Israeli announcements on expanding communities in Judea and Samaria.

The Moroccan government has canceled plans to host the Negev Forum next month over recent Israeli announcements regarding the expansion of Jewish communities in Judea and Samaria.

US and Israeli officials confirmed Rabat’s decision to the *Times of Israel* on Tuesday.

It would have been the second gathering of foreign ministers from Israel, Morocco, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Egypt and the United States in the spirit of building upon the Abraham Accords normalisation agreements. The inaugural event was held in southern Israel in March 2022, and since then three steering committee meetings have taken place—in June 2022 in Bahrain, a virtual meeting in October 2022 and in Abu Dhabi in January 2023.

“It is another sign in the deterioration of the Abraham Accords,” Professor Eytan Gilboa, an expert on US-Israel relations at Bar-Ilan University in Ramat Gan and a senior fellow at the Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security, told JNS.

The Morocco event was originally planned for March, but the North African country’s government postponed it four times before canceling it completely. The US official said that a date had not been finalised but had been ‘pretty locked up’ for mid-July.

According to the official, two announcements regarding Israeli communities in Judea and Samaria had derailed the summit.

On Sunday, Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich announced the approval of more than 4,500 new housing units for residents of Judea and Samaria. Hours later, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s Cabinet passed a resolution handing Smotrich near-full control over planning approval for existing Israeli communities in Judea and Samaria.

Smotrich, the leader of the Religious Zionism Party, is also a minister in the Defense Ministry.

The resolution also reduces red tape for expanding existing Israeli communities and retroactively legalises some outposts in Judea and Samaria.

Gilboa said that Israel has always maintained good diplomatic relations with Morocco but that the African country had no choice but to nix the summit because Israel went against commitments it made at the Aqaba and Sharm el-Sheikh summits. According to a joint statement from the 19 March meeting in Sharm el-Sheikh released by the United States, that included an “Israeli commitment to stop discussion of any new settlement units for four months, and to stop authorisation of any outposts for six months.”

Gilboa said that it was a difficult decision for Morocco to make as the host country for the Forum.



The steering committee of the Negev Forum in Abu Dhabi, 9 January 2023. | Photo: UAE Foreign Ministry/JNS

“Morocco didn’t really have a choice but to cancel this meeting because the meeting signifies the importance of the Abraham Accords and I believe that there is some crisis between Israel and members of those Abraham Accords,” Gilboa said, calling the developments ‘disappointing.’

Expanding Israeli communities in Judea and Samaria ‘taints the atmosphere’ around the Biden administration’s efforts to forge a diplomatic agreement between Israel and Saudi Arabia, the US official added.

“I would be singularly focused on doing absolutely nothing that would prevent the Saudi deal from getting done, but they

haven’t been able to do that,” the official said.

Gilboa said that Netanyahu was beholden to his Likud Party’s coalition agreements with other parties in his government.

“The more extreme members of his coalition are applying pressure on him that is stronger than his foreign policy considerations like the Abraham Accords and relations with the United States,” the professor said.

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Third Pipeline to Boost Output at Israel’s Leviathan Gas Field

(2 July 2023). “The expansion will allow us to supply more energy to the local, regional and global market.”

The Leviathan gas field, located in Israel’s exclusive economic zone (EEZ) in the eastern Mediterranean, will soon increase production, an energy consortium announced on Sunday.

The \$568 million project will see a third pipeline laid from Leviathan to an existing production platform about ten kilometres (six miles) off the coast near Moshav Dor and Zichron Ya’akov, with the gas flow starting in the second half of 2025.

According to the partners behind the project—NewMed Energy, Chevron Mediterranean Limited and Ratio Energies—the new pipeline will boost production capacity from about 12 billion cubic metres annually to nearly 14 billion cubic metres per year.

Leviathan is the largest gas field in Israel’s exclusive economic zone, located about 120 kilometres (75 miles) west of Haifa. It was discovered in 2010 with estimates of

605 billion cubic meters of exploitable gas reserves.

“The third pipeline project is an initial, significant and important step in expanding Leviathan,” said Yossi Abu, CEO of NewMed Energy.

The expansion “will allow us to supply more natural gas to the local, regional and, very soon, also the global market,” Abu continued.

Leviathan currently supplies gas to Israel, Jordan and Egypt.

The Israeli Cabinet in May approved a 900 million shekel (\$246 million) project to expand natural gas exports to Egypt.

A 65 kilometre (40 mile) pipeline will be constructed along a route between Ramat Hovav, south of Beersheva, and Nitzana, near the Sinai border, via Ashalim, allowing for an additional 6 billion cubic metres of natural gas to be exported to Egypt each year.

Also in May, Israel’s Energy Ministry certified the discovery of a new maritime



View of the Israeli Leviathan gas field gas processing rig. | Photo: Flash90

natural gas deposit, the country’s fourth-largest to date.

British-Greek energy company Energean can now begin drawing up plans to develop the field, named Katlan, which is entirely inside Israeli territorial waters.

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Saudi-Iran Rapprochement and Saudi-Israel Normalisation: No Contradiction Intended

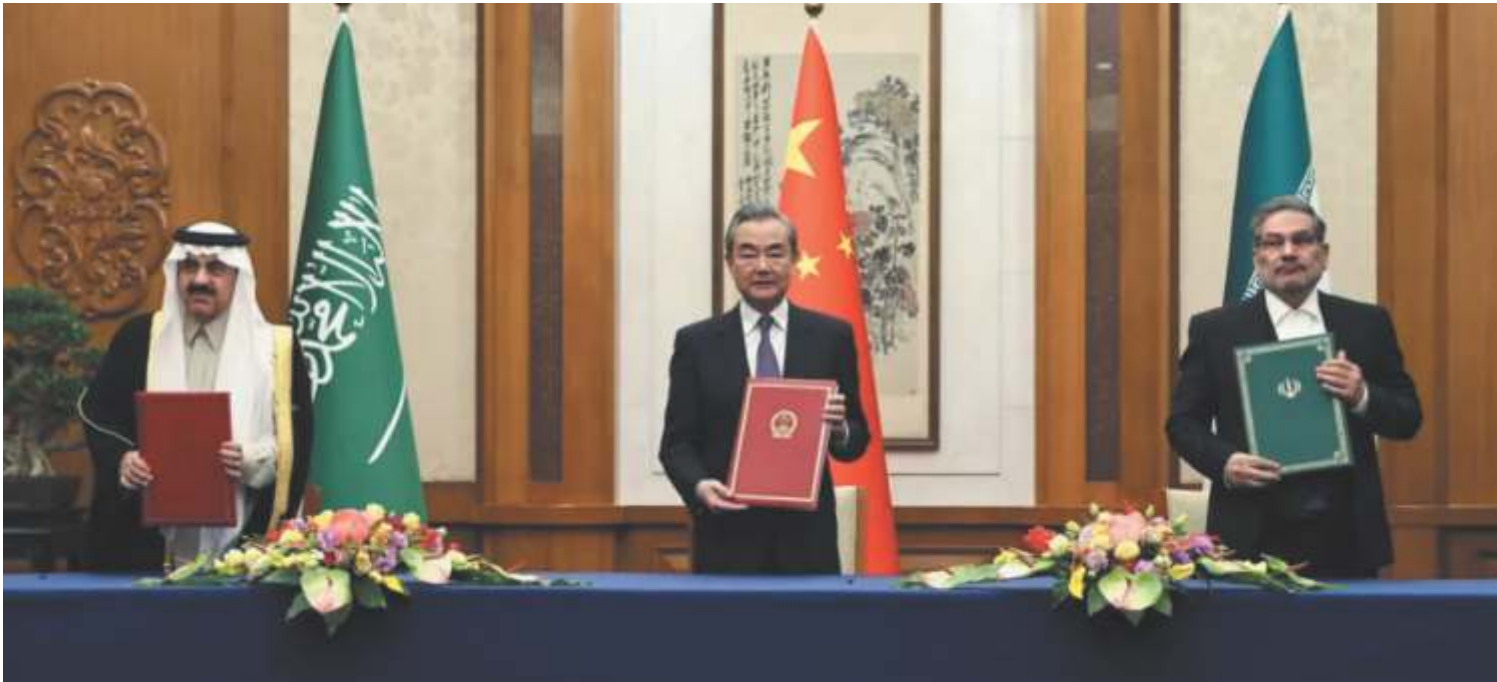
■ Dr Yechiel M Leiter

With the announcement of the rapprochement between Saudi Arabia and Iran, it appeared that the strategic direction of the Middle East had reversed course.

What seemed to many as a one-way drive along the Abraham Accords freeway toward normalisation and peace was suddenly thrust across the political guardrail into oncoming traffic. An embrace of Iran appears, *prima facie*, to be a shunning of Israel.

However, while that reading is a possible interpretation, it is an unlikely one. Instead, we will argue that the Saudi Arabia of Mohammed bin Salman is committed both to depriving Iran of nuclear weapons and, at the same time, gradually normalising relations with Israel.

- Saudi Arabia’s return to ‘diplomatic relations’ with the Iranian regime neither contradicts its commitment to alliances intended to prevent the ayatollahs from attaining nuclear weapons nor does it jettison a process of normalisation with Israel.
- There is an argument to be made that Riyadh’s unexpected re-engagement with the Iranian regime is a change of tactics, not strategy; a bearhug, intended to squeeze the belligerency out of its nemesis.
- The Saudis’ intention is to feed a starving Iranian population, build their



Top Chinese diplomat Wang Yi (center) attends a meeting with Secretary of Iran’s Supreme National Security Council Ali Shamkhani (right) and Minister of State and national security adviser of Saudi Arabia Musaad bin Mohammed Al Aiban (left) in Beijing on 10 March 2023. | Photo: China Daily

crumbling roads, bridges, waterways, and urban infrastructure, and empower the Iranian people to regain their dignity and identity; then use its economic leverage to derail the nuclear program and bring down the terror-sponsoring ayatollahs with it.

- If the Saudis thought rapprochement would enable Iran to move closer to achieving its nuclear ambitions, they would obviously not pursue such a deal. The conclusion must be drawn, then, that this is a move intended to stop or at least stymie their menacing neighbour.
- Meanwhile, a functional rapprochement between Israel and Saudi Arabia has been in place for a number of years and is progressing, qualitatively and quantitatively, at an impressive rate. From joint business ventures to meetings of intellectuals and policy researchers at international conferences, from Saudi Arabia opening its airspace to Israeli overflights and Israeli participants at sports events on Saudi soil, to the Kingdom’s blessing of the Abraham Accords, the rapprochement with Israel is practical, while the rapprochement with Iran is, as yet, declarative.

And as I have argued, Saudi Arabia’s rapprochement with Iran might actually be the cleverest aspect of the ongoing Saudi rapprochement with Israel.

Read the full article: <https://jcpa.org/article/saudi-iran-rapprochement-and-saudi-israel-normalization-no-contradiction-intended/>

Dr. Yechiel M. Leiter is Director-General of the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs. He has served in senior government positions in education, finance, and transportation. He received his doctorate in political philosophy from the University of Haifa. His post-doctorate study of John Locke and the Hebrew Bible was published by Cambridge University Press. Published by Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs on 24 May 2023. Republished with permission.

Jerusalem Prayer Breakfast ‘23

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

Over 400 Christians from 50 countries gathered in Jerusalem in June for the seventh annual Jerusalem Prayer Breakfast. The gathering follows the biblical command in *Psalm 122:6* to pray for the Peace of Jerusalem. Jewish rabbis and Israeli Members of Knesset attended this two-day Prayer event in Jerusalem. Every year this prayer event takes place at the invitation of Members of the Knesset. This year Member of the Knesset, Mr Matan Kahana, was our guest host in the Knesset. Many pastors and leaders of Christian Israel organisations attend this prayer event, including several Christians for Israel leaders.

Israeli President Isaac Herzog welcomed the audience with a video speech expressing his gratitude to the Christian communities for standing with Israel. Israel’s Foreign Minister Eli Cohen announced that Hungary will move its Embassy to Jerusalem. The Knesset spokesman apologised for the recent protest from orthodox Jews against a Christian prayer event near the Temple Mount. He emphasised that freedom for all religions is fundamental to Israel, as expressed in

Israel’s Declaration of Independence. This was highly appreciated by the audience. A variety of speakers addressed the audience, such as Albert Veksler, director of the Jerusalem Prayer Breakfast and American-Israeli communications strategist and best-selling author, Joel Rosenberg. Hananya Naftali, the media advisor for Prime Minister Netanyahu, told us that it is important “to win together with Israel in the Media storm”. Ze’ev Orenstein, director of International Affairs for the City of David Foundation, revealed how a “busted sewage pipe may have saved the biblical heritage of Israel”. He explained how during the repair of a sewage pipe south of the Temple Mount, the access road from the Siloam pond to the Temple Mount from biblical times was discovered. This has now been completely excavated and is open to the public. Frederik Ekholm, Vice Chair of International Christian Chamber of Commerce, spoke about how Christian businessmen can support Israeli business. On behalf of Christians for Israel, I was invited to speak about the biblical connection between the city of Jerusalem and the Jewish people. I explained from the Bible why it is impossible to divide the



Matan Kahana, Member of the Knesset, speaking at the Jerusalem Prayer Breakfast. | Photo: Christians for Israel

city into East and West or to transfer the city under international supervision. Jerusalem belongs to the Jewish people. Rabbi Yehuda Glick called upon all Christians worldwide to come to Jerusalem and pray on the Temple Mount. Since it began in 2017, the Jerusalem Prayer Breakfast has experienced miraculous

growth. It has been held in many nations, from Dallas and Houston in the US, Rome, The Hague and Tallin in Europe, Kampala and Ghana in Africa, and recently in Australia. It is always encouraging to attend this prayer event, to join in prayers, to listen to good speeches and to meet many brothers and sisters worldwide.

Israel Expresses Gratitude to C4I Germany

■ **Dana Nowak**
Christians for Israel Germany

75 years of Israel and 25 years of Christians for Israel Germany—100 good reasons to celebrate. This was the motto of the big anniversary celebration of C4I Germany during March in Neu-Ulm (southern Germany). The main speaker was historian Michael Wolffsohn. Representatives of Jewish and Christian organisations addressed the audience. The President of the State of Israel, Yitzchak Herzog, expressed his gratitude to C4I Germany in a video message.

President Herzog praised the work of C4I Germany. On the occasion of the anniversary conference, he sent a video greeting from Jerusalem, stating, “I am pleased to be able to attend this event from afar and to congratulate you and show my appreciation for an organisation that has done so much for Israel and for German-Israeli relations. “C4I Germany was founded on a strong

sense of ethical responsibility for the Jewish people.” The organisation has “transformed the cruel treatment of our people in a dark past into an attitude of solidarity and generosity in the present —especially when it comes to *Aliyah*, currently from Ukraine and Ethiopia,” Herzog continued. He ended by saying: “I would like to thank all of you for your efforts to bring understanding and healing to history and to the relationship between the Christian and Jewish worlds. May you continue to be a force for good and generosity in this world for many years to come.” One speaker at the conference was historian and journalist Michael Wolffsohn. In his lecture, he examined 75 years of the State of Israel in the context of 3,000 years of Jewish world history. Josias Terschüren, who heads the Politics and Society division at C4I Germany, spoke about the biblical roots of our mission—standing with Israel as Christians. He emphasised that this

mission also includes the political world and society. “We believe that Israel has a glorious future. We believe in Israel’s calling to serve as a blessing to the nations. We believe in peace in the Middle East and throughout the world. We await the coming of the Jewish Messiah and we know that until then we are commissioned to support God’s plans for the restoration of Israel on all levels, in particular politically and through the media.” Among the guests were also representatives of Israeli organisations with which C4I Germany has been working closely for years. Rafi Heumann, an envoy of the Jewish organisation Keren Hayesod, said in his greeting, “As a Jew, as an Israeli, and as a representative of a Zionist Israeli organisation, I would like to thank each of you very much for your commitment to Israel, for all that you do, and for always having Israel in your hearts.” Other speakers at the conference were Rev Cornelis Kant, Executive Director of

Christians for Israel International, and Roger van Oordt, Honorary Consul of the State of Israel and former Executive Director of Christians for Israel Netherlands. Van Oordt pointed out that C4I is on Iran’s sanctions list. He stressed the importance of praying for Israel and the work of C4I. “God’s enemy does not want us to do this work,” van Oordt said. He encouraged the guests to pray for the Jewish state in their congregations, even if Israel is not a topic there. During the conference long-time C4I Germany chairman Harald Eckert was given a ceremonial farewell. Harald led the organisation for 15 years and then handed over the chairmanship to Luca Hezel. Closing the conference, C4I Germany Chairman Luca Hezel thanked all guests, friends and supporters. “We will continue to stand with Israel. All of us, not only the staff, are Christians for Israel.” | Photos: Christians for Israel Germany



C4I Germany Chairman Luca Hezel (left) presents former chairman Harald Eckert with a copy of the first issue of the newspaper 'Israelaktuell', of which Eckert was the editor.



Historian Michael Wolffsohn with C4I Germany's Josias Terschüren and Dana Nowak



The music duo Shaul and Julia Ben Har from Israel



UN Not Only Biased—Also Incompetent



■ Andrew Tucker

Director General | The Hague Initiative for International Cooperation (*thinc.*) | www.thinc.info

The UN Human Rights Council's Commission of Inquiry into Israel and the Palestinian territories has demonstrated its incapacity to function as an independent tribunal based on the rule of law.

Its incompetence was made clear during the recent presentation of the Committee's third report.

At that presentation, one of the members of the Committee—Mr Miloon Kothari—claimed that Ukraine and 'Palestine' should be 'dealt with' in the same way, namely, "international law uphold[s] correctly the rights of Ukrainians to resist, and we would like to see the same standards being applied to the case in Israel and Palestine."

This absurd claim is not only false, it is grossly misleading by suggesting that Israel has somehow illegally attacked territory belonging to the State of Palestine.

According to Professor Geoffrey Corn, a leading international expert on international humanitarian law (the law of war), "equating Ukraine's international legal status in response to Russian aggression with that of the Palestinian Territories is a fundamental distortion of international law."

Professor Corn explains: "Since the adoption of the Charter of the United Nations, there have been few clearer examples of a member State's right—pursuant to Article 51 of the Charter—to act in self-defence, and the right of other Member States to come to that victim State's aid, than the situation Ukraine. Russia's initial and most recent invasion of Ukrainian territory was a blatant violation of Article 2(4) of the Charter prohibiting the use of force against another member State. Ukraine's 'resistance' is not only legally sanctioned by Article 51 but also by deeply rooted principles of customary international law permitting a State, which is the victim of an armed attack, to use all proportional means to protect and defend itself."

Corn: "Nothing about the ongoing situation between Israel and the Territories is even remotely analogous to this situation. First, Israel's continuing presence in the Territories is not the result of an unlawful armed attack against a Palestinian State. Indeed, even the notion of such a State remains contested between the Parties, both of which entered into an international agreement [the



Navanethem Pillay (center), chair of the United Nations Independent International Commission of Inquiry into Israel and the Palestinian territories. On the right is member of the Committee Miloon Kothari. | Photo: UN Photo/Twitter

Oslo Accords—ed.] indicating that the final status of the Territories must be decided through mutual subsequent agreement. Second, even accepting the generally agreed position that Israel is bound by the international law of belligerent occupation in the Territories as the result of gaining control through military action in 1967 (not against Palestine, but against Jordan), that law provides no 'right' of self-defence analogous to Article 51."

"At best, the law of belligerent occupation acknowledges that the occupying power will encounter resistance efforts within the occupied territory; and, when those resistance fighters operate on behalf of the State whose sovereign territory is under occupation, international law may accord such individuals prisoner of war status if captured. But occupation law is fundamentally neutral on the issue of whether the occupying or occupied State was or was not acting as an aggressor or in self-defence; it is instead a legal regime triggered by the de facto reality of occupation. Therefore, suggesting that Palestinians are vested with a 'right' of resistance analogous to that of the Ukrainian people—a right ostensibly derived from the assumption that Palestine, like Ukraine, is the victim of an armed attack in violation of the Charter of the United Nations and is therefore exercising an inherent right of State self-defence—is factually untenable, historically distorted, and legally invalid."

In 2022, Mr Kothari stated in an interview that Israel's occupation has "been illegal from the beginning". That is untrue: occupation is not illegal under international law.

He added, "I would go as far as to raise the question of why [Israel is] even a member of the United Nations. Because... the Israeli government does not respect its own obligations as a UN member state. They, in fact, consistently, either directly or through the United States, try to undermine UN mechanisms".

Mr Kothari is not a lawyer and should not be placed in a position where he can misrepresent and misuse legal principles and mechanisms—without any possibility of review or appeal—to advance his own political agenda.

As UN Watch and other organisations have demonstrably shown, the Committee is fundamentally one-sided, and members of the Committee are all heavily biased against Israel.

But as Mr Kothari's recent statements show, the Commission is not only biased; it is also incompetent.

It is time for UN member states to take their responsibility seriously and disband this dangerous body.

For further information, and to make a donation directly to *thinc.* www.thinc-israel.org



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The Six-Day War Episode of *Whose Land?*



■ Hugh Kitson

Writer, Director & Producer of the *Whose Land?* Documentary

We have recently released the Six-Day War Episode in the *Whose Land?* documentary series presented by

Colonel Richard Kemp. This is the third of nine episodes that will comprise Part Two of *Whose Land?* which has the overall subtitle *The Law of War and the Status of Jerusalem*.

The opening sequence of Episode 13 is taken from a film I made nearly 25 years ago—*Jerusalem, The Covenant City*. It graphically documents and carries the emotion of one of the most momentous events in all of Jerusalem's long history as the beloved ancient capital city of Israel was liberated by the IDF and came back under Jewish sovereignty for the first time in more than 2,000 years.

for us, and we are glad.”

Could this be a direct fulfilment of prophecy? I think so. The late Gershon Salomon, who was among the first IDF soldiers to enter the Temple Mount on 7 June 1967, thought so too. His interview, which I filmed for *Jerusalem, The Covenant City*, is replayed in this episode of *Whose Land?* Soon after the recapture of the Old City, he founded The Temple Mount Faithful. You will note that a BBC film crew was present with the IDF soldiers as they rejoiced at the Kotel! Even they were stunned by Israel's amazing victory in June 1967. Sadly, that is no longer the case at all, as a new ‘narrative’ has been invented.

Which is why it is so necessary for us to make this documentary series—to counter the lies that are propagated through the international media, the United Nations, the European Union and most nations around the world.

Their agenda is to disinherit the Jewish



Western Wall 7 June 1967

Because we are aiming at a secular audience with *Whose Land?* we don't quote texts from Scripture. Nevertheless, the opening three verses of *Psalms 126* explicitly describe that moment in history: “When the Lord brought back the captivity of Zion, we were like those who dream. Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing. Then they said among the nations, ‘The Lord has done great things for them.’ The Lord has done great things

State of their ancient capital city and even delegitimise their existence altogether. Inspired by the one whom Jesus described as ‘the father of lies’, they are rewriting history, and they are doing it ostensibly in the name of ‘international law’. One of the reasons they are able to get away with this ‘lawfare’ is that very few people understand the principles of international law that clearly back Israel's legal right of domicile and sovereignty over all of Jerusalem as well as the whole of Judea and Samaria.



Andrew Tucker in *Whose Land?*

The first two episodes of *Whose Land?* Part Two—Episodes 11 and 12—examine something that is left out of the modern-day narrative: the illegal invasion by the surrounding Arab nations with the sole aim of annihilating the nascent Jewish state. That would have resulted in another genocide of the Jewish people just three years after the Holocaust—had the Lord not intervened, which He did! The Arab intention was well documented at the time. Our team of prominent international lawyers, which includes Andrew Tucker, tells us that the invasion, which was backed by Great Britain, was a violation of Article 2 of the UN Charter, as was Jordan's subsequent annexation of Israel's Biblical heartland. Like Russia's invasion of Ukraine, that occupation and annexation has no justification under any doctrinal principle of international law.

In Episode 13, following Israel's stunning victory in a defensive war, our team of lawyers unpack the legal situation. Is the repossessed territory ‘occupied’ or not? Indeed, this question recurs in subsequent episodes as the lawyers scrutinise what obligations UN Resolution 242 actually requires of both Israel and its Arab neighbours. And then there is the question of the so-called ‘settlements’. Are they legal or not? Where did the term ‘Occupied Palestinian Territory’ come from? What basis does it have in international law—if any?

After a long wait, the completion of the Part Two episodes is now well on the way, thanks to a fund-raising drive by the Australian Jewish Association and others, who have raised more than half of what is needed. But we still need more. Once all nine episodes are released, we will compile them into a feature-length documentary which will be available for public screenings.

To view all of the *Whose Land?* episodes released to date, please go to our website: c4israel.com.au/whose-land

Part Three of *Whose Land?*—subtitled *Two-State Solution?*—is also in the pipeline. It will not only examine the origins of the PLO but expose its real agenda: the elimination of the Jewish state. We will also seek to answer the question, why are the nations of the world

so hell-bent on creating a hostile ‘State of Palestine’ in Israel's historic heartland? Does it have any justification in international law? It most certainly has no justification in the Scriptures. Even though we are not engaging in a study of the Bible in *Whose Land?* we can nevertheless see the nations of the world charging headlong towards the fulfilment of the final three chapters of the prophecy of Zechariah.

More than half of the funds needed for the completion of the Part Two episodes has been received, and we are pleased to give you a link to Episode 13 on the Six-Day War of 1967, which runs 13 minutes: <https://vimeo.com/841267435/def0974138>

Hugh Kitson is a documentary filmmaker who has made many films about Israel. His films about the British Mandate for Palestine include ‘The Forsaken Promise’—a three-part series (Hatikvah Film Trust 2006) and ‘Whose Land?’ presented by Colonel Richard Kemp (Title Deed Media 2017)—see www.whoseland.tv. To contact Hugh Kitson please email him: hugh.kitson@titledeedmedia.com



Six-Day War—Israeli paratroopers stand in front of the Western Wall. | Photo: Wikimedia Commons

Important Conditions for Experiencing the Amazing Blessing of Our God—Part 2



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

In this issue of *Israel & Christians Today*, I am sharing some

further pastoral reflections on the *Torah* portion, or *parsha*, named *Ekev*—*Deuteronomy 7:12-11:25*—which is the 46th weekly *Torah* portion in the annual Jewish cycle of *Torah* reading, and read this year on 5 August. Moses, now 120 years of age, continues with his series of farewell messages to the children of Israel as the Promised Land awaits them across the Jordan River.

Moses encourages the Israelites who have survived forty years of wilderness wandering to conquer and settle the land, to trust in God, and to discover the wonderful ways in which He will abundantly bless them. Israel's experience of these many promised blessings is, however, dependent upon a number of important conditions that are highlighted in various ways in our text.

We saw earlier that it was true for the children of Israel—and true for every believer—that he shall receive blessing from the Lord who (W-H-O) holds fast to the Word of God, displays true humility, and demonstrates obedience to our Lord.

Our *Torah* passage develops these three important conditions for experiencing the amazing blessing of our God. We have considered the importance of holding fast to the Word of God and now explore the significance of a humble heart and an obedient spirit.

In this farewell address to the new generation of God's people about to enter into the land promised to His people, Moses recalls the hardships the Israelite people faced during their forty years in the desert. Yet, despite everything, they survived—their clothing did not wear out, their feet did not swell, and there was

manna to eat.

God graciously watched over them and provided for them. As we read earlier in *Deuteronomy 8:3*: “He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna....”

Again and again, throughout this *parsha*, Moses stresses to the people that they must obey the commandments and maintain their faith in God. In so doing, the people will enjoy lives of abundant goodness. But when the blessings come, they must be careful not to take credit for all their wealth.

“Beware that you do not forget the Lord your God by not keeping His commandments, His judgments, and His statutes which I command you today, lest—when you have eaten and are full, and have built beautiful houses and dwell in them; and when your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and your gold are multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied; when your heart is lifted up, and you forget the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage:

“Who led you through that great and terrible wilderness, in which were fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty land where there was no water; who brought water for you out of the flinty rock; who fed you in the wilderness with manna, which your fathers did not know, that He might humble you and that He might test you, to do you good in the end—then you say in your heart, ‘My power and the might of my hand have gained me this wealth.’

“And you shall remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day.” (*Deuteronomy 8:11-18*)

We tend to feel that when things go well, it is all—or at least mostly—our doing, and God may not get much, if any, of the credit. On the other hand, if things go poorly, we may be tempted to say that it is God's fault and not ours.



The Gathering of the Manna (watercolour circa 1896–1902 by James Tissot)

Psalms 149:4 says: For the Lord takes pleasure in His people; He will beautify the humble with salvation. *James 4:6* reminds us that “God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”

Writes Adam Lieberman, a Jewish businessman who helps Jews of all backgrounds to see the beauty and relevance of their heritage: “In the same way you don't take credit for your sparkling blue eyes, the picturesque sunset, or the gorgeous multi-coloured rose bush, so too, don't take credit for your monetary success. Know that the same source of ‘nature’ that surrounds you is the same source of everything else you have. If you can live with this reality, know that you'll literally be walking with God.”

The idea of ‘walking with God’ has a real appeal to me and brings to mind the declaration of the prophet Micah: He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God? (*Micah 6:8*)

The humble really do recognise that all that they have comes from God, and in all that they do, they seek to give Him all the glory. But humility goes further than not taking credit for what God alone has accomplished on our behalf. It is more, too, than not ‘puffing yourself up’ when you are recognised for your achievements.

That reminds me, by the way, of the story of the person who was given a medal for humility—which was promptly taken from him when he walked around wearing it!

Importantly, humility means not being so caught up with our own interests that we care little for others who may need our help and support. *Isaiah 57:15* reminds us that the humble heart is, in fact, the very dwelling place of our caring and compassionate God:

For thus says the High and Lofty One Who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: “I dwell in the high and holy place, with him who has a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.”

How amazing it is that the infinite, all-powerful, almighty God of all creation is here described as caring intimately for those who are most in need—those who are acutely aware of their need of restoration; the forgotten, marginalised and broken in society.

To care only for ourselves, and maybe also those immediately dependent on us is simply not God's way. We'll return to this thought a little later.

Also at the heart of this *Torah* portion is the clarion call to the Israelites to be a people who obey their God. In the very first verse (*Deuteronomy 7:12*), we read: “Then it shall come to pass, because you listen to these judgments, and keep and do them, that the Lord your God will keep with you the covenant and the mercy which He swore to your fathers.”

To be continued.

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



| Photo: Shutterstock

Celebrating Life in the Midst of War

■ Anemone Rüger

Christians for Israel

Holocaust survivors in Ukraine are deeply thankful for the support they get from Christian sponsors.

We are driving through a beautiful country at war. What a strange mixture. Terrible things happen; miracles happen. These two realities stand side by side in Ukraine as our team tries to bring hope and joy to the many Holocaust survivors who depend on local help. For every smile on their faces, the effort is worth it.

“Here in this village is where the Russian troops stood,” my colleague Kolya tells me as we head to the outskirts of Kiev for our next visit with Holocaust survivors and Jewish seniors in need. “They came in via Belarus, all the way here to Busovar. From here, they were going to take the capital. See that apartment block over there? That’s the one they hit.” Again and again, Kolya points to a destroyed bridge, a damaged house.

You have to look closely, as many of the country’s wounds are hidden behind nature’s lush green. Colourful flowerbeds line the simple houses in the villages. It’s hard to imagine that just a few hundred kilometres to the east, life has been hell for many months now.

On the eve of the outbreak of war a year ago, Kolya says, he returned tired from a trip and considered putting off refuelling until the next day. “But I felt prompted to do it right away. The next morning, around five, we woke up to war. As terrible as it was—we were prepared. We grabbed our things and were able to escape to a quieter area with our car filled up just before the big panic traffic jam.”

“What you do for us cannot be measured!”

Today, the Jewish community of Belaya Tserkov is waiting for us. We have invited the mobile seniors from our programme to a restaurant—an unaffordable luxury for most and, for us, a good opportunity to spend some quality time with many of our elderly friends simultaneously.

People are approaching from all directions of the little square, welcoming us with a big hug and radiant smile. A wonderful sense of anticipation is in the air. I see a wheelchair arriving. Ludmila, a warm-hearted survivor who lost her mother in the Holocaust, embraces me, hardly wanting to let me go. “How happy I am, I cannot tell you!” It’s the first time we see each other since the Covid19 pandemic and the outbreak of the war.

“When we asked our people who would like to have coffee with Anemone and Alina, we could hardly manage the overwhelming response,” says Tanya, our contact person. “Ludmila can barely walk, but she was determined to be here!”

Slowly, the room is filling up. The long tables are getting set with *vareniki* (Ukrainian corn dumplings), *blinchiki* (stuffed crepes), salads and pastries. Tanya opens our gathering and a trio of musicians begins to play nostalgic coffeehouse music.

I take a moment to look around and study the faces of all the needy and elderly, who are usually just happy that we help them survive with some extra food and medication, and I realise what a special afternoon it is for everyone.

I convey the greetings of hundreds and thousands of



War damages nearby Kiev. | Photos: C4I

sponsors and friends to these war children of yesteryear grown old. They have become so dear to our hearts, and I encourage them to draw hope from the Psalms for each new day. Soon, I begin to eat as well, expecting the music and fellowship to continue at ease for the rest of the afternoon.

Then the first lady stands up and asks for attention. “What you do for us is beyond measure!” she says, her voice breaking. She wipes her eyes and hands us a bouquet of flowers.

One woman thanked us for the hairdresser who restored a bit of dignity and joy to her life with her home visit. Another praises the medical foot care, thanks to which she can now walk again. A Holocaust survivor calls me over and says in German for all to hear, “We love you!”

A well-dressed older gentleman approaches me and says, “If one of our officials had spoken here, he might have made big words, but people don’t care about such things. You spoke from your heart, how you believe and how you help practically—that went straight to our hearts. You gave such hope to the people here! It’s so important that we hear words like that now!” Then the music plays a well-known Ukrainian love song, and the seniors invite the ladies to dance.

The tears often come afterwards when I put these precious moments on paper. I received so much love and gratitude on behalf of you, dear friends and supporters when all I really wanted was simply to bring a ray of joy to the orphans and widows who had grown old. Everyone wanted to shake my hand again, to say thank you again; many were in tears. A moment of heaven on earth in the middle of the war.

Escaped from Slavyansk

At the very end, Mr Abramov approaches me. He recites a poem full of warmth and gratitude and asks Alina to record it so that I can look at it again and again. He fled from Slavyansk, located in the middle of the war zone in eastern Ukraine, a year ago. Tanya asks me to write down his story—maybe we can include him in our programme.

Ivan was born in 1948, the year Israel was founded. “I didn’t have a father; I never knew anything about him,” Ivan begins his account. Instead of ‘unknown,’ the authorities simply put ‘Ivan Ivanovich’ on his birth certificate. “But I know quite a bit about Mom’s family,”



Team member Anemone with Holocaust survivor Ludmila



Group photo at the end of the get-together

Ivan continues. “They lived in a village near Izyum, not far from Kharkov. There was a Jewish estate manager there before the revolution. When my grandfather Samuil lost his wife in 1908, the estate manager adopted his three sons. Grandpa then married his maid and had three more children; one of them was my mother.”

When World War II began, Pawel, the beloved brother of Ivan’s mother, had to go to the battlefield; Grandfather Samuil had already died. Pavel ended up a prisoner of war in Germany. He spent four years in a camp; he barely survived. Upon his return to the Soviet Union, Stalin sentenced him to another ten years in the Gulag, punishing him for having fallen captive.

“Mom and Grandma didn’t escape,” Ivan reports. “Somehow, they managed to survive. They hid here and there in the villages. Grandma had destroyed her Jewish papers. Those were horrible times. They went through so much there that neither of them ever talked about it.”

In 1949, the family went to Slavyansk. Ivan became a mechanic, started a family, and helped build two businesses. A year ago, his whole family had to flee the burning Donbass. The Jewish community in Belaya Tserkov took them in.

Except for a tiny pension, Ivan has no income, and his children who fled have not yet found work. All expenses, especially those related to health care, have to be paid privately.

Many families find it difficult to leave as long as their conscripted relatives are not allowed to leave the country due to the ongoing war. For the elderly, it is an almost insurmountable hurdle to start over somewhere else in their advanced age.

Thank God for the local Jewish community workers who continue to be there for those in need in all the cities in our programme. And thankfully, there are always people in peaceful and more prosperous countries like yours who make room in their hearts and budgets to give to the needy—one survivor at a time. Would you like to help?

If you would like to support hundreds of Jewish seniors and Holocaust survivors in Ukraine and Moldova, please support our food parcel campaign. See coupon on the back of this newspaper.



Visit with Igor, who became bedridden after multiple surgeries



Semyon and Bassya fled the hail of rockets and joined friends in a holiday home far from the city

Believing Without Israel

After the Holocaust—Part 6

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

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

After World War II, the effects of antisemitism and the deep tragedy of the Holocaust are slowly permeating the populations of Western Europe and beyond. How could six millions Jews be horribly murdered in the heart of Christian Europe, just because they were Jews? In the 1960s and 1970s, churches were also slowly becoming aware of how centuries-old anti-Jewish theology contributed to this tragedy. This awareness, along with the miraculous restoration of the state of Israel in 1948, contributed to a renewed perspective on Jews and Israel. Many churches have confessed guilt for their failures towards the Jews, both in their theology and in standing up for the Jews during the Nazi regime. No well-intentioned person would want and dare call themselves an antisemite today.

Dialogue

During the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), the Roman Catholic Church renounced, in its document *Nostra Aetate*, the age-old accusation that all Jews are guilty of the death of Jesus. Churches came out with statements acknowledging that they had in the past considered Jews and Judaism in a wrong way. New



‘Shoes on the Danube bank’—Memorial of the victims of the Holocaust on the bank of the Danube in Budapest, Hungary. | Photo: Shutterstock

with the people of Israel, yet you cannot say that the classical way of looking at Jews and Israel among pastors and church members has thus disappeared. On the contrary, many Christians in all churches consciously believe in Israel’s continued place in God’s Salvation plan with the world, but they probably belong to a minority.

between God and the Jewish people has been broken. They are no longer God’s chosen people. The Christian church has become the (new) people of God. Jews are excluded from God’s eternal salvation unless they repent, get baptised and join the Christian church. Being a Jew and Judaism are meaningless. The alleged break between God and the Jewish people has the character of punishment. This perspective has changed, particularly after WWII.

Replacement theology, or believing without Israel, is no longer primarily based on the idea of punishment among the vast majority of believers today. It is now based on the perspective that Israel only had a temporary role in God’s salvation plan. God started His salvation plan for the world with one man, Abraham, and one nation, the Jewish people. But it has been God’s intention from the beginning to include the whole world and all mankind in His salvation. The demarcation to the borders of Israel and the Jewish people was then temporary. With the coming of the promised Messiah and Saviour, Jesus Christ, God’s offer of salvation by grace went out to the whole world and all mankind. With the commission of the apostles to the ends of the world, the unique position of Israel and the Jewish people then came to an end. Israel is thus no longer God’s chosen people because God’s election has broadened to the whole world, according to this renewed conception of replacement theology.

Replacement theology, or believing without Israel, is no longer primarily based on the idea of punishment among the vast majority of believers today. It is now based on the perspective that Israel only had a temporary role in God’s salvation plan.

working groups were created to engage in dialogue with Jews to learn from each other. Learning houses and Israeli organisations were established in numerous churches. In many countries and churches worldwide, there is now a long-term and deep dialogue between Christians and church leaders on the one hand and Jews and Jewish rabbis on the other.

These new and impressive developments in the relationship between Jews and Christians have nevertheless not been able to prevent the fact that, in practice, replacement theology is still prominent within most churches. True, there are churches that, even in their church order, speak of an (unfailing) connection

For many pastors and church members, Israel and the Jewish people have little or no significance anymore in their personal faith or theological understanding. This is evidenced by the fact that Israel can count on fierce debates within churches. Israel has even become a sensitive topic within many churches. Many pastors prefer to avoid the topic of Israel to avoid divisions within the church community.

Replacement Theology Renewed

The traditional way of looking at Jews and Israel, replacement theology, has undergone a profound change. Over the centuries, the classic way of thinking was: the Jews have rejected and killed Jesus, and so the covenant

Loelav

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

We find a remarkable precept for the Feast of Tabernacles in *Leviticus 23:40*: “Now on the first day you shall take for yourselves the fruit of beautiful trees, palm branches and boughs of leafy trees and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God for seven days.” You must have seen it before, the palm branch and the citrus fruit as attributes of the Feast of Tabernacles. On the seven days of the feast, every morning during morning prayers, the bundle of branches is taken in the right hand and the lemon in the left hand and moved back and forth in six directions: east (forward), south (right), west (back), north (left), up and down, as a symbol of God’s universal rule. Moving the *lulav* is associated with prayers for rain, but the *lulav* is also taken in hand during the singing of the *Hallel* (*Psalms*

113-118 and 136). *Psalm 118* contains the words “Hosha’na—O Lord, do save, we beseech You” (*verse 25*). On the seventh day, while those words are sung, the *lulav* is walked around the *bima* (the elevation where *Torah* is read) seven times. This is called *Hosha’na rabba*, the ‘great Hosanna’.

What fruits and branches are used? Traditionally, the *etrog citron* (*etrog* actually being the Aramaic word for beautiful, desirable) is taken for the fruit of beautiful trees. The palm branch comes from the date palm (*Hebrew: Tamar*). The word *loelav* for palm branch comes from post-Biblical times. In common parlance, it also denotes the whole bundle of branches, which further consists of a branch of myrtle (the ‘leafy tree’) and a willow branch.

These so-called ‘four species’ take on all kinds of symbolic meanings. One of the oldest homiletic explanations in the Jewish tradition is that the *etrog* stands for a man’s heart, the myrtle for his eye, the willow for his mouth and the *lulav* for his spine (showing backbone).

Why these four? According to Maimonides, they were the most readily available products in the land of Israel, recalling the fertility of the land. They symbolise nature, rain, the cycle of the seasons, and things shared by all humanity. And thus, writes Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, they represent the universal meaning of the feast. | Photo: Shutterstock



Prophecies Fulfilled in Our Time

Return to the Promised Land

By Rev Oscar Lohuis

“Do not be afraid, for I am with you; I will bring your children from the east and gather you from the west. I will say to the north, ‘Give them up!’ and to the south, ‘Do not hold them back.’ Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth.” *Isaiah 43:5-6*



From all Over the World

The above-mentioned verses come from *Isaiah 43:5-6*. Isaiah prophesied in the 8th century before Christ. Prior to the Babylonian exile of the Israeli people (605 – 536 BC). Some therefore say that the above prophecy was fulfilled when the Lord brought His people back from the Babylonian exile.

It is certainly true that Isaiah wrote down prophecies about this return. But the above prophecy refers to the return of Jewish people from all over the world. From where the sun rises in the east to where it sets in the west. The Lord also speaks to the north and the south calling His children (the children of Israel) back to the Promised Land. The return from Babylon was a return from the east and maybe some from the north. But certainly not from the west and south.

Fulfilment

Events that happened to the Jewish people mid 19th century, shows us an entirely different fulfilment of the above prophecy. Jewish people began the return from around the world to the land of their forefathers. First, they came from Russia because of the pogroms in the east. Then they started to come from many other countries. Jews have now returned to Israel from more than one hundred countries worldwide!

From countries in the Far East, such as China and India, from countries in North and South Africa, North and South America, all European countries, from all Arab countries in the Middle East and from Iran and Turkey. More than one million Jews have returned from the Land of the North, the former Soviet Union. The predecessors of the present Jewish population in Israel collectively spoke more than eighty different languages. Amazing! It is the opposite of colonialism. Palestine, as a mandate area of a foreign nation, is history. The land is inhabited by the people whose history began there 4000 years ago. | Photo: Flash90

The Only Way to Salvation

■ Johannes Gerloff

Theologian, Journalist, Lecturer & Author

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

Paul declares his love for the people of Israel (*Romans 9:1-3*), the riches of the chosen people (*Romans 9:4-5*) and God’s absolute sovereignty (*Romans 9:6-33*) as the basis of his theology regarding Israel. Now, he emphasises a fourth fundamentally crucial point:

Brothers, my heart’s desire and prayer to the [one, true] God for them [is] that they may be saved. (*Romans 10:1*)

The Apostle expresses his ‘heart’s desire’ in order to put the cry of his heart to his Heavenly Father into words: “That they may be saved!” Paul does not explain what his Jewish kinsmen are to be saved from. He leaves it to his readers to find this out through their own study of the Scriptures.

In the letter to the Romans, ‘salvation’ describes the turning away from all ‘ungodliness’ and the preservation ‘from God’s wrath’.

Salvation is the restoration of the ‘communion with God’ that was destroyed by man’s sin. Communion with God is ‘life’. In contrast, sin, as separation from God, brings about ‘death’ (*Romans 6:23*). We’ll have to keep this important observation in mind as we approach *Romans 11:15*, where the term ‘life from the dead’ demands an explanation.

The basic intention of *Romans 10:1-13* is to explain this personal dimension of salvation. ‘How shall I be reconciled with

God?’ is the question of every human being who has experienced “how evil and bitter it is for you to forsake the Lord, your God” (*Jeremiah 2:19*). It is this personal question that Paul has in mind. This is underlined by Paul’s choice of wording in *verse 9*, where he suddenly addresses the reader in a boldly personal manner, “...if **you** confess with **your** mouth... and if **you** believe in **your** heart... **you** will be saved”.

From Paul’s point of view, however, the salvation of an individual human being is inseparably connected with the groaning of the whole of creation (*Romans 8:22-23*). Therefore, it is no accident that our passage concludes with a quote from the Prophet Joel in *verse 13*. In the original context of *Joel 2:32*, we read of a redeeming event that shakes the foundations of the universe. Sun and moon are being changed, and God pleads to the Gentile nations, “For my people and for my heritage Israel” (*Joel 3:2*).

God’s saving grace not only gives us a pure conscience in the present and allows some of the elect to enter into His Kingdom. God’s foretold redemption contains the power to create a new heaven and a new earth—in which there will be no tears, no death, no suffering, no crying and no pain ever again (*Revelation 21:1,4*). In Biblical thinking, the personal salvation of a single human being, the salvation of Israel, and the re-creation of the entire universe are indivisibly interconnected.

Reconciliation with God is only possible if a person has been redeemed from ‘all iniquity’—to be a part of God’s people which is “zealous unto good works” (*Titus*

2:14). As a first observation regarding the term ‘righteousness’, we need to keep in mind that there are different ‘righteousnesses’. In our text, we read of a man’s ‘own righteousness’, which he seeks to establish, or of ‘the righteousness which is of the law’ (*verse 5*) and which opposes ‘the righteousness of faith’. Finally, in *verse 3*, the ‘righteousness of God’ is mentioned twice. ‘Righteousness’, then, is not an absolute term but a relative one. What is ‘righteous’ in the eyes of one person might be defined as ‘sinful’ by someone else. The decisive measure that defines what is ‘righteous’ and what is ‘unrighteous’ is the personality that sets the standard. Whenever, therefore, the term ‘righteousness’ appears without specification, for example, in *verses 4 and 10*, it has to be explained by the context in which it appears and how it is used.

The basic problem of mankind and the whole of creation is that they fall short of the glory they should have before God (*Romans 3:23*). They have lost their connection with God. The relationship between Creator and creation is broken. Today, human beings do not meet the standard originally set by the Creator. God, when He looked at all the things He had made, concluded, “Behold, it is very good” (*Genesis 1:31*). In our day, that is no longer the case. On the contrary, “the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth” (*Genesis 8:21*).

Therefore, the whole of creation has been subjected to sin and death. It lacks the righteousness that counts before God—the ‘righteousness of God’.

Tobias Krämer Awarded a Doctorate

■ Rev Cornelis Kant

Executive Director | Christians for Israel International

Tobias Krämer, a theologian connected with our German branch, received his doctorate in theology cum laude from the University in Basel on 5 June 2023. His thesis, some 400 pages long, researches the origin of Christian water baptism. How do we imagine the development from John’s baptism to Christian baptism? Tobias has researched that question in detail.

Jesus, as God’s faithful Son and John as God’s messenger shared the same expectation. They warned of coming judgement and waited for the eternal kingdom of God. Jesus was baptised by John. This fact can hardly be overestimated. The baptism became a turning point for Jesus: Jesus received the anointing of the Holy Spirit and, from then on, worked as the Messiah (the Anointed One).

Jesus Himself (parallel to John) baptised for a time but soon delegated baptism to his disciples (*John 3:22 - 4:3*). After His resurrection, Jesus extended his commission to his disciple to include the



Tobias Krämer holding his degree, standing next to his wife. | Photo: Jörn Krebs, STH Basel

making of disciples in a worldwide context (*Matthew 28:18-20*). From this perspective, baptism became a ‘Christianised’ form of John’s baptism. Jesus was baptised, He Himself baptised and instructed others to baptise., It is now in His Name that baptism still takes place. These are important stages in the development of Christian baptism. The origin of Christian baptism, however, lies in the baptism of the Jewish John the Baptist. This is clear, not least from the

title of the thesis: “In the beginning was John the Baptist.” It also underlines the connectedness of the Old and New Testaments.

Tobias has done an outstanding job. As an international organisation, we are proud that, once again, someone from our worldwide network has been awarded a doctorate in theology. Tobias, congratulations! We hope that we will be able to profit a lot from your acquired knowledge.

Jesus’ Jerusalem

The History of Jerusalem—Part 4



The Garden Tomb in Jerusalem, Israel. | Photo: Shutterstock



■ **Kameel Majdali**
Director | Teach All Nations Inc.

He was born a Judean but raised a Galilean. The first thirty years of His life were spent in an obscure village with less than three hundred inhabitants. Because of Him, His hometown has grown to 78,000 today. Regarding His famous ministry, it was also Galilean, based by the shore of what is now the most famous body of water in the world, the Sea of Galilee.

Yet our King, Saviour, and Lord—Jesus of Nazareth—had an appointment in Jerusalem. Indeed, He had several, but the most important one occurred at the end of His natural life. While His visits to Jerusalem were occasional, they were also notable.

These visits started when Jesus was eight days old: the time of His circumcision and then presentation to the Lord at the temple in Jerusalem. A simple sacrifice was offered of a pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons. While the sacrificial side of the visit was routine, some extraordinary things happened. A man named Simeon was told that he would not die before seeing the Lord’s Christ with his own eyes. He prophesied that the infant would cause the fall and rising again of many in Israel (*Luke 2:21-35*).

After Simeon came an old prophetess Anna, daughter of Phanuel, from the obscure tribe of Asher. She pointed to this same infant as the means of redemption in Jerusalem—which was accomplished nearly thirty-three years later.

Jesus’ next recorded visit was when He was twelve years old. His family took Him to Jerusalem for the feast of Passover. When they returned to Nazareth, unbeknown to them, He stayed behind with the theological doctors, listening to them and asking questions. He astonished everyone with his words. Then the curtain descends between Jesus and Jerusalem, and we hear nothing more for eighteen years. At the age of thirty, at the Jordan River, the Triune God—The Heavenly Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit made their visible public earthly debut at the site of John the Baptist’s ministry.

Remember that much of Jesus’ public ministry was done along the western, northwestern, and northern shore of the Sea of Galilee, from Magdala on the mid-western shore to Bethsaida on the Northeast corner of the lake. The eastern shore was Gentile country; hence, the herding of swine and the deliverance of the Gadarene demoniac. The southern half of the western shore was the area of Tiberias. Built by ‘that fox’ Herod Antipas on an abandoned cemetery, good Jews refused to live in Tiberias. There is no record of Jesus visiting the city, despite its proximity to His ministry headquarters.

When Jesus did miracles in Galilee, they were universally celebrated and acclaimed. Duplicate the miracles in Jerusalem, and the Lord received, at best, a mixed response. There were those who reacted just like the people of Galilee, yet others became resentful, hardened, and hateful. His popularity in Jerusalem was not helped by the cleansing of the temple at the early part of His ministry (*John 2:13-22*), with another round after His Palm Sunday entry into the sacred precincts just days before His crucifixion.

Another example of the mixed response to miracles occurred in the sheep market at the pool of Bethesda (*John 5*), where a man with an infirmity of thirty-eight years. Jesus came to him and commanded that he rise, take up his bed, and walk. Immediately, he was healed and was able to comply. Only one problem: it was the *Sabbath* day. The Jewish elite was highly offended, not impressed, by this powerful miracle. They viewed it as a violation of the *Sabbath*. The healed man went out of his way to tell them that his healer was Jesus; from that point, they persecuted the Lord until the time of His death. A similarly mixed response happened when Jesus healed the blind man at the Pool of Siloam; the whole of *John 9* is devoted to this miracle and the controversy surrounding it.

This mixed response, love-hate, double-minded attitude by Jerusalem towards Jesus was fully manifested in the last week of His life. During the Palm Sunday entry into the city, the crowd rapturously welcomed him. They called Him the ‘Son of David,’ which was tantamount to recognising Him as the Messiah—the Anointed One—and coming king. This was a threat to the current ruling Jewish religious establishment and the Roman occupying authorities. Jesus took time from the adulation to view the city of Jerusalem and weep, knowing its celebration of Him was brief, its soon-coming rejection of Him deadly, and its own destruction by Rome was a few years away.

A second cleansing of the temple and strife-riddled arguments with the scribes and Pharisees, the communal temperature was raised to boiling point. His enemies would not rest until He was destroyed. Within a few short days, Jesus would be betrayed, arrested, tried, convicted, mocked, humiliated, then crucified and buried in a new but borrowed tomb. Three days later, He rose from the dead. The city of His crucifixion and ratification of the New Covenant in His blood also became the dissemination centre of the glorious gospel of salvation to the ends of the earth. As it says in *Luke 24:47*: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. So, from the city where it all began, in the fullness of time, He will return.

To be continued.

Biblical Roots

By David Nekrutman

The Cost of Discipleship

In my twenty years of serving the calling of Jewish-Christian relations and studying the New Testament, I have always been fascinated by *Matthew 19:16-30*, usually entitled “*The Rich Young Man*.” My preferred title for this episode is “*The Rejection to Become Jesus’ Disciple*.”

It is obvious that the rich man believes in eternal life, known in Hebrew as *Olam Habah*. This is contrary to the Sadducees, who only believed in the *Five Books of Moses* and did not believe in *Olam Habah* since there is no direct Pentateuchal source for this concept. At the time of Jesus, the Sadducees were one of the most influential streams of Judaism. The anonymity of the rich man’s Jewish affiliation is quite shocking in a corpus usually identifying the questioner.

Although there is a *Mishnah* that states, “All Israel have a share to *Olam Habah*,” it immediately lists the exceptions. These include anyone who does not believe that the resurrection of the dead is sourced in the *Torah*, a person who denies that the *Torah* is not divine, a heretic, and anyone who treats *Torah* scholars with contempt. (*Mishnah Sanhedrin 10:1*). It is my contention that the movements of Judaism, at the time of Jesus who believed in *Olam Habah*, were fully aware of this maxim. Therefore, the issue was never about gaining *Olam Habah* but losing it.

Judaism doesn’t believe in the notion that once you have *Olam Habah*, you always have it.

The initial response of Jesus to the rich man may come as a surprise for some Christians, “Keep the commandments.” There is *Olam Habah* with living a *Torah* lifestyle! However, the questions of the rich man after Jesus’s first response finally reveals how he views *Olam Habah*—as a get-rich-quick scheme. The rich man is looking for that small effortless investment to gain a permanent guarantee of *Olam Habah*. The rich man is seeking that one commandment that shields his *Olam Habah* investment forever.

Jesus sees an opportunity to disciple the rich man by helping him understand that *Olam Habah* should never be viewed as a commodity but a responsibility.

Jesus was offering the rich man discipleship at the highest level to realign his *Olam Habah* attitude. The cost was for the rich man to immediately see himself as a vehicle of God’s material bounty. This is why Jesus said to the rich man, “If you wish to be **completely whole** (*shalem*), go, sell your possessions, and give to the poor, and so you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow Me” (*verse 21*).

The rich man had a fragmented approach to living an *Olam Habah* lifestyle, and in the end, he was unable or unwilling to become ‘whole.’ Therefore, he rejected Jesus’s offer of discipleship. It was easier for him to live in his compartmentalised world.

The purpose of this life is to bring the Kingdom of Heaven down to earth. Our daily lives are opportunities to bring more of Him into this world via His *Torah*. It is a lifelong journey. However, it requires paradigm adjustment to see that our life not only affects this world but also *Olam Habah*.

David Nekrutman is an Orthodox Jewish theologian involved in the sacred calling of Jewish-Christian relations for over two decades and currently serves as the Israel Director for The Isaiah Projects. In 2018, Mr Nekrutman received his master’s in biblical literature from Oral Roberts University.

From Rosh Hashanah to Yom Kippur

Kees de Vreugd

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

The festival of *Rosh Hashanah*—the name means ‘Head of the Year’—is observed for two days beginning on 1 *Tishrei*, the first day of the Jewish year. It is the anniversary of the creation of Adam and Eve, the first man and woman, and their first actions toward the realisation of mankind’s role in God’s world.

Annual Decree

Rosh Hashanah thus emphasises the special relationship between God and humanity: we are dependent upon God as our creator and sustainer, but God wants us to make His presence known and felt in His world. Each year on *Rosh Hashanah*, “All inhabitants of the world pass before God like a flock of sheep,” and it is decreed in the heavenly court, “Who shall live, and who shall die... who shall be impoverished, and who shall be enriched; who shall fall and who shall rise.” But this is also the day God is proclaimed as King of the Universe. Jewish mysticism teaches that the continued existence of the universe is dependent upon the renewal of the divine desire for a world when we accept God’s kingship each year on *Rosh Hashanah*.

Shofar

The central observance of *Rosh Hashanah* is the sounding of the *shofar*, the ram’s horn, which also represents the trumpet blast of a people’s coronation of their king. The cry of the *shofar* is also a call to repentance, for *Rosh Hashanah* is also the anniversary of man’s first sin and his repentance thereof and serves as the first of the ‘Ten Days of Repentance’ which culminate in *Yom Kippur*, the Day of Atonement. Another significance of the *shofar* is to recall the Binding of Isaac (*Genesis 22*), which also occurred on *Rosh Hashanah*, in which a ram took Isaac’s place as an offering to God; Abraham’s readiness to sacrifice his son is evoked, as a plea that the merit of his deed should stand by Israel as we pray for a year of life, health and prosperity. Altogether, faithful Jews listen to one hundred *shofar* blasts over the course of the *Rosh Hashanah* services.

A Piece of Apple

Additional *Rosh Hashanah* observances include: a) Eating a piece of apple dipped in honey to symbolise our desire for a sweet year and other special foods symbolic of the new year’s blessings. b) Blessing one another with the words “*Leshanah tovah tikateiv veteichateim*,” “May you be inscribed and sealed for a good year.” c) *Tashlich*, a special prayer said near a body of water (an ocean, river, pond, etc.), in evocation of the verse, “And You shall cast their sins



A Jewish man blowing the *Shofar*, which is used to blow sounds on *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur*. | Photo: Lightstock

into the depths of the sea” (*Micah 7:19*). And as with every major Jewish holiday, after candle lighting and prayers *Kiddush* is recited and a blessing made on the *challah*.

Yom Kippur

Yom Kippur is the holiest day of the year—the day on which Jews feel closest to God. It is the Day of Atonement—“For on this day, He will forgive you, to purify you, that you be cleansed from all your sins before God” (*Leviticus 16:30*).

In the course of *Yom Kippur*, five prayer services are held: *Maariv*, with its solemn *Kol Nidrei* service, on the eve of *Yom Kippur*; *Shacharit*—the morning prayer, which includes a reading from *Leviticus* followed by the *Yizkor* memorial service; *Musaf*, which includes a detailed account of the *Yom Kippur* Temple service; *Minchah*, which includes the reading of the *Book of Jonah*; and *Ne’ilah*, the ‘closing of the gates’ service at sunset. The confession of sins (*Hebrew: Al Chet*) is said eight times in

The central observance of *Rosh Hashanah* is the sounding of the *shofar*, the ram’s horn, which also represents the trumpet blast of a people’s coronation of their king.

For nearly twenty-six hours—from several minutes before sunset on 9 *Tishrei* to after nightfall on 10 *Tishrei*—faithful Jews ‘afflict their souls’: they abstain from food and drink, do not wash or anoint their bodies, do not wear leather footwear, and abstain from marital relations.

Before *Yom Kippur*, the *Kaparot* atonement service is performed; everyone requests and receives honey cake in acknowledgement that we are all recipients in God’s world and in prayerful hope for a sweet and abundant year; eats a festive meal; immerses in a *mikvah*; and gives extra charity. In the late afternoon, the pre-fast meal is eaten, following which the children are blessed, a memorial candle is lit, as well as the holiday candles. Then it is time to go to the synagogue for the *Kol Nidrei* service.

the course of *Yom Kippur*, and Psalms are recited at every available moment.

The day is the most solemn of the year, yet an undertone of joy suffuses it: a joy that revels in the spirituality of the day and expresses the confidence that God will accept our repentance, forgive our sins, and seal our verdict for a year of life, health and happiness. The closing *Ne’ilah* service climaxes in the resounding cries of “Hear O Israel... God is one.” Then joy erupts in song and dance, followed by a single blast of the *shofar*, followed by the proclamation, “Next year in Jerusalem.” Then everybody partakes in a festive after-fast meal, making the evening after *Yom Kippur* a *Yom tov* (festival) in its own right.

Adapted from www.chabad.org.

Facts Speak



The Gaza Strip has a 12-kilometre-long border with Egypt. Just 48 kilometres from this border lies the Egyptian city of El Arish. The city has a port and an international airport. It should be possible for everything Gaza needs to find its way to and from Gaza via El Arish, including the flow of people coming and going. However, Egypt keeps the border with Gaza closed nearly 100 per cent of the time.

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50 Years Ago: Yom Kippur War

■ Ps Nigel Woodley

For the Protection of Zion I Speak Up | NZ

After the humiliating defeat of the Arab forces in 1967, the Soviet Union set about rearming a new breed of Arab fighters. In six years, Arab armies were ready to strike Israel again. Equipped with the latest in the Soviet arsenal, including what would prove to be the deadly SAM missile systems, they would strike on the holiest day in the Hebrew calendar—Yom Kippur, 1973. The Arabs won the war of secrecy to start with. It was only on the day of the planned attack that news began to filter through Israeli intelligence. Saturday, 6 October, was a high holy day, being both the *Shabbat* and the fast day of atonement. Early morning phone calls between the Israeli military and political leaders began an urgent mobilisation of Israeli forces.

It usually took 72 hours to fully mobilise their reserve army. The regular army is sufficient for keeping the peace but not for going into a major war. For the first time in Israel's history, her jet fighters were flying low over civilian areas and breaking the sanctity of Yom Kippur. It was the signal to the reserve troops to prepare for war. Secret codes were broadcast over the radio, calling different battalions to mobilise. All the secret signals were to prevent the enemy from knowing that the Israelis had learned of their intentions.



Major Ariel Sharon (with his head bandaged) is holding the map of Operation 'Knights of Heart'. To his left is Defense Minister Moshe Dayan and Colonel Chaim Bar-Lev. | Photo: Wikimedia Commons

Israel's battlefronts—in the Sinai and on the Golan. Both world superpowers became involved. First, the Soviets were reinforcing the Arabs with hundreds of tons of supplies every day. A reluctant United States under President Nixon and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger finally succumbed to Israeli pressure. The Israelis reminded them that they still had a nuclear arsenal hidden away in the vault if needed. The biggest planes in the US fleet

the Egyptian capital, Cairo. For the first time in 3,300 years, an Israelite army was back inside Egypt. *Exodus 13:18* tells us that when the Israelites went up out of Egypt, they went up armed for battle. This time they were going back down into Egypt, also armed for battle. If it were not for the enforcement of the United Nations ceasefire later in October, then Israel could have pressed her advantage all the way to both Arab capitals—Damascus and Cairo.

The Israelis paid a high price in the Yom Kippur War of October 1973. Approximately 2,500 Israeli soldiers were killed in the fighting, and another 7,500 wounded... it was a traumatic and painful war.

At precisely 14:00 hours, huge barrages of artillery, tank and airpower were simultaneously hurled at the Israelis: by Syrian forces on their northern front on the Golan Heights and by Egyptian forces in the south along the Suez Canal. Initially, Israel was stunned. Casualties were high. In the first three days, Israel lost 50 of her state-of-the-art jet fighter-bombers. Coupled with that were major incursions of enemy forces into their territory. Thousands of Egyptian tanks and tens of thousands of their troops had managed to cross the Canal and entrench themselves well inside Israel's front. In the north, the Syrians almost managed to push the Israelis off the Golan Heights. They came within minutes of crossing the vital B'not Yaakov bridge just north of the Sea of Galilee. This was the door into Israel proper and would have meant a disaster for civilians living in Galilee.

Lance Lambert, a Messianic Jew living in Israel, shared an interesting story in his book *Battle for Israel*:

"Another Israeli captain without any religious beliefs said that at the height of the fighting on the Golan, he looked up into the sky and saw a great, grey hand pressing downwards as if it were holding something back. In my opinion, that describes exactly what happened; without the intervention of God, Israel would have been doomed (*Lambert 13*)."

The greatest tank battles since the Second World War were taking place on both of

began a huge re-supply operation for the Israelis just in the nick of time. The Israelis did not have to open their nuclear vault.

At crucial times in the war, both Syria and Egypt stumbled. They did not fully appreciate the advantages that were before them, and each missed their opportunities. The Syrians had a clear path over the Golan and into Israel proper, but they hesitated and waited, and while they did, the Israeli reinforcements began rolling into the Golan and drove the Syrians back. Much the same happened in the south in the Sinai: the Egyptians had the advantage, and if they had pressed on, they would have been knocking on Israel's back door in no time. Their hesitation, as in the north, gave the Israelis time to lick their wounds, regroup and strengthen their forces for the inevitable counterattack. Whereas the Six-Day War had made the Israelis overconfident, it had made the Arab armies over-cautious. Soviet training had led them to do everything by the book. They were not dashing nor daring enough to drive those advantages home.

The result was that within three days in the north, the Israelis had bounced back, and their forces were rolling over the Syrian frontier into Syria proper. The Syrian capital Damascus was now under threat of being occupied by an Israeli army. It took a bit longer in the south, but in another week or so, Israeli troops were crossing the Suez Canal, now threatening

The Israelis paid a high price in the Yom Kippur War of October 1973. Approximately 2,500 Israeli soldiers were killed in the fighting, and another 7,500 wounded. For a small country of three million at the time, to have ten thousand casualties had a devastating impact. It was a traumatic and painful war. Not the prestigious victory of 1967, but a fight which, in the first few rounds, could have seen the Israelis knocked out completely. However, they managed to bounce back, and their momentum, in the end, could have taken them to the Nile in the south and the Euphrates in the north.

Israeli's Prime Minister at the time, Golda Meir, summed up the attitude of her nation during the emergency:

"This People, small as it is, surrounded as it is by enemies, has decided to live. And if we have to pay the price for living, we have to pay it. This is not a people that can give in. And we know that giving in means death means the destruction of our sovereignty and the physical destruction of our entire people. We will not be destroyed. We dare not be destroyed. Therefore, the spirit of our men on the front, the spirit of our people in every home, in every city, in every village, is a spirit of a people who hates war but knows that in order to live, it must win the war that has been forced upon it (*The Story of the Yom Kippur War*)."

Adapted from Nigel Woodley's eBook *Modern Israel is Still Biblical Israel*: <https://fortheProtectionofzion.com/product/modern-israel-is-still-biblical-israel/>

Short News

Drone Taxis



As part of a government-led initiative, Israel is preparing infrastructure for a national airspace network of large drones that are designed to carry passengers and heavy cargo. The aim is to relieve Israeli road traffic, with its many traffic jams, and to provide commercial and public services more efficiently. The initiative is a collaboration of several government agencies led by the Transportation Ministry. A successful week of test flights was recently completed. | Photo: BY Creative & Productions

Autism Research Breakthrough

Every year, millions of people are diagnosed with autism. Research from Hebrew University in Jerusalem has revealed a direct link between nitric oxide in the brain and autistic behaviour. Dr Haitham Amal, who led the research, said: "I am hopeful that with our new understanding of the nitric oxide mechanism, we can begin to develop therapeutic drugs and help millions of children and adults living with autism around the world."

Israel Success

No fewer than three Israeli startups won prizes at the Aviram Awards ceremony in Morocco. The first prize was for QD-SOL, a company developing technology to produce green hydrogen from water using solar energy. The Aviram Awards is an annual competition for young entrepreneurs and startups from the Middle East and North Africa who work to improve life through business, innovation and technology.

High-tech Complex Opens in East Jerusalem



Israel opens a new industrial business campus in East Jerusalem to lure Israeli and international high-tech companies to operate in the Wadi Joz neighbourhood. It is part of the city's effort to increase the participation of the Arab population in the country's workforce. The campus is supported by an investment of \$ 2.8 million. About 20 local programmers have already started working at the campus for one of the tech companies. | Photo: The Times of Israel

Upgrade for the Ancient Tower of David

■ Judith Segaloff

Tucked inside the Jaffa Gate of Jerusalem's Old City stands an edifice that personifies the resilience of Israel's eternal capital.

The Tower of David has served as a Herodian fortress, a Crusaders' palace, an Ottoman entrance gate, and now hosts the renewed and state-of-the-art Tower of David Jerusalem Museum.

The \$50 million renewal and conservation of the museum, thanks to Dame Vivien Duffield through the Clore Israel Foundation, the Jerusalem Municipality and other philanthropic funding, has transformed a compound designed to keep intruders out to carefully plotted galleries filled with exhibits that explore and trace the history and the spirit of Jerusalem.

Turning the ancient structure into a modern and accessible museum was a formidable challenge for the architects and design team on the project. Using all the original architecture, except for one ceiling, they transformed the first-century fortress into a welcoming, comfortable, and handicapped-accessible modern museum with 215,000 square feet of galleries detailing Jerusalem's 4,000-year significance to Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

After 10 years of planning, three years of construction and the installation of a mile of fiber optic cables, the museum, originally founded in 1989, officially opened on 1 June, with an additional contemporary art gallery opening in November.

According to Caroline Shapiro, director of external affairs for the museum, the new flow that begins adjacent to the Jaffa Gate takes visitors through the museum in a way designed to showcase the city of Jerusalem. It still offers shady outdoor areas where tour guides gather their groups or where visitors can meet before beginning their exploration.

Curator Tal Kobo and her seven core team members combined actual artifacts culled from the site during excavations by teams of archeologists during the renovation with 3-D touch screens, mounted carefully to highlight the stone walls behind the glass.

Eilat Lieber, chief curator of the museum, understood the nature of the diverse audiences she had to reach, after her son took a school trip to the museum prior to its renovation and pronounced it 'boring.' History, he said, is boring. She pondered how to make it relevant to our time—and to the many different communities that converge in Jerusalem.

"We decided to use an interactive process," she explained. "We have the perfect location, and this building represents all the layers of history and of conflict," she said. "We realised that the evidence of the past will tell the story in different ways and engage visitors to find what is meaningful to each different person. The Tower of David is one of the most beautiful and well-preserved fortresses in the world. The history of Jerusalem must be told through technology and beautiful design."

With headsets and audio tours, her son came back on a class trip to experience

the 'new' museum. This time he didn't say boring. "This," he said, "is cool!"

The technology team for the museum comprised more than 50 people in five separate studios.

The designers chose a clean, minimalistic look to contrast with the heavy stone structure and enhance the power of the site. Even the cracks between the stones were conserved. Grouting was replaced by limestone. Elevators and ramps were installed.

"The two elevators were six years of heated discussion with the antiquities commission," recalls professor Tal Roi de Lange of Studio de Lange, one of the designers.

"The important design principle was to maintain context with the city," he explained. "Each space is different in both architecture and context. "Communication cables, electric wires and even lighting fixtures were carefully hidden."

But how do you light 215,000 square feet of castle without beams and ugly cables strung across the ancient ceilings?

The architects and designers met the challenge using 'floating' cement floors with LED lighting in between the crevice between floor and wall. Heating and cooling emanates from under the floors as well. Small but powerful sconces inserted in the limestone cracks between the stones were used to augment the natural lighting of the vaulted ceilings. The glass displays light up as well, offering effective and dramatic interaction.

And don't think the acoustics in a castle are optimal. According to Architect Yotam Cohen Sagi, they used 3D scans to conduct acoustic studies and tried three different materials until they were able to ensure that the sound traveled properly throughout the galleries.

"I have never been on so many site visits and to so many meetings for a project," Sagi explained. "There were so many layers, and we used old fashioned methods of measuring and leveling—holding strings. And then, just when you think you know what you're doing, you find ancient remains or artifacts and have to stop everything and call in the Israel Antiquities Authority," he said.

Every window and skylight is visible. At one point the visitor looks through a display and a window beyond the exhibit highlights the modern city of Jerusalem. History connects with high-tech Jerusalem itself.

All the 3D models face in the actual direction of their orientation, transporting the visitor to their exact location within the space of the museum. As large as each space is, the exhibits are designed to keep visitors engaged, without fatigue from the constant content. The technology is designed to communicate various content in different ways. Transparent touch screens allow 360-degree close-ups of real artifacts located in nearby cases in one space. Another space lends itself to ceiling projections, and another to multimedia presentations.



View of the Tower of David museum in the Old City of Jerusalem. | Photo: Flash90

The first gallery offers 3,000 years of history in three minutes—a multimedia presentation by Israeli cinematographer and Golden Globe winner Ari Folman. Through classic animation and video mapping, it traces the history and culture of Jerusalem.

A 'Bunting Map' from the Middle Ages portrays Jerusalem as the center of the world, flanked by Europe, Asia and Africa; the city on the shores of eternity. As you progress through the gallery, it's like being in a time tunnel, with a 40-foot-long interactive wall fueled by 12 computers.

As you progress through the Mamluks and Ottomans and finally find the interactive 3D globe, you are brought to almost the present time with a letter from Israel's first president, David Ben-Gurion, to a young boy.

If you enjoy maps, there are 14 interactive ones on offer, including an elevation map of Jerusalem, enhanced by special lighting and a 2.5 minute video that displays the entire city. Don't forget your audio guide (it's in three languages). As you progress through the museum, it will tell you what you're looking at, because at some point, it can become overwhelming. You will see a five-and-a-half-minute film by Jerusalem filmmaker Yair Moss, and Dale Chihuly glass exhibits adjacent to cannonballs from the Jerusalem revolt in days of yore.

Each religion is given its due. The Jewish room features the mosaic of Bet Alpha's Binding of Isaac and a large model of the Second Temple, complete with artifacts from that period, including a coin press for Hasmonian coins and a first-century lily coin. A Yeshiva University-created 3D scan of the Arch of Titus has been coloured and animated, capping off the Jewish exhibit.

A Jordanian Madaba Map with crusader coins features the Tower of David on the coins, with some featuring the Crusader kings and queens who took up residence in this very castle.

Underneath the minaret, which served as a mosque at various times during the city's history, there is a large model of the Temple Mount complex, featuring the Al Aqsa Mosque and a cutaway of the famed Dome of the Rock. For those of us who

have never been near or inside it, it is illuminating to see the Foundation Stone and other features of the Mount.

"With all its layers and incarnations, the Tower of David has never been a 'holy place,' explains Tal Kobo. "But the artifacts and the history symbolise the yearning to come back to Jerusalem."

For children who still think 'history is boring,' in addition to all the displays and visuals, every room is equipped with fun interactive games and quizzes for children. For the older generation and for those with special needs, the museum is one of the most accessible attractions in Jerusalem.

"We had to get permission for everything," explained Reut Kozak, accessibility coordinator for the museum. "From hanging signs to buildings and structuring the floors. The Mamluks didn't make the doorways wide enough for wheelchairs," she said. All told, only 15% of the museum is not completely accessible, she added.

Famous for its light shows at night, the new museum will feature noise reduction headphones and relaxed performances for people on the autism spectrum or who have sensitivities to sound. An app uses Bluetooth to access hearing aids for the hearing impaired and customises the sound for each ear, and there are audio descriptions for the sight impaired. A sensory map provides a guide that details dark, light and the noisier rooms, and there is a special audio tour guide for sight impaired. There are visuals with sign language on the app for the hearing-impaired.

The only area not accessible to anyone who cannot navigate the final 50 steps is the Observation Deck, but the museum has created a Virtual Reality experience for those left behind that will help them enjoy the 360-degree panoramic view from their phone.

And, thanks to the new flow, when you come out of the Tower of David, through what used to be the original entrance, the Old City is at your feet, ready to be explored in real time.

Originally published at www.jns.org. Republished with permission.

Helping in all Circumstances

Koen Carlier about the situation in Ukraine



(Left) Koen Carlier distributes food parcels in Zaporizhzhia thanks to your support. (Right) Often times our team in Ukraine is confronted with the devastation and misery of war as they visit people in towns and villages to provide food parcels, or pick them up for departure to Israel | Photos: C4I

Marijke Terlouw

Christians for Israel Netherlands

Ever since the first nerve-racking weeks following the outbreak of war in Ukraine in February 2022, hopes for peace remain unfulfilled. The war forced thousands to flee the country, seeking safety. Our team continued to do their important work and was sustained by your prayers. The situation has not improved in recent times. People have been displaced, prices are rising, and unemployment is enormous. In these conditions, the work of our C4I team continues. Koen Carlier shares about the situation.

...you pick people up from apartments that have been destroyed. This really affects you as a person.

“Perhaps you could say that our work has not changed much after more than sixteen months of war. We continue to do what we always did: help people in need, provide them with food, and assist with transportation to the airport when people want to immigrate to Israel. Except now people don’t leave from Ukraine but from Moldova. The most important thing we offer to people is hope. Hope for the future. The fact that we are able to help, comfort and listen is invaluable.”

Why do people leave Ukraine?

“Because of the war, there are no signs of improvement, and the end of the war is not yet in sight. Apartments are damaged, and will not be repaired for the time being, so this also doesn’t give people any hope. And relatives from Israel tell them: ‘Come to Israel’. For thousands of Jews, the war has accelerated their plans to go to Israel. Every week we drive to Kishenov, Moldova, two or three times to bring people to the Israeli consul for an interview, and shortly thereafter, they can depart for Israel. As a result of the mobilisation law, however, men between the ages of 18 and 60 are not allowed to leave. Therefore, many families wait and stay in Ukraine. When the mobilisation ends, we expect that at least a few thousand people will want to leave for Israel when they are able to leave as a family.”

Koen, at the beginning of the war, you said, “Your prayer is the fuel that allows us to do this work.” How do you feel about this today?

“This was relevant back then, and it’s still true today. In times of need, you help those in need. We must not

forget that this need was already there before the war. In 2014, Crimea was occupied, and the conflict started in the east of the country, in Lugansk and Donetsk. Then came Covid19, and now worse: a war in which the whole country is involved.

We ask for God’s protection and security. Of course, that is no guarantee. So we should not be careless about it. The Lord says: ‘I will call the nations to bring My people home’. It does not say: ‘I will call the nations when it is safe, when it is quiet when it is summertime’. In other words, it says: under all circumstances. We have always been spared, and we see it as grace, as His protection. Because basically, anything can happen.”

Surely you must encounter a lot of suffering when you meet and pick up people.

“You hear about what is happening on the news. And at the same time, you pick people up from apartments that have been destroyed. This really affects you as a person. You listen; you hear what happened. The stories about families, about sons who are no longer there, the misery. But being there, helping, being able to comfort and encourage, that really makes a difference. We say to the people: we don’t understand everything either, but we know that the Almighty brings you home. This is true hope.”

Do you read the Bible differently than before the war?

“Most certainly! When I think of Zechariah 2, flee from the land of the north and save yourself to Zion. This is a warning to flee, but at the same time, there is a plan B after people flee: go to Zion. This is actually what I have been experiencing since 2014 when the conflict in eastern Ukraine broke out. The war forced many people to flee to Israel. Gradually, the borders closed more since 2014.”

Could the situation get worse than it is now?

“Yes, you have to expect that to happen. Russia can’t really go back; they started this. And if Ukraine would recapture territory, we have no idea how Russia will react. So we live from day to day.”

So what does that mean for the work you and the team do?

“Before the war, we were well prepared. And we still are. We have food supplies; we have fuel storage; we have a warehouse, a generator, shelters and enough minibuses. If something happens and there is a new flood of Jewish refugees, we can help them.”

If you would like to support our work among the needy Jews in Ukraine, please complete the coupon on the back of this newspaper.

Overview of our projects

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

Aliyah

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



Hineni Soup Kitchen

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



Holocaust Survivors

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



Christian Friends of Israeli Communities (CFOIC)

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



Food Parcel Campaign Ukraine

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



Arab Christians

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



For country-specific or further information on our projects, go to our website, www.c4israel.org

Letter from Naim and Elvira Khoury

We recently received a letter from Rev. Naim Khoury and his wife, Elvira, from Bethlehem, who have a remarkable a testimony of God’s provision for their ministry, surrounded as they are with extreme poverty. The pastor couple would very much like to offer to members of their congregation a few days of relaxation

and for building up their faith. They are asking for help to cover some of the costs of those who cannot afford to attend the camp. Saleem Shalash from Nazareth also hopes to offer activities this summer to those who cannot afford it themselves. Read the letter from the Khoury’s below.

Will you help Rev Khoury and Rev Shalash? You can donate by completing the coupon below selecting ‘Arab Christians’. Thank you on behalf of them!

Dear friends,

We hope and pray that you are doing well. We would like to tell you more about our summer family camp. The families will go away for a three-day period. We hope it will be a time of ‘recharging’, a time away from home and away from all the pressures. How relaxing that will be! And what a spiritual strengthening that will be, where we may grow in the Lord, find peace of mind and rest physically.

The assistance is for those families who cannot afford to pay for this outing themselves. It includes food, accommodation, an edifying programme and children’s activities. What a blessing this will be for all.

With enough finances, we can organize a wonderful time for all. Last year (see photo), you helped the Arab Christians in Bethlehem too. With His help, we will make it happen.

In His service, our King, the Messiah,
Elvira and Naim Khoury



Rev Shalash with children of the congregations. | Photo: Church of Rev Shalash in Nazareth



Bethlehem summer camp.

YES! I Want to Support Christians for Israel

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ALIYAH - BRING THE JEWS HOME

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- ☐ One bus (25 people) - € 4500 | US \$5000
- ☐ First Home in the Homeland - € 450 | US \$465
- ☐ Bnei Menashe (India) (1 person) - € 950 | US \$1000
- ☐ Aliyah Ethiopia

SOCIAL WELFARE PROJECTS

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

TOTAL DONATION

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)
- ☐ Why Israel? (DVD) ☐ Why Jerusalem? (DVD) ☐ Why End Times? (DVD)
- ☐ Why Israel? (Trilogy DVD Set)
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