

ISRAEL

& Christians Today

INTERNATIONAL

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CHRISTIANS FOR
ISRAEL
 INTERNATIONAL

"Bring my sons from afar and My
 daughters from the ends of the earth."
 Isaiah 43:6



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

Prayer Points



By Pieter Bénard
Christians for
Israel Prayer
Coordinator

ISRAEL

- Pray for the protection of Israel's coastline. The marine commandos are responsible for security on the beaches and monitor all boats approaching or leaving Israel.
- Pray for protection for the Jewish residents of Judea and Samaria. Pray for talks and peace with the Palestinian Authority and for a solution to the current impasse on who can live where. Pray that the Biblical promises will be fulfilled.
- Give thanks for the miracle of the State of Israel's founding and continued existence. The hostility is unbelievably fierce, both visible and invisible. We can see the hand of our heavenly Father in this miracle every day.
- Give thanks for the Word of God. The return of the Jewish people to the Promised Land is like a prophetic stone thrown into a global river. The ripples that it causes touch every country, reach the ends of the earth, and are undeniable!

INTERCESSION AND
THANKSGIVING

- Pray for the elderly Jews in Ukraine who often live in loneliness in small villages, especially now winter is coming, and they are barely able to leave their houses. Give thanks that we are able to visit them and have the opportunity to encourage them by distributing food parcels.
- Give thanks that we can look for the coming/return of the Messiah and all that goes along with it together with the Jewish people (*Isaiah 2:1-5, Revelation 22:1-5*).
- Pray for the Christian denominations in all of their diversity for perspective when it comes to Israel. Pray that the Church will understand that although the Holocaust sped things up, the State of Israel came into being as the fulfilment of God's prophetic Word

CHRISTIANS FOR ISRAEL

- Please pray for the staff and volunteers of Christians for Israel around the world. 'Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.' (*Colossians 3:23,24*).
- Please pray for the bi-monthly newspaper 'Israel and Christians Today' and the websites of Christians for Israel. Pray that news about Israel will be clearly explained in the context of the Bible and vice versa: the Bible explained in the context of current events.

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

"Look at the Fig Tree"

By Andrew Tucker, International Editor, Christians for Israel International

"Look at the fig tree and all the trees" (Luke 21:29)

When Jesus was teaching His disciples about the signs of His coming and the 'end of the age', He explained that many difficult things would happen in the world and the church before He comes again. Amongst other things, 'nations will rise against nations' and 'kingdoms against kingdoms'. It is remarkable how often Jesus refers to the nations when describing the last days in *Luke 21* and *Matthew 24*. It seems He wanted to emphasise the prominent role the nations will take in the last days.

In Luke's account of this conversation, in *Luke 21*, he records that Jesus told His disciples to "look at the fig tree and all the trees". In the Old Testament, trees were symbolic of the nations. Jesus was saying that the greatest sign of His coming will be the trees sprouting their leaves – nations coming to life and bearing fruit after the long winter months.

At the end of days, the fig tree that withered and was cursed will come to life.

This suggests a period in which the nations of the world come to life and become mature.

The most important tree, however, will be the fig tree that will become tender and spread its leaves. The fig tree symbolised the national identity of Israel. The fig tree coming to life, therefore, represented the nation of Israel being restored. Jesus' words no doubt reminded His disciples of His prophetic act earlier in the week, when he encountered a fig tree that did not bear fruit and declared: "May you never bear fruit again!" (*Matthew 21:19*). At the end of days, the fig tree that withered and was cursed, will come to life.

We are living in the generation that sees the nations coming to life. It is exactly 100 years since World War I ended - a war in which millions of young soldiers were killed in the trenches in Europe and the Middle East. Many more were injured, and societies were destroyed. In many ways WWI was a watershed, that ushered in a new and bloody era in world history. But it also laid the foundations for the modern community of nations as we know them, as well as the revival of the fig tree.

The Allied Powers (Great Britain, France, Italy, United States and Japan) had taken over control of the whole of the Middle East, southern Europe and northern Africa following the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Turkish Ottoman Empires. At the Paris Peace Conference, they decided to establish the League of Nations, and help the nations that had been under foreign occupation to achieve self-determination. This resulted ultimately in the creation during the course of the 20th century of modern states in Africa such as Rwanda and Cameroon, in the Pacific Islands such as



Nauru and Samoa, and in the Middle East, Iraq, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Israel.

Most importantly, the League of Nations laid the foundation for the creation, in 1948, of the Jewish State of Israel. In 1920,

clearly being set for a "strong man" to emerge, who will use these new global structures and systems to unite the dominant religions and ideologies in the promise of establishing a new world order.

At the centre of all of this is the miraculous revival of the fig tree – the re-emergence of the Jewish nation, their restoration to the land and the establishment of the city of Jerusalem.

**Christians for Israel
Mission Statement**

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.

Jewish Festivals

Sigd - Ethiopian Jewish holiday occurring 50 days after Yom Kippur
7 November 2018

Hanukkah - The Jewish festival of rededication (Festival of Lights)
3-10 December 2018

Rosh Chodesh - Beginning of new Hebrew month of Kislev
8 December 2018

Asara B'Tevet - Fast commemorating the siege of Jerusalem
18 December 2018

ISRAEL
& Christians Today

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70 Years of Aliyah

By Danielle Mor, Vice President, Israel and Global Philanthropy. The Jewish Agency for Israel

The rows in the auditorium built with Jerusalem stone, slowly began filling with guests, their excited faces and hushed voices demonstrating that to them, this was no ordinary event. They took their seats and waited with anticipation for the evening to begin.

All those present knew that the deep meaning of this evening's celebration, the entire reason for it to take place, with such diverse guests coming together in friendship, could only be truly understood through the eyes of faith. And for those who viewed it that way, it was quite simply a miracle.

The evening was about to celebrate Israel: 70 years of Independence and 70 years of Aliyah. Years in which the small, scattered and weak Jewish people who just three years earlier suffered the Holocaust, the worst human catastrophe that the Jewish people, the world, has ever known, returned to their ancient homeland to be established as a modern state, the state of the Jewish people.

With all the struggles, wars and ongoing security threats, it is innovation, growth and a pioneering spirit that has prevailed in Israel for the past 70 years. Many will agree that the greatest blessing of all is the ingathering of the exiles, the return of over 3 million Jews back home. Jews are speaking over 30 languages and coming from over 100 countries in all four corners of the earth. Coming home to a state that is proudly saying: Never Again! Never will a Jewish person be persecuted, need to seek refuge, or wish to return home and the doors will be closed. The doors will always remain open.

And so, though the auditorium can typically welcome only some 200 guests, this evening it welcomed nearly 400. Who were they?

- 200 singers and leaders of the magnificent Holland Choir, who travelled from the Netherlands to raise their voices in songs of prayer and praise and to give encouragement. The choir was joined by the inspiring world-class Jewish prayer leader, the Chazan Simon Cohen;

- 50 leaders of Christians for Israel, a worldwide Christian organisation representing over 100,000 Christians who pray for the peace of Jerusalem and give from their typically modest income to provide the Jewish people with practical and much-needed support;
- 80 Israeli friends and partners of Christians for Israel, including leaders of various Israeli organisations including The Jewish Agency for Israel and Keren Hayesod (UIA) who together with Christians for Israel, hosted the event;
- And most importantly, over 70 new olim, new Israelis. Olim who had arrived in Israel for the most part in recent weeks and even just a few days earlier. The new pioneers, who like Abraham millennia ago, left everything known to them behind to come to this new land. Their Aliyah to Israel is a blessing to them as well as a blessing to Israel. These 70 olim were symbolic of the 70 years of Israel and in fact, represented the nearly 30,000 olim who through the Jewish Agency, found their way home in the past year, coming from nearly 40 countries around the world. The evening was to honour, encourage and bless them.

Many of these olim came home specifically thanks to the direct support of Christians for Israel. Indeed, together, we are bringing the Jewish people back home. And while for some Aliyah is the fulfilment of a dream, for others, it is like waking up from a nightmare. For all, it is starting a new life in Israel.

As we were singing and celebrating, all those present deeply understood that Aliyah doesn't just happen. It requires Jewish education, encouragement, guidance, preparation and of course a promise that with all the difficulties, life in Israel will be good, and the olim might be assuredly planted in this land.

Christians for Israel are working with us at the Jewish Agency every step of the way! Support, which is given through Keren Hayesod, is directed to many global efforts. In Ukraine this includes operating summer camps, and holding day and weekend Aliyah seminars. Also, with

Jewish Agency dedicated emissaries on the ground serving with the Christians for Israel team in Ukraine, we are able to care for those people so desperately in need of safety. Once the olim arrive here in Israel, the Agency provides them with Hebrew education, mentoring, and a warm home for the first months and years of their new lives in Israel.

Very moving were the words of Tatiana Neslevich, a young wife and mother and a new olim from Ukraine who came on the First Home in the Homeland programme and lives in the Hinanit Community in Samaria:

"Just after landing in Ben-Gurion airport our lives changed forever; of course we were afraid of these drastic changes. We went through wonderful and exciting times as well as through tough and tragic moments. But all the time we felt the support and prayers of Christians for Israel.

We want to express our deepest gratitude to all the people who supported us in their deeds and prayers and who have such a big heart for Israel. I truly believe that our decision to make Aliyah will be a blessing for our children and us. Making Aliyah on Israel's 70 birthday is even more special as our dream is to be part of building Israel's future in the next 70 years!

Thanks to you, dear friends from Christians for Israel and your support of the Jewish Agency's First Home in the Homeland programme. This dream can now come true."

As Tatiana so beautifully said, the special friendship of Christians and Jews has been a blessing to her. How can this be believed when for nearly 2000 years there was hardly any friendship, just fear, hate and wars? But as people of faith, we know we are living in special times, and it is thanks to organisations and people such as Christians for Israel that this friendship and with it the blessings, can come true.

With all the challenges and difficulties, we are together, praying for the next 70 years, the next 3 million olim we must help and the blessings yet to come. For it is for such a time as this, that we have been waiting for.



The Jewish Agency awarded Christians for Israel a certificate of honour celebrating the 70th anniversary of the State of Israel and 70 years Aliyah



The 70 new olim receive a memento for their Aliyah to Israel

Short News

Tourism Judea and Samaria is Growing

If there is one thing that cannot be argued is the growth of tourism in Judea and Samaria (West Bank). The growth is the result of a stable security situation. Not only tourism is growing, but the economy is also growing as well. In 2017 Judea and Samaria were placed fourth worldwide as fastest growing tourist destinations.

Catching Plastic Waste

SodaStream is an Israeli company that sells appliances to enable you to produce your own carbonated soft drinks in reusable bottles. The company announced in October 2018 that it would start cleaning up plastic waste in the ocean off the coast of Honduras. The company is going to 'catch' the plastic waste with a special dragnet tied between two ships.

Egypt Urges Hamas



Egypt is fed up with Hamas's weekly protests at the Gaza border. The country told Hamas to back down to avoid an escalation with Israel. Egypt is concrete in its advice: maintain a distance of at least 500m from the border. Furthermore, they need to leave a space for the UN to provide humanitarian aid. The protests occur every Friday and have continued every week since March 2018. | Photo: Flashgo

Embassy Moving?

The Australian Prime Minister has stated his intention to consider having the Australian embassy moved from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. A decision will need to be made by the Australian government. It is not clear as to when this issue will be debated by the Australian Parliament.

Tunnel Discovered



The Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) discovered a tunnel dug by Hamas that underpasses the Gaza strip about two hundred metres into Israeli territory. The IDF succeeded in tracking down and destructing fifteen tunnels in the last year. This last tunnel was fitted with electricity and communication equipment. | Photo: Flashgo



Israel 70 Years
One-Time Edition | Collector's Item
Magazine 112 pages, full colour
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2018 marks the 70th anniversary of the State of Israel. After ages of diaspora, the Jewish state was reborn in 1948. A true miracle.

This limited commemorative edition magazine celebrates the 70th Anniversary of the State of Israel. It is beautifully illustrated, with in-depth articles, inspiring interviews, photos, facts, time-lines and much more. A 'must have' for everyone who loves to know more about Israel.

Christian for Israel's Brazilian Tour

By Rev Cornelis Kant, Executive Director, Christians for Israel International

The Christians for Israel Team in Brazil launched a tour through the North East of Brazil under the leadership of Pastor Val Nogueira. There were eight meetings in total, which took almost eight months to organise. The meetings were wonderful and very blessed.

At the office of the National Bible Society of Brazil in Recife, we held a meeting with pastors. The leader of the Bible Society was so impressed by the mission of Christians for Israel that he offered the Brazilian team full cooperation for future meetings with pastors.

The Christians for Israel Brazil National Forum was held in the State Department building in the city of Natal. The Israeli Ambassador, Mr Yossi Avraham Shelley attended the meeting. Being overwhelmed by the message and the attitude of friendship and love from the Christians for Israel team the Ambassador offered to be present and speak at whatever conference Christians for Israel is going to organise in Brazil. Also State Congress member, Dr Albert Dickson and his wife Dr Carla Dickson attended the Forum and spoke beautiful words.

In the city hall of Extremoz, we had a meeting with the mayor, Mr Joaz Oliveira

Mendes da Silva. He expressed his personal faith in the Lord and quoted from the Bible. He emphasised his willingness to be part of Christians for Israel and to cooperate with us. It was a heartwarming experience to listen to a speech from a politician that was so full of faith and belief.

Alongside these meetings with an official character, there were also meetings in several churches in the North East. It was wonderful to see how many young people attended these meetings about Israel. In the city of Senhor do Bonfim more than 200 young people attended a meeting on a Saturday evening. The next morning before the start of the church service they were invited to ask questions of the Christians for Israel speakers. More than 40 young people seized the opportunity to do so. Even a delay in starting the church service did not stop us answering all their questions. It was amazing to witness such an interest in Israel by so many young people.

Christians for Israel speakers at all those meetings were Pastor Val Nogueira, Pastor Vincent, Conrado Lumahan and myself.

It was a wonderful and heartwarming experience to meet so many Brazilian Christians and to see their enthusiastic reception of the message. God has really



From left to right: Cornelis Kant (C4I International), Conrado Lumahan (C4I Philippines), Reginaldo S Balduino Melo (Northeast Pastor), Fábio Vincente da Silva (City Assembly President), Yossi Avram Shelley (Israel Ambassador to Brazil), Joaz Mendes de Oliveira (Mayor of Extremoz-RN), Pr Vincent Neto (Director of Northeast), Pr Ejon Torquato (Northeast), Pr Gilson Melo (C4I Brazil treasurer), Pr Marione Melo (C4I Brazil, Director of Development & Relations)

blessed this wonderful tour and opened a lot of doors in Brazil for Christians for Israel.

A lot of work and follow up lies ahead of the Christians for Israel team in Brazil. But the team is in good hands. I admire Pastor Val Nogueira and the team with

lovely and dedicated people around her. May the Lord bless Val and her team and all the people who heard the message about God's everlasting faith to Israel and the Jewish people.

Israel & the Church Congress: Berlin

By Joachim Kudlek, Editor Israel & Christians Today Germany

From 8 to 10 November 2018 more than 1200 people participated in the 3rd Israel and the Church Congress in Berlin. The theme chosen was "Your Kingdom come. Israel and the Church as light for the nations".

In his introduction, Harald Eckert, Chairman of Christians for Israel Germany, emphasised that the Lord's Prayer, 'Your kingdom come' is a 'deeply Jewish prayer request'. It requests that the Son of David comes to the city of David - Jerusalem - sits on the throne of David and establishes the Kingdom of Peace of God. Thus, the Kingdom of God is not

only something spiritual but also has an external dimension for Israel with a Jewish perspective.

This clearly emerges from Acts 1, where it is reported that Jesus taught the disciples about the Kingdom of God for 40 days and that they finally asked Him when He will restore the kingdom to Israel (1,6). So, according to Harald Eckert, an inner and an outer dimension belong to the Kingdom of God, both of which are closely connected.

Joela Krüger, Sister of Mary, emphasised the close connection between Christians and Jews: Jesus Christ is not only the King

of Kings but also the King of the Jews, as it was written on the cross: 'Jesus of Nazareth, the King of Jews'. But Christianity left this title 'on the cross' instead of elevating it to an honorary title. Regarding all efforts promoting the unity of the Church, Sister Joela stated: "It must be said: We belong to the God of Israel!"

An act of repentance, addressing the guilt of the German and Christian Church towards the Jewish people, was led by Harald Eckert, Sister Joela and other speakers.

The programme included further lectures, reports on Aliyah, a Shabbat celebration,

an evening commemorating the 80th anniversary of the *Reichspogromnacht* (a pogrom against Jews throughout Nazi Germany on 9–10 November 1938), short presentations of Israel organisations and times of worship. 40 organisations had information booths in the foyer.

The Congress had been organised by the Christian Forum for Israel (CFFI), an umbrella organisation of more than 20 Israel organisations in Germany, including Christians for Israel Germany.

| Photos: Jason Terschüren



Harald Eckert, Chairman of Christians for Israel Germany delivering his opening speech



View of the hall where the '3rd Israel and the Church Congress' took place, where approximately 40 Israel-organisations set up their information booths

View the Bible through a Lens

By Rev Henk Poot, Christians for Israel Netherlands

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

>> Shechem

We started our journey through the Biblical heartland in the north, at Itamar, where the mountains of Ephraim pass into the mountains of Menashe. To the west of the enormous valley, lie the mountains of Gerizim and Ebal, with the city of Shechem nestled between them.

Nowadays it is an Arabic city called Nablus. There is a big refugee camp that is still artificially maintained by the Palestinian Authority because with money from the UN a whole new neighbourhood has been built in the city - but that is a different story.

>> Famous or Infamous

In the Bible, Shechem is famous or more accurately: infamous. In the Talmud you can read the following: ‘Shechem was a place for evil; in Shechem, Dinah was raped; Joseph was sold by his brothers in Shechem, and in Shechem, the kingdom of the house of Israel was divided’ (*Sanhedrin 102a*). Others add that the sons of Jacob while travelling from Haran, buried their idols there and that the well

of father Jacob and the tomb of Joseph are located in Shechem.

And there is more to tell: about Abimelech for instance, the son of Gideon who settled in Shechem and led a reign of terror over Israel from there. He killed all his brothers, but one of them, Jotham, escaped. In *Judges 9* the story is told how he stood on Mt Gerizim addressing the citizens of Shechem with his notorious fable: When the trees were once searching for a king, no one wanted to have the position. Not the fig tree nor the olive tree. Neither of them wanted to give up their oil or their sweetness to hover over the other trees. In the end, they chose the thorn bush: Abimelech.

>> Joseph’s Tomb

In Shechem, the kingdom of Israel was indeed divided, in the time of Jeroboam and Rehoboam, the son of Solomon. It was a terrible low in the history of God’s people. The ten tribes of the Northern Kingdom would even wage war against Judah and Benjamin until they were taken into exile by Assyria and from there would be scattered among the nations.

In Shechem, the tomb of Joseph is located. This explains why devout Jews built their villages here. Praying at a tomb can only be done at certain times with an army escort. And sometimes not at all, because the

tomb has been destroyed. This happened a few years ago when Arabs turned a sanctuary into a donkey stable. A salient detail of this unpleasant situation was the memories it evoked to a story from the Bible. The son of the king, Shechem, once raped Dinah the daughter of Jacob, after which Levi and Simeon killed all the men of Shechem. The name of that king, mind you, was: Chamor (donkey!).

>> Son of Joseph

I often visit near the site of Joseph’s tomb, in the so-called ‘soldiers café’, where soldiers sit in front of the television with coke after their patrol of the neighbourhood. I stand outside the café and I look around thinking: this is where Jesus was. Close to the field of Joseph He had that special encounter with the Samaritan woman, at Jacob’s well. She pointed him to the sanctuary of her people at the Gerizim and Jesus revealed who He was. His disciples were buying bread and heard that the fields were ripe for harvest (*John 4*). It is an encounter that is so reminiscent of the history of Joseph: the bread, the fields of grain, the well, the revelation: It is me! Jesus, the Son of Joseph, walked here and I never imagined the surroundings looked like this: the mountains, the hills and the valley where the farmers are still growing their grain.



The tomb of Joseph (the building with the dome) is nowadays located in between modern buildings. | Photo: CC4.0 Wikimedia Commons



Aerial photo of modern Nablus, showing how the valley is positioned between Ebal (left) and Gerizim (right). | Photo: ramixz/CC3.0 Wikimedia Commons



Fields with yellow grain near Shechem | Photo: Mrbrefast/CC3.0 Wikimedia Commons

Short News

Israel Supports Trump

A survey has been conducted amongst the Israeli population about what they think of the President of The United States. President Trump finds favour in the eyes of 69 per cent of the Israeli population. But that doesn’t make Trump the most popular American President ever in the eyes of the Israeli people. Obama could count on the approval of 71 per cent of the population and George W. Bush on 83 per cent.

Religion Makes Happy



A religious upbringing seems to attribute to a person’s happiness in a positive way. This was shown by a survey published in the American Journal of Epidemiology. The researchers found that children that grow up with religious customs have a better physical and mental health when they age and stand less change of depression and the use of tobacco and drugs. | Photo: Flashgo

Looted Art on Display

Works of art stolen during the Holocaust by the Nazis from their Jewish owners will be on display in a unique exhibition. For the first time there is an exhibition of looted art in Israel. According to MK and Minister of Social Equality Gila Gamliel the subject is of major importance. “It is the first step and an important phase in returning the works of art to their Jewish owners. It is the heritage of the Jewish people.” Minister Gamliel hopes that in this way the owners of the works of art can be traced.

Fuel for Gaza



For months terrorists from Gaza have scorched the Israeli border with arson attacks. But Israel wouldn’t be Israel if it didn’t recognise the difficult circumstances the Gazans are in through Hamas. Electricity is available only a few hours a day. Therefore Israel supplies fuel to Gaza again, paid for by Qatar. | Photo: Flashgo

Israel - 70 Years of Opportunity

By Kasa Bainesay-Harbor, Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of Israel in New Zealand

The nights in Ethiopia are unimaginably dark. In the small village where I was born, we had only the light from the moon and stars to illuminate our nights - yet that never deterred my grandfather from his holy obligations.

I remember sitting next to him one evening when I was a young girl while he prayed in front of our ‘Gojo’ (house). I asked him “What are you saying?” and he responded “*L’amlak alsrael*,” – God of Israel, “Redeem and take us back home to Jerusalem.” My childhood had been ripe with stories about our holy city of Jerusalem, so I raised my hands and joined my father in silent prayer, “*Amlak alsrael*.”

It is hard to believe that I am writing these words as a diplomat of the State of Israel. I could not be more proud. I was only ten years old when my family made Aliyah to Israel. The experience of landing in a country that you had been dreaming of for your entire existence was life-altering, to say the least. The *Jews of Beta Yisrael* (the House of Israel) had left Israel during the time of the First Temple, so there was much to catch up on as you can imagine.

“I will gather you from the peoples, assemble you from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel.” (*Ezekiel 11:17*)

How fortunate are we to live in the days when God’s promises are coming true and

that the People of Israel are returning home to the Holy Land? This past year, more and more Jews have returned home to Israel as we are celebrating 70 years of independence in a strong, vibrant and innovative country of our own.

A place where every Jew can feel confident that no matter where they live, they are safe from the pogroms, attacks and discrimination that have followed us throughout the generations in exile.

As we celebrate 70 years since the reestablishment of the State of Israel in our ancestral homeland, we reflect on the struggles, tragedies and challenges that have come with rebuilding our home and the contributions that we have made towards making the world a better place. Whether it be in creating new life-saving medical technology, revolutionary applications and hardware that have changed how we compute and communicate or even how we engage in agriculture or conservation, Israeli innovation has become a fundamental part of almost every person’s life on planet earth, whether they are aware of it or not.

All of this could not be possible without the help and support from our friends all around the world. Thanks to organisations such as Christians for Israel New Zealand, Israel has not only survived but continues to thrive and give back in every way possible. Thank you for all your friendship and unwavering support. May



God Bless You and Yours this upcoming holiday season, and from your friends in Israel, we hope to see you all soon.

Kasa Bainesay-Harbor (pictured above) was recently a guest speaker at the ‘Israel70’ event held in Auckland, New Zealand.

Led by Christians for Israel NZ, an organising committee representing many of New Zealand’s pro-Israel groups, partnered with Keren Hayesod of Israel in a fundraising effort to celebrate Israel’s 70th Anniversary of Independence. The project focussed

on sponsoring Jews living in Ethiopia to make aliyah to Israel.

Over 200 people welcomed dignitaries, including the Israeli Ambassador to New Zealand, Dr Itzhak Gerberg, and the Deputy Chief of Mission Kasa Bainesay-Harbor. In a remarkable display of solidarity, the VIP guests included a group of Parliamentarians led by the Hon. Alfred Ngaro, Leader of the Parliamentary Friends of Israel. The event was a huge success, sending a clear message to Israel; that they have many friends in New Zealand.

Jews Returning Home

Sources: Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics, Jewish Agency, jewishvirtuallibrary.org

The following infographic shows how many Jews live around the world according to official figures. It also contains an overview of how many Jews went to Israel in the past decade.

For 2017 we specified the number of Jews leaving from certain countries. These figures do need some explanation.

>> Massive Return?

There were times when Jews from around the world went to the Promised Land in great numbers. One such time was shortly after the establishment of the State of Israel. Jews living in Arab countries no longer felt safe to remain after the Arab world turned against Israel and numerous Jewish communities in Arab lands. The collapse of the Soviet Union led to a

stream of hundreds of thousands of Jews to Israel. The communist regime had forbidden them for years to emigrate, and now their long-cherished wish could finally be fulfilled. The influx of new immigrants in the last ten years may seem a bit meagre compared to those times.

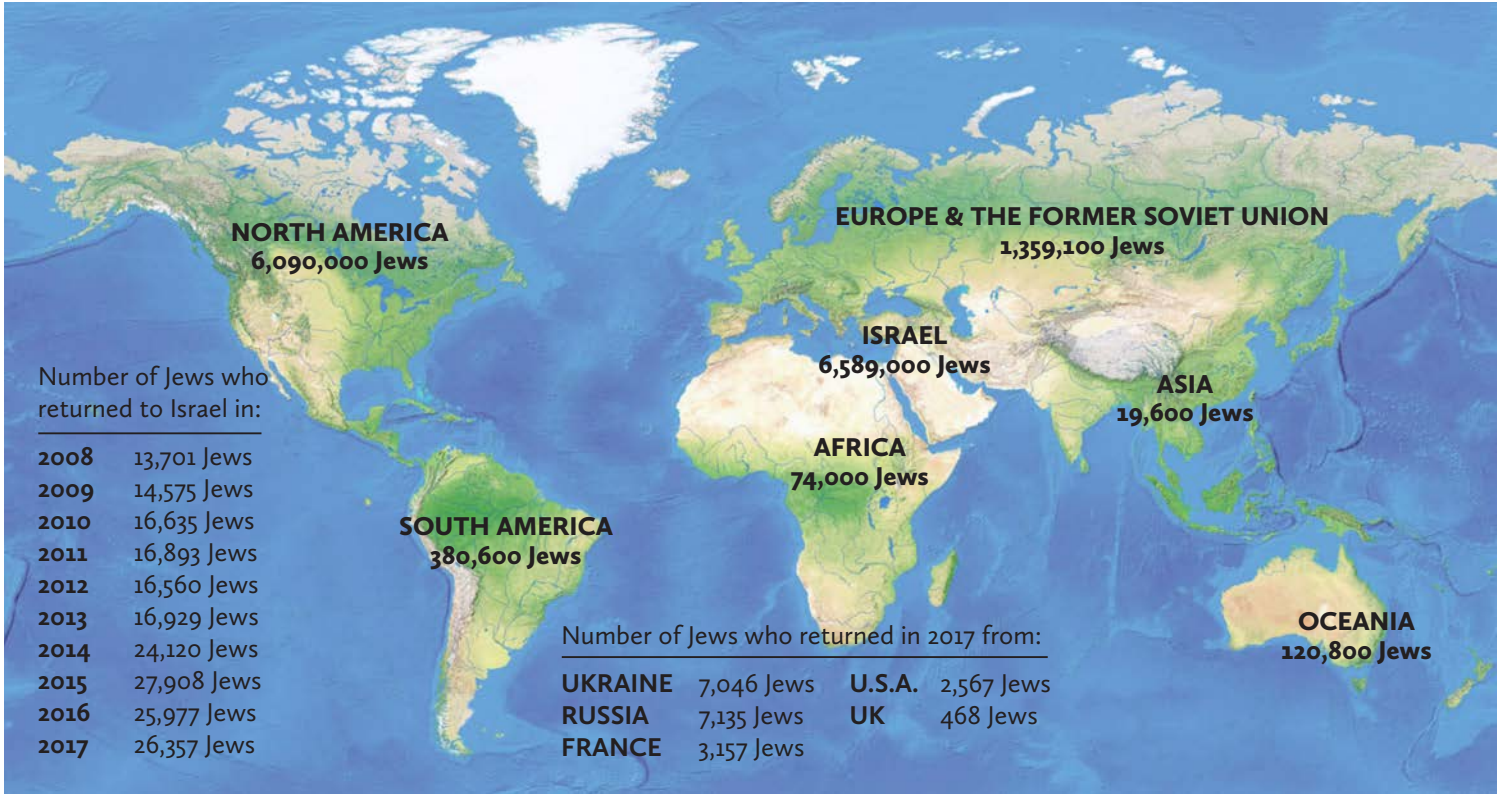
>> Official Figures

Official figures are always controversial.

An exact count is just impossible. Take Ukraine for example. According to ‘official figures’ the country still has 53,000 Jews. If 7,000 return on a yearly basis, it would mean that after 2025 there will be no Jews left. However, the Jews in Ukraine suspect that there are more ‘hidden Jews’ in the country. Many Ukrainians and their Jewish ancestors, hid their origin or even forgot it in fear of pogroms, or in fear of the communist regime which forbade any form of religion.

>> Twelve Tribes

Then there are the twelve tribes, known as the ‘Jews’. They descend mainly from the tribes of Judah, Benjamin and Levi, who formed the kingdom of Judah in the Bible. The kingdom of Israel however, was led into exile in the time of the kings. The tribes of the former kingdom of Israel are known as the ‘ten lost tribes’. However recently there is convincing evidence that descendants of at least one such tribe, Bnei Menashe, have been located in Northern India. Many of those descendants are now making aliyah back to Israel. Evidence is emerging that descendants of other tribes of Israel have been identified in various places around the world. Whoever reads the biblical promises, understands that the Lord will bring all twelve tribes back to the Promised Land. We are not there yet. But it does create anticipation.



5th Thesis: God is Faithful

By Kees de Vreugd, Theologian, Christians for Israel International, and Editor of Israel and the Church

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

Thesis 5: We believe that the Lord will be faithful to all the Covenants He made with Israel, as well as to all the promises He gave to the Church.

Elaboration: We confess that the Lord is faithful to all of His Covenants with Israel. God did not reject His people, nor did He temporarily put them aside. Israel remains to be the axis in God’s plans of salvation for the world. Not all of the promises have yet been fulfilled in Christ, but He is the sure guarantee for their future and final fulfilment.

Clarification: In various translations it is written as a caption above *chapter 11* of the *Epistle to the Romans*: ‘National Israel is temporarily set aside but not cast away permanently’. Captions – of course – do not appear in the original Greek text of the New Testament, as they are added later by the editor. In reality, the text says the opposite! *Romans 11:1*: “I ask then: Did

God reject His people? By no means!” And at the end of his impressive dealing with the mystery Paul succinctly exclaims: “For God’s gifts and His calling are irrevocable.”

Often people in the churches give the impression that all the promises made to Israel have been fulfilled in Christ, referring to Paul: “For all the promises of God in him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us” (*2 Corinthians 1:20*). What Paul means, however, is that the Lord Jesus is the guarantee that we can trust the promises of God.

What a great Saviour we have. In Him, God’s faithfulness has taken flesh and blood.

In *Romans 15:8-11*, Paul quite vividly expresses this point, in order that the nations shall also worship and praise the God of Israel: ‘Now I say that Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers, and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His

mercy, as it is written: “For this reason I will confess to You among the Gentiles, And sing to Your name.” And again he says: “Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people!” And again: “Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles! Laud Him, all you peoples!”

>> Reflection by Kees de Vreugd

First of all, thesis 5 is a confession of praise to God. We rejoice in God’s faithfulness, as we experience His

goodness both in the life of Israel and in our personal lives. We glorify God for His mercy.

And as God is faithful, Christ is faithful, too. Even ‘if we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny himself’ (*2 Timothy 2:13*). What a great Saviour we have. In Him, God’s faithfulness has taken flesh and blood.

The explanation of thesis 5 makes an important point: ‘not all of the promises have yet been fulfilled in Christ, but He is the sure guarantee for their future and final fulfilment.’ This echoes the saying of Paul in *Romans 15:8*: ‘Christ has become a servant to the circumcision on behalf of the truth of God to confirm the promises given to the fathers’. Paul does not just say that Christ has come to fulfil the promises. Of course, He comes as the fulfilment of the Scriptures.

However, His coming does not make the promises obsolete. Rather, the promises remain promises. Twofold is Christ’s ministry in Paul’s words, revolving around the ‘truth of God’. Christ confirms the promises to the fathers. He will restore the people of Israel to its promised land, and He will restore the kingship of David. That is one part of His mission. The other part is that He brings the Gentiles to glorify God for His mercy. Christ brings the nations to join Israel in praise of her God.

So in *Romans 15*, as in many parts of the Bible, it is about Israel and the nations. What about the church?

Could it be that the church is that unique and promising community, where believers of the nations already join in with Israel in glorifying God? Maybe, the church is really something of the future. The promises given to the Church could be summed up in just one promise: the blessing of the Holy Spirit. This is the indwelling of the Divine Presence, or in other words, the orientation towards Jerusalem. Every other promise is first and foremost preserved for Israel, even – I believe – the promise of governing the nations.

Faithful to His covenants, the Lord renews His covenant with Israel. The nations pick the fruits of that renewal: they, too, receive the promise, the blessing of the Holy Spirit. Because God renews the covenant with Israel, Israel reaches its destiny, and the nations receive blessing.

Short News

Exports from UK to Israel on the Rise

Exports from the UK to Israel have increased considerably in the first half of 2018. That puts Israel in second place as the most important export partner worldwide. Only the USA exceeds the UK. Exports mainly comprise of mineral products, machinery and electric appliances.

Rental Bikes in Jerusalem



Soon you will be able to rent a bicycle in Jerusalem too, at one of the shelters in the city. There will be fifty shelters with room for 500 bicycles. Tel Aviv has had facilities for renting a bicycle for quite some time. Several companies are trying to get their share of the demand for bicycle transport. In Jerusalem only one company will be permitted to hire out bicycles. | Photo: Flashgo

BDS Not Very Meaningful

The activists really go for it: BDS – Boycott, Divest and Sanction Israel. The media regularly expatiate about it. Still, the economic consequences of BDS for Israeli companies prove to be small. The economic journal Globes conducted a seven year survey amongst hundreds of large Israeli companies from all sectors. Only 0.75 per cent of the companies were effected by a boycott. The damage suffered was about ten per cent of the turnover, and that was in 2014. In the remaining years most companies experienced no damage at all.

Tulips Instead of Rockets



Teams of volunteers from the Netherlands handed out thousands of tulip bulbs in Israel at the end of November on behalf of the Dutch branch of Christians for Israel. Southern Israel has been in the grip of violence. Terror from Gaza increased: rockets land on villages and cities (resulting in many casualties), fire balloons destroy thousands of acres of farmland. In the northern part of Israel, it is not quiet either. Especially at the places where not many visitors come, tulips were distributed. In a few months, the tulips which were planted will blossom as a reminder of their friends in the Netherlands!



Twelve Theses of Faith on Israel

1. We believe that Israel was created and chosen by God to bless the nations.
2. We believe that the Church and the nations should bless Israel.
3. We believe that the Church has not replaced Israel. By faith in Jesus Christ we also have become ‘children of Abraham’, the father of all who believe.
4. We believe that all the Covenants since Abraham have been made with Israel.
5. We believe that the Lord will be faithful to all the Covenants He made with Israel, as well as to all the promises He gave to the Church.
6. We believe that there is the mystery of the hardening in part of Israel for our sake, but that there is also the blindness of the Church for Israel, and a veil over the nations with regard to Israel.
7. We believe that the Church should repent for all deeds of anti-Semitism committed in her name, and should show her true repentance in acts of love and solidarity with Israel and the Jewish people.
8. We believe that the restoration of the Jewish people to the Promised Land of Israel is the beginning of ultimate redemption. We believe that the nations carry a responsibility to help the Jews return.
9. We believe that the City of Jerusalem is the place where the Lord again will make His Holy Name dwell.
10. We believe that one day, Messiah will come to establish His worldwide Kingdom, Then the bodily resurrection of the righteous dead will take place and they will reign with Christ in His Kingdom on earth. We therefore pray for the peace of Jerusalem.
11. We believe that the Son of man will sit in judgment over the nations when the Kingdom comes and will ask them how they have treated Israel and the Jewish people.
12. We believe that ultimately and finally the renewal of all things will take place. Creation will be delivered from its bondage to decay and be brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. And God will be all and in all.

Festival of Lights

By Kees de Vreugd, Theologian, Christians for Israel International, and Editor of Israel and the Church

On the streets in Jerusalem, in Jewish homes, and even in many cities worldwide, Hanukkah lights are kindled, the first night one light, the second night two, and so on, until on the last night eight candles are burning.

The ritual is simple. At the lighting of the candle, a blessing is said commemorating the miracle of Hanukkah. Usually, the hymn *Ma'oz Tzur Yeshu'ati* ('Solid Rock of my Salvation') is sung. And it has become a custom to eat *sufganiyot*, a sort of doughnut baked in oil, referring to the miracle of the oil.

>> History

Hannukah celebrates the (re)dedication of the temple. The history is described in the books of the Maccabees. It happened in 167 BC. The Greek king Antioch IV Epiphanes, who ruled over Israel, placed an 'abomination of desolation' (1 Macc. 1:54, Daniel 9:27) in the temple in Jerusalem: a statue for the Greek deity Zeus. He also had pigs sacrificed on the altar. In an unparalleled attempt to assimilate the Jewish people into the Greek-Hellenistic culture, Sabbath,

circumcision and study of the Torah were forbidden.

The elite in Jerusalem, among which many priests, had already adopted Greek culture. But the people in the land resisted. A clan of priest-farmers in the city of Modi'in, the Maccabees, started a revolt against the Greeks. Under the leadership of Judas Maccabeus, the Jewish people succeeded in taking over Jerusalem and expelling the Greeks from the city. The temple was purified from idolatry, and on the same date as it was desecrated, the 25th of Kislev, the altar was rededicated. The celebration of the rededication took eight days, just like the eight days of the feast of tabernacles, and like the original dedication of the first temple. The temple was ornamented with crowns and bosses of gold and was abundantly lit. From then on, the feast of the dedication has been celebrated yearly. Jesus, too, celebrated the Feast of the Dedication in the temple (John 10:22).

The Talmud relates the story that, when they entered the temple and wanted to light the Menorah (the seven-branched candelabra), no oil was ritually fit for the Menorah. Finally, however, they found a



small jar of ritually pure oil, just enough for one day. However, a miracle occurred: the Menorah burnt for eight days on this small amount. And this was long enough to produce new pure oil.

>> Dedication

The word Hanukkah means dedication. Hanukkah is not just about lighting candles. It is about dedicating and re-

dedicating oneself to a life by God's Word. It is a Jewish thought that every human being is supposed to make of himself a temple, a sanctuary by learning the values of God's Word. In this way, he spreads light into the world. That is how Israel understands her own being in the world. This year, Hanukkah is celebrated from Sunday evening 2 December till Monday evening 10 December. | Photo: Gershon Elinson/Flashgo

Happy Hanukkah and Christmas

By Rev Willem JJ Glashouwer, President Christians for Israel International



This Menorah, shaped in the form of the Star of David, was built in 2013 by Christians for Israel Netherlands. It is a landmark that illustrates the light that Israel and the Jewish people are to the world, and it symbolises beautifully universal values such as friendship, tolerance and appreciation.

A new Europe is on the rise. A new Babylon. A new Empire in the name of Man. Like a new phoenix, a shining firebird, a breath-taking 'Brave New World' is arising from the ashes of the unimaginable world conflagrations of the

past century with two World Wars. With a new spirit. A new kind of humanism is on the rise – combined even with a new kind of religious awareness. Not even the Pope was able to prevent Europe's new constitution in progress from omitting

any reference to God or the Judeo-Christian traditions and values that have shaped and formed and put their stamp on Europe for centuries. It is new enterprise in the name of Man. We have had the benefits and blessings of the Judeo-Christian way of thinking, but people don't want it anymore.

So secularisation, materialism and a decline of churches and Christian faith and ethics are in progress.

>> Rebellion

Man is a fallen creature. Rebellion against God runs through our veins and the forces of darkness stand ready to lead us on. With Satan as the grand master in the background. But the downfall in the end will be terrible.

The new spirit of humanism looks suspiciously like that of ancient Hellenism, which had spread throughout the world by the Greeks, and especially by Alexander the Great and his descendants. That spirit

of Hellenism once clashed powerfully with the God of Israel as you can read in the article about Hanukkah above.

>> Celebrating Hanukkah and Christmas Together

Christians and Jews celebrate their unique Feast of Light. Why not celebrate Hanukkah together? We are facing a common enemy. The Kingdom of Man over and against the Kingdom of God. Babylon versus Jerusalem. Christians and Jews should stand together, side by side against a wave of spiritual darkness setting upon planet earth and mankind. Together we should be a new spiritual resistance movement against new occupying forces. Maybe eventually forced underground. But victorious in the end! Babylon will fall and Jerusalem will come down from heaven to earth.

The Menorah on the Mountain

Courtesy of Bill Slott, the Times of Israel

Kibbutz Ketura, in the south of Israel, is a small, quiet agricultural settlement, with a rich tradition of community celebration. Behind the kibbutz looms a stately limestone cliff. The view from the top is stunning, particularly at sunset, when the red mountains of Jordan on the opposite side of the Arava Valley turn radiant shades of pink and purple.

With Ketura and its neighboring kibbutzim laid out in crisp panoramic detail, one might easily miss the seemingly irrelevant series of nine large ash cans that stand along the edge of the cliff like silent, rusted sentinels. But they are one of the most important cultural icons of this little kibbutz. This is the community's Hanukkah menorah.

Each night of Hanukkah, a different child from Ketura's bar mitzvah class ascends the mountain at sunset, accompanied by a parent, and lights the menorah. Moving with simple grace through the darkness, the child lights the appropriate ash cans. Below in the kibbutz, families gather outside, staring up at the menorah that has just been lit.



Iran Behind Latest Gaza Crisis

By Yochanan Visser, Israel Today

Recently released information and comments made by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu during an address to the Israeli public on Sunday 18 November shed new light on the mini-war between the Palestinian terror groups in Gaza and the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) in mid-November and the Israeli decision not to launch a ground offensive.

Netanyahu said during his address to the nation, which was meant to save his coalition after Defence Minister Avigdor Liberman resigned on 14 November, that as leader of Israel he sometimes had “to hide crucial considerations that must be concealed from the enemy” and hinted that there were plans for a military operation in the future. “I cannot elaborate on our plans for the future, but we will determine the right conditions and the right times for the State of Israel, those which are optimal for the security of our citizens,” the Israeli PM earlier told participants in a state memorial service commemorating the 45th anniversary of the passing away of former Israeli PM David Ben Gurion.

Some understood this as a hint to a future ground operation against the terror organisations in Gaza after Netanyahu decided to enter into a ceasefire with them the previous week, provoking Liberman’s resignation.

However, from a briefing after the ceasefire to the Knesset Committee for Foreign Affairs and Defence, it became clear Netanyahu’s statement was related to Iran’s continuing preparations for a three-front war with Israel.

The three fronts are Syria, where the IDF has succeeded in preventing Iran from establishing a foothold on the Syrian Golan Heights according to Gaby Eisenkot the Chief of Staff of the IDF, Lebanon and Gaza.

Netanyahu said during the Knesset briefing that Israeli “spy-planes continue to fly and collect information” on the movements of Hezbollah in Lebanon and Syria and the Iranian military build-up in Syria.

The Israeli PM and new Defence Minister also revealed he had tried to enlist Russian President Vladimir Putin for the

effort to drive Iran out of Syria but acknowledged that this effort would require the help of a third country. His remarks immediately led to speculation that Israel could be this third country.

During his address to the Israeli nation, Netanyahu hinted at a very large military operation which would demand “sacrifice”.

The Israeli military and government are very concerned about Iran’s activities in Lebanon where Iran is helping Hezbollah with converting crude rockets into guided missiles which can reach all of Israel and about the continuing Iranian entrenchment in Syria.

The Quds Force of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) has founded the so-called Golan Liberation Brigade. The Brigade comprises 80,000 men and has been formed as an umbrella organisation of various Shiite militia which have recently been fighting in Iraq and Syria. It is commanded by Qassem Soleimani, the shrewd commander of the Quds Force.

Until recently the Israeli air force (IAF) used to frustrate the Iranian military build-up in Syria by carrying out airstrikes on weapon convoys and military facilities, but the delivery of the Russian S-300 anti-aircraft missile shield has limited the operational capabilities of the IAF.

The Iranian-led pro-Assad coalition is currently setting its sights on the Israeli Golan Heights and recently threatened Israel with the war over what it calls the ‘illegal Zionist occupation’ of the mountainous plateau. During a meeting of the fourth committee of the General Assembly of the United Nations Dr Bashar al-Jaafari, the Syrian ambassador to the UN, said: “we will reclaim Golan by peace, or by war.” Al-Jaafari’s statement indicated that Syria and Iran are looking for a casus belli to start the anticipated three-front-war against Israel after the Iranians most likely tested the Israeli military via the mini-missile-war last week in Gaza.

The Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center in Israel revealed mid-November that Iran – via Hezbollah - had delivered the Kornet missile which was used to open the offensive against Israel



Iran's President Hassan Rouhani addresses the 72nd session of United Nations General Assembly at the UN headquarters, in New York, USA

by the Palestinian terror groups in Gaza. The anti-tank missile destroyed a bus which had just transferred and unloaded a group of 50 IDF soldiers to the border with Gaza, an action which was filmed by Hamas and which was clearly taken out of Hezbollah’s playbook for wars.

Shortly after the Kornet missile was launched Hamas and Islamic Jihad started to pound southern Israel with roughly 460 rockets while the IAF destroyed 150 terror-related targets in Gaza in response.

Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah openly admitted his organisation had supplied the Palestinian terror groups in Gaza with the Kornet missile, according to the Meir Amit Center.

Islamic Jihad, furthermore, reported it had used a new missile with a large warhead to destroy a complete building in the coastal city of Ashkelon in southern Israel.

The short-range missile was a copy of the Iranian Falaq-2 rocket and was assembled in Gaza. The missile onslaught in southern Israel was furthermore conducted in waves, an indication the Iranian-backed terror groups in Gaza wanted to test the limitations of the Iron Dome anti-missile shield of the IDF.

All this shows that the actions of Hamas and Islamic Jihad bore the hallmarks of a Hezbollah operation and that the Palestinian terror groups in the Gaza Strip

acted on orders from Iran.

Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar has been very open about who is calling the shots in Gaza.

During an interview with al-Mayadeen TV in Lebanon on 21 May 2018, Sinwar said Hamas and Hezbollah are working in tandem in the war against Israel “almost on a daily basis” and claimed the relationship between the two terror groups is “excellent and evolving” while he also said they are conducting joint operations. The Hamas leader boasted about the “strong powerful and warm ties” with Soleimani and said Iran had provided the Islamist Sunni terror group with “large amounts of cash, ‘equipment’ and expertise.” Sinwar told the Lebanese TV station that Hamas had “greatly developed its capabilities” thanks to friends, “first and foremost the Islamic Republic of Iran” and said that with Allah’s help “the resisters will stand on a united front”. His remarks led to an IDF statement that read “Hamas is Iran, Iran is Hamas”.

This week the radical Hamas leader intended to pay a visit to Tehran, but he was barred from flying to Iran by the Egyptian authorities. | Photo: Amir Levy, Flash90

This article was originally published on 21 November 2018 by Israel Today. Reproduced with permission of Israel Today and the author.

Israel: Iran Continues Nuclear Quest

By Ryan Jones, Israel Today

Israeli experts continue to caution an erroneously placated West that Iran’s new president will press forward with his nation’s nuclear arms programme. His track record proves as much.

From the US to Europe to Russia, the international community has breathed a collective sigh of relief over the election of Hasan Rohani as Iran’s new president, hailing the cleric as a ‘moderate’ leader.

But few seem to remember that Rohani previously served as Iran’s chief nuclear negotiator during the term of former President Mohammed Khatami. It’s true that between 2003-2005 Rohani halted Iran’s uranium enrichment programme, but it’s also true that he started it right back up again once the immediate threat of US military intervention had passed.

That’s right - Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was not, as many have wrongly come to believe, the originator of Iran’s defiant nuclear programme. In fact, none of these politicians are more than advisers when it comes to such important matters of state. Iran’s nuclear programme, and even who gets elected as president, is all ultimately under the control Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khomeini and his Guardian Council.

What that means is that Iran’s nuclear programme will continue if Khomeini says it will, and Rohani has no power to stop it, assuming he even wanted to. And that is a pretty big assumption to make, considering the man’s past remarks and actions.

In 2004, Rohani advocated accelerating Iran’s nuclear programme to the point

where the international community would have no choice but to accept it as a fact of life, as had previously happened with Pakistan.

“Rohani is a dyed-in-the-wool Khomeinist and part of the consensus on Iranian nuclear energy, which is a code word for nuclear weapons,” explained Ze’ev Maghen, an Iran scholar at the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, in an interview with the Times of Israel. Nor is Rohani necessarily any friendlier toward Israel than his predecessor. In his first public address since winning the election, Rohani asserted that international sanctions against Iran had been imposed in service to Israel.

According to Maghen, Rohani is every bit as hostile toward Israel as Ahmadinejad,

he simply has better style.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu sought to remind everyone that Rohani had only won the election because the ayatollahs of the Guardian Council had allowed him to, meaning Rohani must, like Ahmadinejad before him, hold views that fall in line with the ayatollahs’ agenda.

“We are not deluding ourselves,” Netanyahu said at Sunday’s cabinet meeting in Jerusalem. “We need to remember that the Iranian ruler at the outset disqualified candidates who were not in line with his extreme world view, and from among those whom he did allow, the one seen as least identified with the regime was elected. But we are still speaking about someone who calls Israel the ‘great Zionist Satan.’”

Dreadfully Direct *Psalm 2, Part 4b*

© Johannes Gerloff, Theologian, Journalist, Lecturer and Author

This is the fifth instalment of a longer article written by German theologian and journalist Johannes Gerloff on Psalm 2. The full text of the article, including extensive footnotes, can be found at www.cqisrael.org/teaching-articles/

“Then He shall speak to them in His wrath. In his fury He will terrify them.” *Psalm 2:5*

While the Jewish interpreters of Scripture have no problem understanding the meaning of these words, Martin Luther gets tangled up at this point.ⁱ Obviously, the reformer pushes his limits with the one-dimensional Christian interpretation of *Psalm 2*, focusing exclusively on the suffering, crucifixion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. He asks, “But when did He speak to them in His anger, or in what did His anger express itself?” Luther considered that these words could have been said: “about the Roman army.” But then he completely misses out the possibility that the Romans or their vassal king Herod could have drawn the wrath of God upon themselves for having executed Jesus. It was actually the Roman occupiers who were responsible for the sentencing of Jesus. And they executed in a way typical for the Roman judicial system, namely as crucifixion.

If Jesus had been executed by Jews in a Jewish way, he would have died by stoning, such as Stephen (*Acts 7:45*).

Luther reveals in this context how biased his interpretation of Scripture is by his anti-Jewish perspective. He concludes here in *verse 5*, “But the Jews, when they were devastated and slain by the Romans, He terrified them by the onset of fear eternally.” The German reformer thought he had to remind his readers at this point: “Now see the register of horrible punishments prepared for the murderers of Christ.” To conclude then: “No creature, not even God Himself, is inclined to them.”

But back to our text. Being emotionally charged in such a way, what does God say? What is His message to the nations? “I have set My king on Zion, the mountain of My holiness.” (*Psalm 2:6*). The British scholar Derek Kidner sees at this point, “this is the neglected voice that has the final say.”ⁱⁱ

First of all, *Psalm 2:6* states: God is the One who appoints the rulers of this world and removes them. This was recognised by the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar who confessed to the Jewish Prophet Daniel: “Your God is a God over all gods and a Lord over all kings” (*Daniel 2:47*). At the same time, the Prophet Ezekiel (*17:24*) testifies in his rich pictorial language, portraying the power of the world as



trees: “All the trees of the field shall know that I am the Lord: I humiliate the lofty tree. I raise up the humble tree. I cause the fresh tree to wither and the dry tree to flourish. I, the Lord, speak and do it.”

Even before the Babylonian exile, the God of Israel had emerged as the actual engine of all ethnic migrations. He had the Prophet Amos (*9:7*) aligned: “Are you not like the sons of the Cushites, you sons of Israel? Did not I bring Israel up out of the land of Egypt, just like the Philistines from Kaftor and the Syrians from Kir?” Moses already knew that “the Most High gives the nations their inheritance,” and

“sets the boundaries of the peoples” (*Deuteronomy 32:8*). | Photo: Lightstock

Footnotes:

ⁱ For the following compare Johann Georg Walch (hg.), *Dr. Martin Luthers Sämtliche Schriften. Vierter Band. Auslegung des Alten Testaments (Fortsetzung). Auslegung über die Psalmen (Groß Oesingen: Verlag der Lutherischen Buchhandlung Heinrich Harms, 2. Auflage, 1880-1910), 265-267.*

ⁱⁱ Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1-72. An Introduction & Commentary, TOTC (Leicester/England and Downers Grove, Illinois/USA: Inter-Varsity, 1973), 51.*

Johannes Gerloff (1963) is a German theologian, journalist and Bible teacher who has lived in Jerusalem for over 20 years.

Christian Media Summit 2018

By Mandy Worby, Christians for Israel Australia

In October, the Israeli Government Press Office hosted the second ever Christian Media Summit in Jerusalem. Just like last year's inaugural Summit, it was a hugely significant and important event for every Christian media person represented.

PM Benjamin Netanyahu officially opened the event and welcomed us very warmly and recognised that he was among friends. He acknowledged that many Christians around the world are some of the best friends the nation of Israel has and he also acknowledged just how important our role is in presenting the truth. In fact, PM Netanyahu gave us one main mission: the mission to tell the truth.

In his opening address to us, PM Netanyahu said, “I think people have to tell the truth. You are ambassadors of truth. You're not merely the greatest ambassadors that Israel has around the world; you're champions of truth. If there's one thing that I can ask you to do, it's to tell the truth. Tell the truth about our history, tell the truth about our present, tell the truth about who wants peace, and who doesn't want peace.”

We live in a world that has redefined so many things from marriage, social justice, morality, ethics and even whether a baby in the womb is worthy of life! Ultimately, at the heart of all these redefinitions is the redefinition of truth.

Pontius Pilate asked Jesus, “What is truth?”

Little did he know, Jesus actually gave the answer to that very question the previous night, shortly before His arrest. He was praying for His disciples, and asked the Father to: “Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth” (*John 17:17*). Of course, we also know that if you know the truth, it's going to set you free (*John 8:32*).

During the Summit we heard from men and women involved in high tech. We heard from media personalities, the IDF, politicians, religious leaders, the entertainment industry and even farmers and educators. We saw demonstrated visually, the widening gap between those on the left and right and the monumental task of bringing understanding and balance between those two extremes.

We see the same thing in our own nations, and the reason the gap is so vast is truth is now relative and preferential.

The overall message from the Summit for every Christian broadcaster present was the necessity to return home and use our media resources, to tell the truth. It's patently clear that the majority of secular media outlets are agenda driven, more often than not with an agenda that is hostile to Israel. As Christians in the media, we need to tell the truth of the reality of life on the ground in Israel to combat the litany of lies and falsehoods.

Truth is under attack, but truth will set people free, and that's our commitment.



PM Benjamin Netanyahu opening the Christian Media Summit 2018



Christian Media Summit attendees outside the Knesset

Letters of the Aleph-bet: Qoph ק

By Kees de Vreugd, Theologian, Christians for Israel International, and Editor of Israel and the Church

Qoph is the nineteenth letter of the aleph-beit. It is usually represented by the letter q, although in older texts, you will find the c as well. An example is the name Jacob, which in Hebrew is written with the *qoph* in the middle. Our letter q goes back to the same ancient sign as the *qoph*, by the way.

In the Talmud (Jewish tradition) it is told that children came to the study house to learn the aleph-beit. To do so, they gave a symbolic meaning to each letter.

We have seen it before. They related the *qoph* to the next letter, the resh. The *qoph* represents *qadosh* – holy, while the *resh* represents *rasha* – the wicked. ‘Why is the face of the *qoph* averted from the *resh*? The Holy One, blessed be He, said: if he repents, I will bind a crown on him like Mine. And why is the foot of the *qoph* not joined to the rest of the letter? To show that if he repents, he can enter and be brought into God’s favour through this opening.’

The numerical value of *qoph* is hundred. In *Genesis 23:1* we read in the Hebrew text literally that the years of the life of Sarah were ‘hundred years, and twenty years, and seven years’. The *Midrash*, the Jewish interpretation, asks why this is said in this way. Each word has a meaning. What is really said here? We can find an explanation in *Psalms 37*: ‘The Lord knows the days of the blameless, and their inheritance will be forever’ (verse 18). As they are blameless,

so their years are, says the *Midrash*. That refers to Sarah. When she was hundred (the letter *qoph*) years old, she was like somebody who is twenty (the letter *kaph*) years old with regards to sin. In other words, she was such a blameless person of whom the psalm speaks.

Finally, when you count all the daily prayers together, a pious Jew says (at least) hundred *Berachot* (thanksgivings) a day.

First Home in the Homeland News

By Orly Wolshtein, First Home in the Homeland, Project Manager Jewish Agency for Israel

>> Black as Ashes, White as a Flower



Drimia (pictured above) is an inconspicuous plant. One sees just a stalk with small, gentle, white or rose flowers, nothing special to most people –but not for Israelis. Drimia, or דרמיה in Hebrew (read *Chatzav*), is a symbol of new beginning. The first Drimia flowers usually pop up in February and March – it’s a certain sign that spring is coming.

Fire kites that fly over the border with Gaza every day destroy the agriculture,

flora and fauna of the Eshkol region, you never know where the burning tale of the kite will land. As a result, while driving through the Eshkol region near the Gaza strip, instead of green fields and forests one sees only black, charred spaces. The picture over the last few weeks, however, is astonishing – the lonely, black, burned fields are now covered with white blossoms – of many, many Drimia flowers!

>> Newcomers

This summer twelve families made Aliyah to Eshkol via First Home in the Homeland. Despite the security situation, they chose this region for their new start in Israel. The youngest newcomer’s name is Platon. He comes from Omsk, Russia, and now lives in kibbutz Ein Hashlosa. . Unfortunately, at just 3 kilometres from the border with Gaza, this kibbutz constantly appears in the newspapers in Israel. There are two more kibbutzim, however, that welcomed newcomers in August 2018 – Tzeelm and Gvulot.

Every family, even if they arrived in the middle of the night, was welcomed by a volunteer, with a greeting card, to a clean and cosy kibbutz apartment, with the basic

necessities ready in the fridge of their new home. While still in Ukraine the families got a call and then a visit from one of the Christians for Israel team, so that they felt supported in their decision to make Aliyah.

>> Life at the Border

“Our children teach us to react properly on sirens because this is what they learn at kindergarten and school. They know that they must not panic, and they know exactly how many seconds we have to get

to the shelter”, says Evgeni Tkachenko. Evgeni made Aliyah from Ukraine two months ago to Ein Hashlosa. His family came to Israel to fulfil the dream of their grandparents, as they had a very difficult life in Ukraine and no way to make Aliyah.

Please support First Home in the Homeland. You can donate by filling out the coupon on the back page.



Dmitri and Aneta, with their two children Tamara (15) and Sergey (17), made Aliyah from Ufa to kibbutz Gvulot

Meals for the Poor in Jerusalem

By Christians for Israel International

Contrary to other countries in the world, Jerusalem, the capital of Israel, is not the richest, but the poorest city of the country. Numerous minorities live in Jerusalem.

Poverty often passes from generation to generation. Decades ago, families often came to Israel without a penny; now they still have no money to spend.



At the Hineni Soup Kitchen in Jerusalem people in need can come for a daily hot meal. The vast majority of visitors are elderly. Among the visitors are those who fled the former Soviet Union years ago and now have financial problems because they do not have a pension. By offering them a meal, these people have money for their medication. Other visitors include war veterans, homeless people, and Holocaust survivors. Everyone who can show they are in financial need receives help.

>> Food for the Soul

The meals at Hineni are fresh and nutritious, but they are not only intended to satisfy the hunger. These meals nourish the spirit in several ways. Benjamin Philip (the Hineni Director) explains: “Through giving meals, you show love to a person

and help carry their burdens. People come out of their social isolation because they can interact with others. And there are opportunities to speak about faith. Our goal at Hineni is not only to help these people in their need, but also bring them closer to the Eternal One. Together with Bible-believing friends, Jews and non-Jews, we want to walk the talk: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself’”

Hineni provides approximately 300 meals per day for the poorest and most needy citizens. Support the work of Hineni in Jerusalem! A hot meal costs € 5. You can donate by filling out the coupon on the back page.



Poverty Amongst Jews in Ukraine

By Koen Carlier, Christians for Israel Ukraine

"Your visit gives me proof that there are still good people out there", says 82-year-old Katia (pictured below), when she opens the door of her creaky house. This Jewish lady lives a lonely life in the vast countryside of Ukraine. "I prayed for your coming. Thank you for looking after me. I can't cook because I am half blind and can't lift anything. Thank you from the bottom of my heart."

For I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink. Matthew 25:35



Did you know that 300,000 Jewish people still live in Ukraine? Among them, the elderly and survivors of the Holocaust, but also families with young children.

Many Jews in Ukraine live in great poverty. The demand for food parcels is constantly growing, especially during the severe Ukrainian winter when we receive help requests from all over the country. With our limited resources we try to help as many people as possible.

In recent years much has changed in Ukraine, unfortunately in a negative way. There is the continuous threat of war in the east, causing many people to flee.

The country is in a deep economic crisis. There is not much work, while prices are rising and the value of the Grivna (Ukrainian currency) dropped significantly. Life seems hopeless for a lot of people, especially in the countryside.

Our goal this winter is to distribute more than 30,000 food parcels to poor Jewish people in Ukraine. During our visits, we always tell them about God's faithfulness to His people and the promises in the Bible - Promises of hope and the return of the Jewish people to Israel. | Photos: Jaco Klamer

One food parcel contains:

1kg flour
1kg rice
1kg sugar
2kg macaroni
1kg grits
1kg porridge
1 tin of peas
1 tin of corn
1 tin of fish
1 tin of chicken
500g oats
1L cooking oil
70g coffee
1 pack of tea

Will you help? One food parcel costs € 10. We buy the products for a good price because wholesalers know that we use the products for charity.

You can donate by filling out the coupon below. Thank you in advance for your support on behalf of the Jewish community!



We always tell the recipient about God's faithfulness to His people Israel!



The food packages are packed and handed out by volunteers

YES! I Want to Support Christians for Israel



CHRISTIANS FOR ISRAEL MINISTRY

- ☐ My donation for ministry costs, print & post

SOCIAL WELFARE PROJECTS

- ☐ Hineni - Soup Kitchen
☐ Holocaust Survivors - "I'm not Alone" Café Europa
☐ CFOIC - Christian Friends of Israeli Communities
☐ **Emergency Food Parcels Ukraine - € 10 per parcel**
☐ First Baptist Church Bethlehem and Holy Land Ministry

ALIYAH - BRING THE JEWS HOME

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

TOTAL \$ _____

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

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☐ 70 Questions About Israel
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☐ Jerusalem Magazine - 50th Anniversary Book
☐ Why Israel? Book by Willem Glashouwer

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



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