

ISRAEL

& Christians Today

INTERNATIONAL

December 2019

Kislev - Tevet 5780

CHRISTIANS FOR
ISRAEL
INTERNATIONAL

Understanding Israel and world events from a Biblical perspective

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Israeli soldiers close the gate leading to the Island of Peace in Naharaim, northern Israel, on the border with Jordan, on 9 November 2019. This is one of the parcels of land of which Jordan did not extend the lease. | Photo: Flash90

Is Peace Gone Between Israel and Jordan?

■ Yochanan Visser

Christians for Israel Correspondent in Israel

Not only has the peace between Jordan and Israel turned cold, but it also looks to be on the verge of collapse.

Jordan recently 'celebrated' the 25th anniversary of its peace treaty with Israel by recalling its ambassador to the Jewish State. The move is highly symbolic of the state of relations between Israel and Jordan, 25 years after the peace agreement was signed by the late King Hussein and the slain Israeli Prime Minister Yitzchak Rabin in the presence of former US President Bill Clinton.

In Israel, there are those like Ksenia Svetlova of Mitvim, The Israeli Institute for Regional Foreign Policies, who agree with Jordanian anti-Israel activists that the deterioration in the relations between the two countries is solely on the fault of the Netanyahu government which allegedly misses every opportunity to increase cooperation with the Hashemite Kingdom.

Ariel Kahana, writing for Israel HaYom, strongly disagrees with Svetlova and claims the cold peace has its advantages. "Israel offers Jordan the strategic backing it needs to deal with the threats it faces; it supports the

preservation of Jordan as the Hashemite Kingdom, and it opposes the 'Jordan is Palestine' concept," Kahana wrote.

"Israel further lends Jordan a powerful status on the Temple Mount, sells its natural gas at floor rates and provides it with significant water supply, as well as enables European goods heading to Jordan to pass through the Haifa port and land crossings," he added.

On the other hand Kahana claims that Jordan keeps the tensions with the Palestinians from boiling over, and adds that this is particularly true when it comes to the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.

"Why is the climate acerbic? Because every public step King Abdullah takes to signal warming ties with Israel will meet with scathing domestic criticism, to the point of rattling the throne," according to the Israeli journalist.

The Jordanian King is dealing with increasing opposition to his regime, something that has been under-reported by both Israeli and international media.

Take, for example, what happened in Jordan when protesters in Ramtha threw shoes (a very humiliating act in Muslim countries) and stones at giant billboards with photos of King Abdullah. The protests were followed by

gun battles between opponents of Abdullah's regime who are members of the Bani Hassan tribe, and regime forces in the city of Zarqa, Jordan's third-largest city.

To divert attention from the many failures of his regime to solve severe economic and social problems Abdullah uses the Palestinian issue to protect his rule over Jordan which is home to a Palestinian majority and roughly 1.5 million Syrian refugees who were taught to hate Israel.

In March this year, the King made clear he sees himself as the patron of Jerusalem, which he still seems to regard as a part of Jordan. "Jerusalem and the future of Palestine are a red line for Jordan. I don't think I can make it any clearer... As a Hashemite, how could I (possibly) relinquish Jerusalem? That is impossible. It is a red line. (I say) a resounding no to (relinquishing) Jerusalem," Abdullah said at the time.

Jordan announced last year that it would not extend the lease of the two parcels of land because of domestic opposition against the peace deal with Israel. At the same time, Jordan is careful not to end security cooperation with Israel because it fears an influx of Islamists from Syria. For this reason, both Jordan and Israel asked President Donald J. Trump to keep some US Special Forces in southern Syria near the Jordanian border.

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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.

Editorial Team

Andrew Tucker
International Editor-in-Chief
atucker@c4israel.org

Cathy Coldicutt
Managing Editor
newspaper@c4israel.org

Marloes van Westing
International Communications Manager
international@c4israel.org

Ian Worby, Bryce Turner, Rita Quartel,
James Patrick, Marie-Louise Weissenböck
and Marijke Terlouw

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C4I Offices

Christians for Israel International
Leon Meijer, *Chairman*
Rev. Willem J.J. Glashouwer, *President*
Rev. Cornelis Kant, *Executive Director*
P.O. Box 1100 | 3860 BC Nijkerk,
The Netherlands | Tel: +31 33 422 0405
info@c4israel.org | www.c4israel.org

The English Edition of *Israel & Christians Today* is published by the following English speaking branches:

Christians for Israel - Australia
Ian Worby, *National Leader*
PO Box 1508, Springwood
Queensland, Australia 4127
Tel: +61 402 277 930, info@c4israel.com.au
www.c4israel.com.au


Christians for Israel - New Zealand
Bryce Turner, *National Executive Director*
PO Box 12 006, Penrose,
Auckland, New Zealand 1642
Tel: +64 9 525 7564, info@c4israel.org.nz
www.c4israel.org.nz

Christians for Israel - United Kingdom
PO Box 789, Sutton Coldfield
West Midlands B73 5FX, United Kingdom
Tel: +44 121 647 3710, ukinfo@c4israel.org

Christians for Israel - USA
Fred J van Westing, *CEO*
PO Box 2589, Manteca, CA 95336, USA
Tel/Fax: +1 209 665 4280
fredvanwesting@c4israel.org
www.c4israel.us

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Fourth Beast with Ten Horns

■ Andrew Tucker

International Editor | Christians for Israel

The fourth beast with ten horns (Daniel 7)

The past two months have seen some very significant geopolitical developments. The global landscape is changing dramatically, and a number of new global power blocks are emerging.

Since the exit of foreign policy hawk and regime-change advocate John Bolton, under President Trump, the US is pursuing a policy of non-intervention in the Middle East. The US sudden pull-out from northeast Syria in October gave room to Turkey to move in and wipe out Kurdish populations. Notwithstanding the various US initiatives to support Israel in its negotiations with the Palestinians (e.g. the move of the US embassy to Jerusalem, and the latest policy announcement that the US no longer considers Israeli settlements to contravene international law), many in Israel are sceptical of how far Israel can rely on this Administration.

Turkey, in fact, is emerging out of all of this as a major player in the region. Even President Trump is flirting with President Erdogan, whom he calls “a hell of a leader”. At the same time, Erdogan met in October in Sochi with Russian President Putin, who is no friend of the West. As commentator Con Coughlin has observed, “the two countries have agreed to work together on the post-conflict carve-up of Syria, one that is designed to bolster the interests of both Russia and Turkey at the expense of the Syrian Kurds who were, until recently, regarded as vital allies of the US and other NATO member states in the fight against ISIS.”

International relations analyst Emil Avdaliani recently observed that Russia could emerge from the chaos in Eurasia as the dominant player: “The geopolitical landscape is changing fast across the Eurasian landmass. As it did over the centuries, Russia will continue to position itself at a distance from the rising warring camps of China and the Western powers.



Israeli citizens of different political stripes demonstrate outside the Knesset, Israeli Parliament, to demand the creation of a unity government on November 18, 2019

Each needs Moscow, and the Kremlin knows it. Chaos in the super-continent could usher in an era of a much stronger Russian role in northern Eurasia, though it would have a more limited scope than that envisioned among the Kremlin elites.”

In the meantime, on Israel’s northern border, Lebanon is imploding. Facing massive protests, the government has resigned, and the country has fallen into economic and political crisis, with (at the date of writing) no sign of a new government yet. This could open up a vacuum to be filled by Hezbollah. With an arsenal of tens of thousands of rockets and missiles, Iran’s proxy Hezbollah is committed to Israel’s destruction.

Europe, as usual, turns a blind eye to these dangers and is persisting in its policies which run counter to Israel’s interests. One of those is its determination to impose the two-state solution, based on the ‘1967 lines’. The other is Europe’s commitment to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPA) with Iran, and policy of downplaying Iran’s nuclear program and fostering economic relations with Iran.

This is problematic to Israel because Iran – in coordination with its proxies close to Israel’s borders, such as Hezbollah, Hamas and Islamic Jihad - is the main existential threat to Israel. Former Israeli ambassador to the US Michael Oren has described in alarming detail how a conflict between

Israel and Iran could easily be sparked and descend into a massive conflagration, devastating Israel and other countries in the region. Israel is already girding for a war with the Islamic Republic and has carried out hundreds of strikes against Iran-linked targets in Lebanon, Syria and Iraq. A single miscalculation during one of those airstrikes could draw retaliation by Iran, Oren wrote in a column recently published in The Atlantic. “Israeli troops, especially in the north, have been placed on war footing. Israel is girding for the worst and acting on the assumption that fighting could break out at any time. And it’s not hard to imagine how it might arrive. The conflagration, like so many in the Middle East, could be ignited by a single spark.” This might sound like scaremongering, but Oren is not alone in warning of the possibility of large-scale conflict in the region.

Of course, we don’t know how all of this is going to play out, but the kings of *Daniel 7* may be emerging. Possibly we are seeing the gradual fulfilment of the prophecies in *chapters 38 and 39* of the book of *Ezekiel* concerning ‘Gog and Magog’ – which, one way or another, will involve Russia, Turkey and Iran, as well as Libya (Put) and Sudan (Cush), moving against Israel. We should definitely keep our eyes on these developments, ask the Lord for discernment, and pray with increasing fervour for the peace of Jerusalem.

Prayer Points

By Pieter Bénard

Israel

- Pray that Israel will soon have a new government; that the new government will govern the country well and that it will trust in God, not in man.
- There is again tension in the borderlands of Turkey and Syria. Israel’s enemies see opportunities to increase their territories with force, creating instability in the region. Pray that God will protect Israel through it all.
- “For God’s gifts and His call are irrevocable” (*Romans 11:29*). Thank God for His calling of and His faithfulness to Israel.
- The Jewish people will celebrate Hanukkah, the feast of the renewal (cleansing) of the Temple, from 22-30 December. The lesson that we as Christians may learn from this feast is victory of light over darkness. Pray for safe and good festival days.

Israel & the Nations

- The growing threat of Iran is a source of concern in Israel. Iran not only threatens Israel directly but also through terror organisations such as Hamas and Hezbollah. Pray that Iran will not attack Israel. If Iran does, then pray for Israel to respond appropriately and that there will be no casualties.

- Anti-Semitism in many European countries is on the rise. Many countries are considering adopting laws that ban ritual slaughter and circumcision. Pray for protection of Jews in Europe and around the world, that they will have religious freedom.
- “Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall; He lifts His voice, the earth melts” (*Psalms 46:6*). Thank God that He is much more powerful than the nations of the earth. Pray that the nations will know who God is and that He takes care of His people.

Christians for Israel

- Praise God for all the opportunities Christians for Israel has in many nations to spread the message of God’s faithfulness to Israel.
- Give thanks that we have the opportunity to be involved in aliyah in a practical way. “This is what the Sovereign Lord says: ‘See, I will beckon to the nations, I will lift up my banner to the peoples; they will bring your sons in their arms and carry your daughters on their hips.’” (*Isaiah 49:22*). Let this be our active response.

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

Short News

More than Hummus



The demand for vegetable products is increasing. A growing number of people realise that animal products harm the environment. Hummus, the typical Middle Eastern chickpea paste is already hugely popular. The Israeli company InnovoPro pioneered possible applications for chickpeas and developed chickpea milk, which has no after-taste and has various uses. | Photo: InnovoPro

Solar Park in Mozambique

Mozambique is one of the poorest countries in the world. One of the obstacles to escaping poverty is the lack of electricity in large parts of the country. The Israeli organisation Interfaith Center for Sustainable Development has joined forces with multinational Gigawatt Global and the national Anglican Church. Together they want to create a solar park from which many inhabitants of the area will be provided with a stable source of electricity.

World Cup 2022



If the history of sports tells us anything about the Arab world, it is that Israeli sportsmen are not particularly welcome. Therefore StandWithUs is worried about the World Cup 2022 that will be held in Qatar. The organisation fears that Israeli supporters are not welcome or safe in the Gulf State. By addressing the international football union FIFA, the organisation hopes that access and security will be guaranteed for Israelis. | Photo: AFL Architects

Clay Seal of Adonia

During archaeological excavations in the City of David in Jerusalem, the place where King David's royal palace stood in Biblical times; a clay seal was recently found inscribed as belonging to "Adonia, the royal stadtholder". In those excavations many archaeological finds have been made that endorse Biblical history.

Online Exhibition

September 2019 marked eighty years since the start of the Second World War which began with the German invasion in Poland. Yad Vashem has established an online exhibition focusing on the events which occurred at the time, based on memories and testimonies of survivors.

Israeli Labelling Rules by EU

■ Tomas Sandell

Founding Director | European Coalition for Israel (ECI)

The European Court of Justice ruled on Tuesday 12 November that EU law requires that products from Jewish settlements in the so-called West Bank cannot carry the label 'Made in Israel' but must be labelled as a product originating from an 'Israeli settlement'.

The ruling came only two days after Jewish communities across Europe have commemorated the 81st anniversary of the 'Kristallnacht' on 9-10 November 1938, during which over 7000 Jewish businesses across Germany were marked, damaged, looted or completely destroyed.

The EU court ruling is counterproductive to peace and a gift to radical forces in Europe and the Middle East who want to isolate, boycott and delegitimise the State of Israel and demonise the Jewish people.

When the European Commission, in November 2015, adopted an 'interpretative notice' on the indication of origin of goods from the West Bank territories occupied by Israel since June 1967, it was said to be motivated by consumer protection. In the ruling, the court added that this consumer information "could influence consumers' purchasing decisions", some of whom choose not to buy products because of "ethical considerations and considerations relating to the observance of international law".

That statement echoed calls from some of the darkest chapters of European history when the labelling of Jewish businesses

with a Star of David was also seen as a form of consumer information.

The Court's latest ruling sends the wrong message to European citizens at a time when anti-Semitism has reached alarming levels in the EU-member countries, and where the dispute between Israelis and Palestinians is seen as a catalyst for fuelling Jew-hatred.

In a recent survey in Sweden, over 85% of those polled considered that the current Middle East conflict directly influenced how they view the domestic Jewish population. By insinuating that Israeli economic activities in the disputed territories are unethical, and require special labels, the EU helps fuel this sense of suspicion.

Instead of promoting economic cooperation between Israelis and Palestinians, the EU seems to prefer to advance division by making industrial activities in the territories increasingly difficult. Following the 'interpretative notice' from the European Commission in 2015, the Israeli company Soda Stream had to relocate their factories from the disputed territories, leaving behind 600 unemployed Palestinians. It is estimated that up to 25,000 Palestinians are dependent for their livelihood on jobs in Israeli companies in the disputed territories of the West Bank.

The court decision is a blow to these



Palestinians and to all other moderate forces in the region who want to see business cooperation as a tool for peace and co-existence.

The US State Department has expressed grave concern over the court decision in that it exposes an anti-Israel bias and encourages the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement.

Meanwhile a spokesperson for the European Commission defended its position by stating that "the EU rejects any form of boycott or sanctions against Israel."

For more information, visit: www.ec4i.org

EU and US Clash on Legality of Settlements

■ Andrew Tucker

Director | The Hague Initiative for International Cooperation (thinc.)

The EU and US now have diametrically opposed views on whether Israeli policy on settlements in the "occupied territories" is legal.

The European Court of Justice decided on 12 November 2019 that the 'occupied Palestinian territories' are not part of Israel. Therefore products imported into Europe from those territories may not be labelled 'made in Israel'. In the Court's view, Israeli settlements are 'illegal', and products from settlements must be labelled as such. The Court said that consumers need to be informed if the place from which the products emanate somehow is in breach of fundamental rules of international law. This is a far-reaching decision. It means all 'occupied' territories – such as Taiwan (China), Ukraine (Russia), Western Sahara (Morocco) and Tibet (China) - do not belong to the occupier, and 'settlements' in those territories could

be illegal. As Psagot's lawyers argue, the case opens up a 'Pandora's box' of problems. How are European importers of products to know when international law is being breached, or determine what consumers want to be informed about?

The EU position that Israeli settlements are illegal stands in direct contrast with the announcement several days later on 18th November by US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo that the US no longer considers the establishment of Israeli settlements 'per se inconsistent with international law'. The announcement goes back to the policy of the Reagan administration and reverses the policy implemented by President Obama. Pompeo said: "After carefully studying all sides of the legal debate, this administration agrees with President Reagan. The establishment of Israeli civilian settlements in the West Bank is not per se inconsistent with international law." Pompeo said "we recognise that, as Israeli courts have, the legal conclusions relating to individual settlements must depend on

an assessment of specific facts and circumstances on the ground. Therefore, the United States Government is expressing no view on the legal status of any individual settlement."

Pompeo also stressed the US is "not addressing or prejudging the ultimate status of the West Bank. This is for the Israelis and the Palestinians to negotiate. International law does not compel a particular outcome, nor create any legal obstacle to a negotiated resolution...The conclusion that we will no longer recognise Israeli settlements as per se inconsistent with international law is based on the unique facts, history, and circumstances presented by the establishment of civilian settlements in the West Bank. Our decision today does not prejudice or decide legal conclusions regarding situations in any other parts of the world."

Pompeo concluded that "calling the establishment of civilian settlements inconsistent with international law hasn't worked."

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It hasn't advanced the cause of peace. The hard truth is there will never be a judicial resolution to the conflict, and arguments about who is right and wrong as a matter of international law will not bring peace. This is a complex political problem that can only be solved by negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians. The United States remains deeply committed to helping facilitate peace, and I will do everything I can to help this cause. The United States encourages the Israelis and the Palestinians to resolve the status of Israeli settlements in the West Bank in any final status negotiations."

Although Pompeo did not state the reasons why the US no longer considers Israeli settlement policy illegal, the position that their establishment does not necessarily infringe international law reflects, in our view, a much more accurate and balanced view of international law than the EU position.

There are several reasons why the US position is to be preferred, and the EU position is mistaken.

'The occupied territories are not part of the territory of Israel'

The Court reasons that 'under the rules of international humanitarian law, these territories are subject to a limited jurisdiction of the State of Israel, as an occupying power, while each has its own international status distinct from that of that State.' Further, the European Court states that 'the West Bank is a territory whose people, namely the Palestinian people, enjoy the right to self-determination.' All of this means, according to the Court, that these territories are not 'in Israel', and therefore products originating from these territories may not bear the label 'made in Israel'.

These statements are astounding in their incompleteness and inaccuracy.

First, it is questionable whether all of these territories are 'occupied' within the meaning of the law of occupation. The argument consistently made by Israel and others is that the territories captured by Israel in June 1967 are not 'occupied' because when Israel captured the territories, they did not belong to another state. The law of occupation, it is argued, only applies when there is a state of belligerency (i.e. war) between two states. This argument has, admittedly, been rejected by most international tribunals and organisations (such as the International Red Cross), but it is not an unreasonable proposition. The Court does not even address it.

But, secondly, and perhaps more importantly, even if these territories are 'occupied' within the meaning of the law of belligerent occupation, this does not necessarily mean they cannot be part of the State of Israel. The law of occupation does not make the occupation itself illegal (as many seem to assume). Clearly an occupying power cannot obtain valid legal title to territory by means of the occupation, but the law of occupation does not say anything about the **prior** territorial sovereign status of the territory. It simply imposes certain obligations and prohibitions on the occupying power, which are to be respected pending the finalisation of a peace treaty to resolve the dispute. It is quite possible under international law for territory to be **both** 'occupied' **and** 'disputed'.

Both Israel and the Palestinians make claims to sovereignty over these territories. Admittedly, Israel has not been very clear or effective in its claims. Its agreement in 1967 to 'voluntarily' apply the law of belligerent occupation to the territories has muddied the waters. But Israel has never completely abandoned its claims to sovereignty over these territories. The question of where Israel's borders lie – the geographical scope of its 'territorial integrity' – is a matter between Israel and its neighbours. It is not up to the European Court of Justice to decide on this.

The arguments that some, if not all, the territories captured in 1967 already belonged to the territory of Israel, is based primarily on the Mandate for Palestine (1922). The argument is essentially that the State of Israel emerged in May 1948 as a result of the Mandate for Palestine (1922), the core purpose of which was the creation of a 'Jewish homeland in Palestine'. The Mandate—an international treaty ratified by all 51 member states of the League of Nations in 1922—conferred on the Jewish people the right to settle in the territory of 'Palestine' – which initially



Panoramic view of Gush Etzion, an Israeli settlement. | Photo: Shutterstock

included all territory west and some of the territory east of the Jordan River. It was undoubtedly intended that Jews should have a right to live in what is now known as 'East Jerusalem' and the 'West Bank' (known to the Jews as 'Judea and Samaria'). After termination of the Mandate, and pending the establishment of a Trusteeship (which, in the case of Palestine, never happened), Article 80 of the UN Charter expressly preserved the pre-existing rights of the Jewish people under the Mandate.

When Israel was created on 14 May 1948, upon the termination of the Mandate, its borders were arguably – on the basis of the principle of *uti possidetis juris* – the pre-existing administrative boundaries under the Mandate – in accordance with the same principle that has determined the borders of all other States emerging out of Mandates – such as Iraq, Syria and Lebanon – as well as many other states in the world.

It is quite possible under international law for territory to be both 'occupied' and 'disputed'.

Jordan (with other Arab states) attacked the infant State of Israel on 15 May 1948, resulting in Jordan's control of East Jerusalem and the West Bank until 1967. This attack was clearly illegal and could not have resulted in Jordan acquiring any territorial sovereignty over these territories. So when, in effect, Jordan 'abandoned' its claims to East Jerusalem and the West Bank in the late 1980s in favour of the Palestinians, it could not confer on the Palestinians more rights than it itself possessed.

Further, it is simply not true – as the European Court suggests – that the Palestinian people have an absolute 'right' to self-determination in all of the territories captured by Israel in 1967. On the contrary, international law requires that the right to self-determination cannot infringe the territorial integrity or security of neighbouring states. Israel has consistently argued that it has a right to secure borders (this is a legal right, as was conceded in UN Security Council resolution 242 in 1967) and that the '1967 lines' are indefensible. Particularly Israel argues that it must have control of areas around Jerusalem and the Jordan Valley in order to be able to defend itself against both against Palestinian terror and the threat of attack from beyond the Jordan River. This is a complex matter, and no international institution – not even the UN Security Council or the International Court of Justice – has the knowledge needed to make that call. In any event, no international institution has the right to make a binding determination on where a state's secure borders lie, without its consent.

The territorial scope of the Palestinian right to self-determination is precisely one of the topics of negotiation under the Oslo agreements. In the Oslo Accords, the PLO itself agreed to a process for achieving self-determination, in which it was agreed that issues like borders, settlements and Jerusalem would be the subject of permanent status negotiations.

'Israeli Settlements are Illegal'

According to the court, any product that 'comes from an Israeli settlement located in one of those territories' must

indicate that fact. This is because 'the settlements established in some of the territories occupied by the State of Israel are characterised by the fact that they give concrete expression to a policy of population transfer conducted by that State outside its territory, in violation of the rules of general international humanitarian law.'

Here again, the Court's reasoning is open to criticism.

First, as we have already observed, there are good arguments that these territories are not 'occupied' within the meaning of the law of belligerent occupation. But even if the territories are 'occupied' (as most – but not all – people seem to think), not all Israeli settlements in these territories are illegal. Under the law of belligerent occupation, it is only an Israeli policy to 'transfer or deport' Israeli civilians into those territories that could be said to be illegal (article 49(6) Fourth Geneva Convention). There is no clear evidence that Israel has a policy to 'deport' or 'transfer' its population into Judea and Samaria. At best, it can be argued that Israel encourages and facilitates Israeli's to live in the territories; but that is hardly the kind of 'deportation' or 'transfer' that was envisaged by the drafters of Article 49(6) of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

Even if such a policy exists, a particular settlement can only be regarded as the product of such a policy if it can be shown that the Israeli person or company concerned is living/working/residing in the occupied territory as a result of an Israeli policy to transfer or deport that person into the occupied territories. The fact is that many Israeli's living in these territories are doing so voluntarily. Their decision to do so was taken independently of Israeli government policy. The mere granting of government approval can hardly be regarded as 'deportation' or 'transfer' and thus is not sufficient to bring the government's actions within the purview of Article 49(6).

Because the label 'made in an Israeli settlement' is clearly intended to stigmatise the producer, the EU's policies have the perverse effect that they are penalising Israeli's who are seeking to establish productive businesses in the West Bank. Many Jews and Arabs simply want to live in peaceful co-existence, and there are many examples of Jewish/Arab partnerships in the territories. Most Israeli businesses in the territories employ Arab Palestinians and are aimed at growing the economy in the West Bank. Why is the EU so determined to undermine cooperation between Israeli's and Palestinians?

Moreover, the conclusion that all Israeli settlements are 'illegal' undermines the terms of the Oslo agreements, in which it was agreed that the status of settlements is a matter of negotiation. The EU policy on settlements is not only breaching Israel's rights to political independence and territorial integrity; it is undermining its right to negotiate under those agreements. As the EU was a witness to the Oslo agreements, the EU policy effectively breaches the EU's own commitments.

The Court's reasoning is deficient. It simply has no jurisdiction to make a determination that these territories do not belong to Israel. The most it should have done was to conclude that the status of the territories is disputed. The judgment interferes with difficult and complex matters of negotiation between two parties (Israel and the PLO).

Short News

Bridge & Tunnel
Disasters Prevented



Bridges are built for a service life of about 80 to 90 years. But bridges sometimes age unnoticed. People who are responsible for the safety of bridges and tunnels can now request a cloud-based 3D diagnosis in real-time thanks to the technology invented by the Israeli start-up Dynamic Infrastructure. The company's own image analysis compares current images of the structure with older images from previous regular inspections on a daily base and sends an automatic warning of potentially dangerous changes.
| Photo: israel21c

Higher Education
Funding Doubled

Since 2010, the budget for higher education has increased from about NIS 6.9 billion to NIS 11.8 billion, according to the Council for Higher Education (CHE) in Israel. The number of students has increased by 10% in the last nine years, with an increase in Arab enrolment of more than 100%. According to estimates, 313,600 students will pursue higher education courses across Israel's 61 educational institutions during the 2019/20 academic year. | Photo: Tel Aviv University

The Palestinian Islamic Jihad

■ Israeli Ministry of
Foreign Affairs

Israel is fighting against Islamic Jihad in Gaza. The most recent conflict erupted when Israel killed Baha Abu al-Ata, a senior commander in the terror group's military wing in Gaza, in a predawn airstrike. Israeli officials say Abu al-Ata was preparing multiple terror attacks against Israelis.

What is Palestinian Islamic Jihad?

The Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) is a radical Sunni terrorist organisation that receives financial and military support from Iran. The organisation grew out of a radical faction of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. It was formally established in Gaza in 1981 by Fathi Shaqaqi, a Rafah-based physician, and Sheikh Abd al-Aziz Awda, an Islamic preacher, together with Ramadan Shalah and other former members of the Muslim Brotherhood. The founders were influenced, among other things, by the Iranian Revolution. The armed wing of the PIJ is the Al-Quds Brigades, also established in 1981.

The goal of the PIJ is to annihilate Israel and replace it with a state governed by Sharia (Islamic religious) law in all of the territory in pre-1948 Mandatory Palestine. The means to achieve this goal is an armed struggle: the organisation rejects the political process.

The PIJ has an annual budget of \$100 million. Iran is the main sponsor of the organisation, transferring huge sums of money to the PIJ every year, along with advanced weapons and missiles such as the Fajr 5. Syria does not provide money or weapons to the PIJ but allows it to operate out of headquarters in Damascus.

PIJ's ideology is inspired by pan-Islamism, concepts drawn from both the Muslim

Brotherhood in Egypt and the Islamic Revolution in Iran, and Palestinian nationalism. It is ideologically opposed to the existence of the State of Israel and believes that jihad will bring about its two central goals: the destruction of Israel, and the establishment of an Islamic Palestinian state in its place.

While the PIJ and Hamas have similar goals, there are differences. Unlike Hamas and Fatah, PIJ refuses to engage in negotiations or the diplomatic process. It does not seek political representation within the Palestinian Authority. Thus, whereas Hamas chose to participate in the 2006 Palestinian Legislative Council elections, PIJ encouraged Palestinians to boycott the elections.

Like Hamas, PIJ conducts summer camps, mostly for high school students, placing emphasis on radical ideological indoctrination and paramilitary training. In an Islamic Jihad kindergarten, the children celebrate their graduation by dressing up in military uniforms, waving rifles, and declaring things like: "When I grow up, I'll fight the Zionist enemy. I want to blow myself up on Zionists and kill them on a bus in a suicide bombing."

The PIJ operates in the Gaza Strip and Judea and Samaria (the West Bank). Operation Defensive Shield, which was carried out by the IDF in 2002, and the enactment of the Disengagement Plan in 2005, significantly reduced the organisation's activity in Judea and Samaria (Westbank). As such, the organisation now focuses its activities in Gaza.

The PIJ's means of attack have changed over the years. Their original method, suicide bombings, became less and less effective as Israeli security forces and technology became more efficient at

preventing suicide bombings. Now, the organisation launches high-trajectory rockets and mortar shells (some of which are assembled by the PIJ itself) from the Gaza Strip into Israeli territory. The organisation also carries out shootings, places explosive devices on the border fence between Gaza and Israel, and digs attack tunnels into Israeli territory.

The PIJ was also involved in three armed conflicts with Israel in the Gaza Strip: Operation Cast Lead in 2009, Operation Pillar of Defense in 2012, and Operation Protective Edge in 2014. Moreover, since 2018, there has been a significant uptick in terrorist attacks perpetrated by the PIJ, including the launching of rockets from the Gaza Strip into Israel, stabbing attacks, and drive-by shootings.

PIJ has been designated as a terror organisation by EU, UK, the US, Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, and Israel.

Major Terrorist Attacks Carried
out by Palestinian Islamic Jihad:

- Suicide bombing, 1989:** on Tel Aviv-Jerusalem bus line 405, 16 killed.
- Bicycle bombing, 1994:** at Netzarim Junction, 3 killed.
- Bus attack, 1995:** at Kfar Adom, 8 killed.
- Suicide bombing, 1995:** at Beit Lid, 22 killed.
- Suicide bombing, 1996:** on Dizengoff Street in central Tel Aviv, 13 killed.
- Ambush, 2002:** at Hebron, 12 killed.
- Shooting, 2002:** from a settlement near the northern border, 6 killed.
- Shooting, 2002:** in Yeshivat Otniel, in the southern hills of Hebron, 4 killed.
- Suicide bombing, 2003:** at Maxim restaurant in Haifa, 21 killed.
- Suicide bombing, 2007:** at Eilat, 3 killed.

Anti-Semitism Sways Votes

■ Times of Israel Staff

Over two dozen British public figures, including authors, historians and actors, issued an open letter on 14 November, saying they could not vote for the Labour Party in upcoming elections due to the UK opposition party's anti-Semitism scandals.

The issue of anti-Semitism in Labour under far-left leader Jeremy Corbyn has featured prominently in the run-up to the December 12 elections, which are expected to be fought in large part on the issue of Brexit.

The letter, published in the Guardian, was signed by spy author John le Carré, Wikipedia founder Jimmy Wales, military historian Antony Beevor and actor Tom Holland, among others.

"We listen to our Jewish friends and see how their pain has been relegated as an issue, pushed aside by arguments about Britain's European future.

For those who insist that Labour is the only alternative to Boris Johnson's hard Brexit, now, it seems, is not the time for Jewish anxiety," the signatories wrote.

Fighting against racism
cannot be accompanied
by giving up on opposing
anti-Semitism

The letter said the issue of anti-Semitism was "central to a wider debate about the kind of country we want to be" and that to ignore it because of Brexit would signal that tolerating "anti-Jewish prejudice is a price worth paying for a Labour government."

"Which other community's concerns are disposable in this way? Who would be next?" it said.

"Fighting against racism cannot be accompanied by giving up on opposing anti-Semitism", wrote the letter's authors.

"Yet that is what it would mean to back Labour and endorse Mr Corbyn for Downing Street," they said. "The path to a more tolerant society must encompass Britain's Jews with unwavering solidarity."

While declining to endorse a party, the signatories said they could not "in all conscience" call on others to back a party they would not. "We refuse to vote Labour on 12 December," they wrote, some of whom had been vocal against Corbyn before the letter.

It also noted the investigation by the UK's Equality and Human Rights Commission into Labour for allegations of anti-Semitism and said Corbyn "has a long record of embracing anti-Semites as comrades."

In response, Labour noted a number of the signatories have expressed support for the Liberal Democrat and Conservative parties.

"We take allegations of anti-Semitism extremely seriously, we are taking robust

action, and we are absolutely committed to rooting it out of our party and wider society," a party spokesperson said.

Labour is facing accusations of anti-Semitism involving Corbyn, who has come under scrutiny for his alleged failure to stop the hate speech and for past actions in which he appeared to ignore, condone, or encourage it.

Following Corbyn's takeover of the party in 2015, hate speech against Jews and Israel began proliferating in Labour's ranks. Thousands of incidents have been recorded both by internal Labour groups like Labour Against Antisemitism, and external ones, including the Campaign Against Antisemitism.

Some of the accusations stem from Corbyn's past support for pro-Palestinian causes and refusal to adopt a universally accepted definition of anti-Semitism — a position he has since partly revised.

Times of Israel originally published this article on 15th November 2019.

The Outcry - Psalm 2 - Part 7b

■ Johannes Gerloff
Theologian, Journalist, Lecturer & Author

This article is the seventh instalment (second part) in a series of contributions to the interpretation of Psalm 2.

The psalmist pleads: first, “Come to your senses!” (verse 10); second, “Serve the Lord” (verse 11); and third, “Kiss the ‘Bar’” (verse 12a).

Who is the ‘Bar’? And what does it mean to kiss him? To kiss is equivalent to do homage. Samuel kisses Saul (1 Samuel 10:1), saying that thereby he does homage to him. In Acts 10:25-26 the Roman centurion Cornelius falls to the ground before Peter, paying homage to him. Radak recalls the ancient custom of slaves kissing their master’s hand.

According to Amos Hakham, ‘Kiss Bar’ is to be interpreted according to Psalm 18:21. There it says, ‘According to the purity of my hands (kevor yadai) reward me.’ ‘Bar’ is written in Hebrew exactly in the same way as the word ‘purity’ (bor) in Psalm 18:21. Hakham decides: ‘Kiss Bar’ is to be interpreted as “kiss purity”, because in worship there is no room for a real kiss, but only for a symbolic kiss, in order to adhere to purity.”

In these statements, the Israeli exegete follows a broad tradition of interpretation, which can be traced back both in Judaism and Christianity. Martin Luther points out that “Jerome had translated in the Hebrew Psalter: Worship in a pure way, because [bar] also means pure and chosen.”

Ibn Ezra derives the request ‘kiss’ (nashqu) from the Hebrew word for ‘weapon’ (nesheq) and suggests: “That would then mean: put on the weapons of the son, that is, pure weapons”. This medieval Spanish linguist and interpreter thus returns again to ‘bar’ as ‘barei levay’, that is, those who are of ‘purity in heart’.

Luther originally had translated Psalm 2, 12a: “Kiss the Son, that He may not be furious, and you may perish on the way.” For this translation He also refers to Jerome in his Latin commentary: “Kissing’, however, they explain as paying homage, so that the meaning is: ‘Kiss the Son’, i.e., receive with honour and humility the King and Lord Christ.”

Some interpreters are against this translation for grammatical reasons. However, Ibn Ezra points to the fact, that in terms of content the ‘serve the Lord’ (verse 11) corresponds with the ‘against the Lord’ (verse 2), as likewise the ‘kiss the son’ corresponds with ‘against his Anointed One’. And Radak explains, that ‘bar’ ‘is to be understood like ‘ben’ [son], as it is written in Proverbs 31:2: “What, my son (beri), what, son of my womb (bar-bitni), what, son of my vows (bar-nedarai) [shall I tell you?].” Obviously in this Hebrew text the word ‘bar’ is used three times meaning ‘son’.



Prayer shawl - Tallit Jewish religious symbol and Jewish Prayer | Photo: Shutterstock

Radak then paraphrases the statement of the messianic personality in Psalm 2:12 as follows: “What do you have against me? I am pure-hearted. There is no fault in me that you come to me and fight against me. Instead, you should kiss me, pay homage to me, and acknowledge gratefully, that I am king by order of God.”

That the Gentile nations, rebelling against the living God and His Messiah, are called upon to kiss the Son, may be acceptable on some of the hermeneutical levels explained at the beginning of this interpretation of Psalm 2. But does that apply to all suggested levels?

It is conceivable that the Philistines had to pay homage to King David. Similarly, that the Gentiles had to submit to the Judean king. For Christians, it is also comprehensible that Psalm 2:12 describes the worship of the Christ Jesus, in whose name all knees shall bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth. Every tongue will once confess “that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:10-11).

But does this ‘kiss the Son’ also apply to Israel as Son of God? Does this even apply to the relationship of Gentile nations with the Jewish people? May it even be giving a guideline for the attitude of the Christian church towards the nation of Israel?

A similar picture like Psalm 2:12 can be found in Isaiah 49:23. There, Gentile peoples and their kings and queens come and fall down before Israel. The Prophet foresees:

“With their nose on the ground, they worship you and lick the dust of your feet.” The consequence of this attitude of Gentile believers in the God of Israel on the side of the Jewish people will be: “There you will realise: I am the Lord. Whosoever hopes for me will not be ashamed.”

Could it be that we as non-Jews are called upon in Psalm 2:12 to pay homage to the Jewish people, ‘to kiss’ them, ‘to lick their feet’? And maybe we should do that, not because we idolize some human beings, but simply because we take seriously God’s choice: His plan and the salvation-historical causal relationships—that His word reveal to us? And maybe we should behave like that because we care about the relationship between the people of Israel and the God of Israel; because we long to see Israel come ‘to know’ that the Lord is God. Maybe that should be more important to us than being right or respected or honoured?

Perhaps, we should also allow Israel the honour given to it by the living God Himself, ‘lest He be angry’ and we ‘perish on the way’ (Psalm 2:12b-c). For the living God is a holy God who ‘cannot be mocked. Whatever a man sows, he will reap.’ This is not a statement about an ‘Old Testament God’ whose wrathful nature has been ‘surmounted’ on Golgotha. Paul wrote it to Gentile believers in Yeshua who lived in Galatia in Asia Minor (Galatians 6:7). ‘For his wrath is kindled shortly’ (Psalm 2:12d).

The full text of this article, including extensive footnotes, can be found at www.c4israel.org/teaching-articles/

The Jewish Origins of Christmas

■ Dr James E Patrick
Author | Theologian | Speaker

Increasing numbers of Christians who value their Jewish spiritual heritage are turning away from Christmas, believing it to have been derived from a winter solstice festival established on 25 December in AD 274 by the pagan Roman emperor Aurelian as *natalis solis invicti*, the birth of the Unconquerable Sun. This is the time when the days start to become longer, and the sun god supposedly proves his strength. The argument about pagan origins for Christmas was first made by a mid-eighteenth-century Protestant theologian, who wanted to prove that Christ-mass was a degenerate Catholic superstition that should be rejected. A century earlier, Puritans had similarly banned Christmas as too boisterous and too Catholic. Nowadays the supposed pagan derivation of Christmas

has been taken up eagerly by atheists and pagans who want to take credit for the popular winter festival. But does history bear out their claim? It is true that the (in)famous emperor Constantine, who converted the Roman empire to Christianity from AD 312 onwards, had earlier been a keen worshipper of Sol Invictus. No doubt this influenced his observation of 25 December as the birthday of his unconquerable god Jesus Christ. But Christmas apparently had good Jewish-Christian roots, long before its association with sun-worship.¹ Rabbis in the Talmud (*b. Rosh Hashana 11a*; *b. Kiddushin 38a*) observed that Moses apparently died on the day of his birth (*Deuteronomy 31:2, 32:48-50*), concluding that this perfect numerical fulfilment is granted to all truly righteous people (*Exodus 23:26*). Early Christians were influenced by Jewish traditions, but in *Luke 1-2* they also

saw God’s emphasis on the conceptions of John the Baptist and of Jesus six months later, both following angelic visitations. They recognised that God actually treats conception rather than birth as the start of life, since John the Baptist rejoiced in Jesus’ presence even before birth. In that case, they decided that the accepted date of Jesus’ crucifixion on 14 Nisan must have been His conception date too, since He was the righteous ‘prophet like Moses’ (*Deuteronomy 18:15-19*). Eastern (Greek-speaking) and Western (Latin-speaking) Christians differed over the date of the crucifixion in the Roman calendar, settling on 6 April and 25 March respectively. With this date for both His death and His conception, birth would happen exactly nine months later.

Continued on page 10

The Light of the Menorah to Israel

■ Marie-Louise Weissenböck

Christians for Israel Austria

The largest Menorah of Europe reached its final destination in September: in the city of Sderot. It will be officially inaugurated on 17 December, five days before Hanukkah, the Jewish Festival of Lights.

Background

Seven years ago, three Dutch entrepreneurs accepted the challenge of Christians for Israel Netherlands and Chief Rabbi Binyomin Jacobs to build the largest menorah in Europe. Just a few weeks later, the twelve-meter-high menorah (an eight-armed Hanukkiah) was erected in front of the head office of Christians for Israel, as a sign of solidarity with the Jewish community. It was inaugurated at Hanukkah by Chief Rabbi Jacobs and the then Israeli Ambassador to the Netherlands, H.E. Haim Divon. In the following six years the Menorah travelled to different places in the Netherlands: It stood in the cities of Lelystad, Leeuwarden, Urk, Maastricht and even in front of the Peace Palace in The Hague. Every year many people who love and support Israel came to see the Menorah.

Final Destination

Together with the Jewish Agency for Israel, the leadership of Christians for Israel Netherlands decided about a year ago that it was time to bring the Menorah to a place where it can be seen every day, to a place where it belongs: Israel! Its permanent location is an area that is continuously threatened by terror and rockets from Gaza. The light of the menorah in Sderot serves as an encouragement for the people who have been living with terror attacks for many years. "After unspeakable suffering, the horrors of the Holocaust and the recent attacks on Israel, the Jewish people may feel alone. This is our way of saying you are not alone, we stand with you," said Arjen Lont, entrepreneur, when the menorah was erected in Sderot in September. The Menorah stands in the middle of a roundabout in a residential area.

Inauguration: 17 December

The Menorah will be inaugurated at nightfall on 17 December in the presence of the Dutch Chief Rabbi, Binyomin Jacobs, the Mayor of Sderot, Alon Davidi, board members of Christians for Israel, Heads of the

Jewish Agency for Israel and Keren Hayesod, as well as friends from Israel and from all over Europe. "May the light of the Menorah brighten the lives of the people of Sderot," is the wish of Roger van Oordt, Executive Director of Christians for Israel Netherlands.

"As Jews and Christians, we want to exalt the God of Israel and spread His light".



C4I Europe Director Receives WIZO Award

The Women International Zionist Organisation (WIZO) has awarded one of its prestigious Gold Awards to Marie-Louise Weissenböck.

Marie-Louise Weissenböck, a musician who was born and raised in South Africa, is Austrian Chairperson, European Director and International Board member of Christians for Israel International - a global network of Christians who seek to bring Biblical understanding in the Church concerning God's faithfulness to the nation of Israel and to promote comfort of Israel and the Jewish people through prayer and action.

The award was given at the *WIZO One Night for Children* event in the Viennese City Hall, under the patronage of the Mayor of Vienna, on Sunday evening, 6 October, 2019. The keynote speaker at this event was Hillel Neuer, Executive Director of UN Watch in Geneva.

WIZO was founded in 1920 in direct response to the needs of women and children in Israel. WIZO continues

to identify the needs of Israeli society and creates solutions to meet them. With 250,000 members, WIZO is a prominent global Zionist organisation, and an important agent of change for women, children and youth in Israel.

Three people were awarded the WIZO Gold Award in Vienna: H.E. Talya Lador-Fresher, Ambassador of Israel to Austria; Hillel Neuer; and Marie-Louise Weissenböck.

Chairperson of the WIZO board, Caroline Shklarek-Zelman, praised Weissenböck's outstanding commitment to Israel, her special relationship with the Jewish community in Austria, and her many initiatives over recent years to fight anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism.

The event was attended by Austria's Chief Rabbi Paul Chaim Eisenberg; President of the Jewish community in Vienna (*Israelitische Kultusgemeinde*) Oskar Deutsch; and Jewish friends of WIZO.

In response, Weissenböck said "I want to thank WIZO and the Jewish community in Vienna for this award. It is



such an honour and privilege as a Christian to be able to serve the Jewish people and the State of Israel, and to show our love in acts of solidarity and service."

C4I's Newspaper Launched in South Korea

■ Cornelis Kant

Executive Director | Christians for Israel International

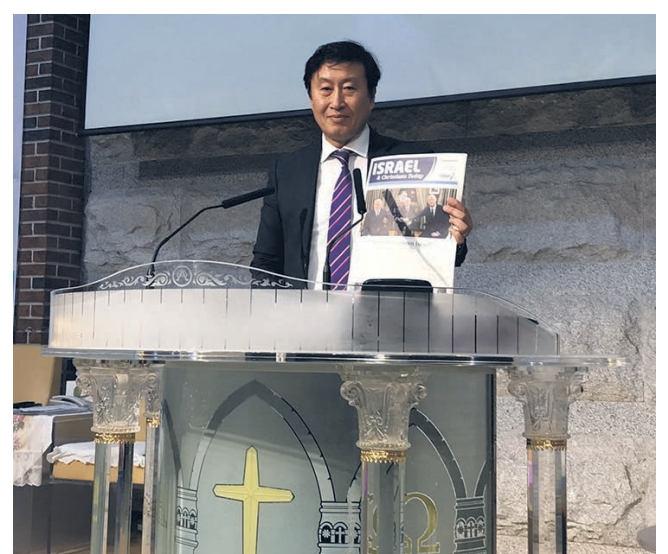
A new country has been added to the list of countries that are publishing the Christians for Israel newspaper, *Israel & Christians Today*, in their native language: South Korea. We are very grateful for that. Pastor Paul Jung has a Korean background and has been serving Korean churches in Sydney, Australia, for many years. He has a warm heart for Israel and the Jewish people. Years ago, he ensured the books of Rev. Willem Glashouwer *Why Israel?* and *Why End Times?* were translated into Korean, and is now keen to publish our newspaper for Korean readers in Australia and South Korea.

In a special Church service in a Presbyterian Church in Seoul, Paul Jung presented the newspaper on Sunday, 17 November. On Monday, 18 November a special conference took place in the Sarang Church in Seoul, which was attended by pastors, professors, and church leaders. During this conference Cornelis Kant spoke

about the existence of a Christian theology in which Israel had no significance anymore and Paul Jung spoke about the relationship between Christians and Jews in Australia.

The Korean edition of our *Israel & Christians Today* newspaper was presented and well received. South Korea has about 50 million inhabitants, and 30% of them are Christian. Seoul has big congregations with tens of thousands of members with many church services on Sundays. It would be wonderful if many of them would be willing to distribute the Korean edition of our newspaper. South Korea has a variety of Israel-related organisations but our newspaper, with its balance of profound articles about Israel from a biblical perspective, is unique in its kind. In 2020 three editions will be published. Paul Jung has established a small team of pastors and friends who are dedicated to promote and distribute the newspaper, who need need our support and prayer. We pray the newspaper may contribute to a

deepening of the reader's awareness of God's wonderful plan for Israel and the world.



Paul Jung presenting the *Israel & Christians Today* newspaper in Seoul

Visit to Vanuatu - 'Isles Afar Off'

■ **Keith Buxton**
Christians for Israel Australia

Following my visit earlier this year to the Solomon Islands, it was a real delight to fly recently to the beautiful country of Vanuatu, a South Pacific nation made up of around 80 islands that stretch across 1,300km. Prior to independence from the UK and France in 1980, the archipelago was known as the New Hebrides. The 300,000 Melanesian people who live there are warm, friendly, and hospitable.

On 12 September, Trixie and I were invited to a meeting in the capital Port Vila of the Port Vila Ministers' Fraternal, where we introduced ourselves and the ministry of Christians for Israel (C4I) to about a dozen pastors. How important it is for the message of Israel to reach Christians in these far-flung islands, in fulfilment of *Jeremiah 31:10*, "Hear the word of the Lord, O nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, 'He who scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him as a shepherd does his flock.'"

And so, I shared about the importance of standing with Israel and the Jewish people. I also talked about the planned tour next year to Israel with others from the Pacific Islands region, which has been designed to be affordable for Christians from these island nations and clearly interested those present.

It was intentionally a relationship-building time. Encouragingly, there was sufficient general interest from a number of those present to ask me to bring a one-hour teaching and video presentation a few days later.

We then had lunch with the Chairman of the Vanuatu Christian Council (VCC). This lunch meeting was valuable, as it enabled us to establish a clear acceptance of C4I by the VCC. It was important for key church leaders to learn about C4I and to see that we are a credible



Christian ministry.

The Vanuatu Christian Council is a non-government organisation made up of seven member churches, plus the Bible Society and Scripture Union. I was interested in finding out that the Presbyterian Church is the largest Christian denomination in Vanuatu - one-third of the country's population are Presbyterian, probably because it is the only denomination that established a theological seminary in Vanuatu and concentrated on educating the local people.

Church leaders from various denominations attended the second meeting (photo above). I gave the requested presentation, spoke about C4I and also more about the

planned tour, and responded to a range of questions. This was followed by fellowship around a shared meal.

The level of acceptance of C4I among the pastors that we met during our visit to Vanuatu was encouraging. It was good to talk specifically about the initial process for establishing a C4I presence in Vanuatu as a countrywide ministry under the auspices of the Vanuatu Christian Council, a step that would be consistent with the views of key leaders with whom I spoke.

Also encouraging is the expressed desire by these leaders for a follow-up visit. Do pray that the foundations laid during this visit will prove to be fruitful and much blessed by God in the coming months.

Vital Teaching Touches Hearts in Japan

■ **Chan Siew Fong**
Regional Trainer | Christians for Israel Asia

The 7th Asia Pacific Training and Leadership Conference was held at Jesus Ministry Christ Nations Church, in Kitahiroshimacho, a scenic rural area, 46 km from the city of Hiroshima in south-west Japan. From 21 to 23 November, 48 Japanese participants from all over Japan and 58 participants from other countries in Asia, Africa and America soaked in biblical truths about Israel which they had not heard before.

"I will keep spreading the message about Israel when I go back..."

The two largest contingents came from Pakistan (22) and the Philippines (20); other nations represented were Nepal, India, Sri Lanka, Cameroon, Nigeria, Myanmar, USA and Saudi Arabia. The conference was organised by Pastor Mimi Hagiwara and her efficient staff. *Why Israel?* was translated into Japanese by Dr Takashi Yoshida.

The teaching team consisted of Reverend Cornelis Kant, Marie-Louise Weissenböck, Reverend Dr Conrado Lumahan, Reverend Dr Wilson Ng, Chan Kuen Yoon and Chan Siew Fong. New offerings included a study of Ruth by Marie-Louise Weissenböck, 'Menorah and the Cross' by Reverend Dr Conrado Lumahan and a Question and Answer session.

The feedback received from conference participants has been encouraging. Ruka Matsuura, on behalf of the

Japanese delegates reported: "We have had great lessons. We now have deep insights on the significance of Israel. We have been reading the bible and seen 'Israel' mentioned many times but we had no deep understanding. Now, the mystery has been revealed and we understand what Israel is all about."

Noliber Gngeh from Cameroon: "...great messages...I have learnt so much about the significance of Israel...met great people - Indians, Japanese, Americans etc...I will keep spreading the message about Israel when I go back..."

Pastor Irfan Shahzad, a Pakistani: "I am really blessed. I have never heard such teaching on Israel in my 20 years of ministry. I got the conviction to translate Reverend Willem's books into Urdu as a seed to plant in this ministry."

Philip, a Nigerian residing in the Philippines: "The teaching in this conference about Israel is amazing. Food is good. The people are nice. The atmosphere is great."

Rommel Delfino, Hawaiian living in Kyoto: "It has been amazing...fresh revelations...I am going to start to pray for Israel."

Robert Coulson, 20 year resident in Japan: "This conference has really opened my eyes to the scriptural foundations with regards to Israel....I am going to step it up in my prayer for Israel."

Two lecturers from the Philippines found the sessions informative and are keen to bring the teaching on Israel back to their Baptist and Assemblies of God Bible Colleges.

Over all, the conference had a great impact on those attending.



The teaching team at the 7th Asia Pacific Training and Leadership Conference



Attendees of the 7th Asia Pacific Training and Leadership Conference

Nati Rom - Zionist Pioneer and Laywer

■ Andrew Tucker
International Editor | Christians for Israel



Nati Rom (left) is full of energy, his eyes sparkling, as we meet prior to a lecture he is about to give to a group of Dutch Christians. A youthful father of six children, he lives in the heartland of Samaria – known to the world as

the ‘West Bank’, or ‘Occupied Palestinian Territory’. He travels the world telling people that the Jewish people belong in these ‘mountains of Israel’.

“Judea and Samaria are the Biblical heartlands of the Jewish people. Living there is not something we do because we enjoy it; it is a Biblical mandate. It is here that 95% of the stories of the Bible took place. For example, the first capital of the Jewish people was in Shilo, which is the spiritual capital of Israel. Jews have been given the task of redeeming the land.”

Nati Rom first came to the heartland when he and an army friend finished their army service, and decided they wanted to serve their country. They simply drove into the Biblical mountains of Samaria and stopped when their car broke down. They stayed there for 18 months, building a small community near Shilo. Others soon joined. They started to build and plant vineyards. Villages developed. “We started to observe commandments that nobody had done before, and that can only be done in the land – planting, reaping, observing Shabbat years, etc. And the land started to laugh with us”.

“Our life is not easy. Jewish communities in Samaria face hundreds of terror attacks each month. Our children go to school in a bulletproof bus. When a Jewish child was recently murdered, PA President Abbas said the killer was a hero. The EU supports him by paying salaries of convicted terrorists. We have to fight against this.”

Divine War

According to Rom, there is a divine war in the world between good and bad, and the land of Israel is at the centre of that battle. “The world has lost its capacity to distinguish between good and bad. For example, it is completely absurd that the terrorist Arafat was awarded the Nobel peace prize. Other examples are UNESCO denying Jewish connection with the Temple Mount, and the EU sponsoring payments to convicted Palestinian terrorists and their families. These are unacceptable, and we need to fight against them.”

The battle, in his view, is not about territory or land, but about those who hate the Jewish people because they are Jewish. Iran is evidence of that. They are simply trying to eliminate us.

So the solution to the conflict with the Palestinians is not to give them land. That won’t remove the deep-seated hatred of the Jewish people. Nati Rom sees the ‘peace process’ as an internationally-sponsored plan to destroy Israel. “Because Israel is so small, the two-state solution is going to destroy Israel. Even President Trump’s planned ‘deal of the century’ is a bad idea from Biblical perspective, because 95% of Judea and Samaria will be given to the Arabs.”

Nati recalls the words of former Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir, who once said: “When they love their children more than they hate us, then there can be peace. Rom: “Peace does not come from making territorial concessions or rewarding evil. This is the lesson that Europe needs to learn. The only way to overcome evil is to confront and destroy it. Those who show mercy to evil are showing evil to mercy. It is outrageous that the world supports those who use terror to destroy the Jewish people.”

Redeeming the Land

Nati Rom’s philosophy is: “Zion shall be redeemed with



Nati Rom overlooking the mountains of Israel

judgment, and her converts with righteousness” (*Isaiah 1:27*). He studied law in order to be able to defend his people and use the legal system to achieve justice. He represents Jews who are arrested simply for praying on the Temple Mount. “The prohibition on Jews praying on the Temple Mount is an outrageous breach of human rights. The Temple Mount should be open to all people to pray”. About 70 people are arrested each month.

In addition, he represents Palestinians who are persecuted by the PLO and also takes cases to court to show that Israeli law should apply in Judea and Samaria - for example against Israeli insurance companies who say their policies do not apply outside the Green Line.

According to Rom, the task of the Jewish people is to redeem the land. “We are doing the Zionism of our forefathers, in the Biblical heartland that the Lord gave us back in 1967”. He and others purchase land from Arabs. They grow grapes and fruit and vegetables and make the land prosperous. “How can this be preventing peace?”

Nati Rom feels he is continuing the Zionist dream of his ancestors. “Israel was created after the ashes of the holocaust. We had a lot of dreams in our hearts. Under the British, it was not legal to enter or to build new villages. But our forefathers didn’t care about the laws of the British. They wanted to redeem the land, so they built villages in one night. This was the start of the new state. The establishment of the State of Israel on 14 May 1948 was a miracle.”

Secular Zionism today is

dying, and religious Zionism needs to be promoted, according to Nati Rom. “Sadly, many in Israel want to be like the nations, rather than being a light unto the nations. We Jews need to reconnect with the land and with HaShem. He will honour our prayers. Hannah is an example – she prayed with passion in belief! HaShem answered her prayers and gave her a child – Samuel. And from Samuel came the anointing of David. So our prayers are powerful and effective!”



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Jewish Festivals

Hanukkah

The Jewish festival of rededication, also known as the Festival of Lights

23 - 30 December 2019

Hanukkah (pronounced Hanu'ka in Modern Hebrew, also romanized as Chanukah or Chanuka) also known as the Festival of Lights, is an eight-day Jewish holiday commemorating the rededication of the Holy Temple (the Second Temple) in Jerusalem at the time of the Maccabean Revolt of the 2nd century BCE. Hanukkah is observed for eight nights and days, starting on the 25th day of Kislev according to the Hebrew calendar, which may occur at any time from late November to late December in the Gregorian calendar. Chanukah begins at sundown on Sunday 22 December 2019.

Asara B'Tevet

Fast commemorating the siege of Jerusalem

7 January 2020

Asara B'Tevet is the tenth day of the Hebrew month of Tevet, a minor fast day in Judaism. The fast commemorates the siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar II of Babylonia. Like other minor fasts, Asara B'Tevet begins at dawn (first light) and ends at nightfall (full dark).

IIth Thesis: Judgment

■ Kees de Vreugd

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

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

Thesis 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.

Elaboration: We understand and believe that before the ultimate Kingdom of Peace and Righteousness is established, there will be a Day of Judgment upon the nations. The main question that the nations will have to answer is the question asked by Jesus: "What did you do to the least of these brothers of Mine?" (*Matthew 25:40*). His calling for solidarity with the poor and suppressed of this world regards in the first place our attitude towards Israel and the Jewish people. The divine commandment given to us by the mouth of Isaiah is: "Comfort ye, Comfort ye My people", says your God."

Clarification: Unfortunately, many Christians seek to prove themselves right in criticising Israel. But we will stress the point that it is not Israel in the first place that caused the suffering of the Palestinians; that happened after the establishment of the State of Israel. It cannot be denied that, above all, they have become victims because of the failing

policies of their own leaders. Even our Arab brothers and sisters in Christ suffer because of the Palestinian leadership. Respectfully, we will ask the Israeli's to pay attention to injustices that sometimes happen, without lecturing them from an attitude of superiority and pride. In many cases, they do listen respectfully, because we come as friends. However, our main task is to carry out the Biblical remit: "comfort, comfort ye My people..."; to encourage them; to love them; and to stand with them. Most are totally convinced that the whole world hates them. We will tell them that we will stand at their side over and against those who hate Israel and the Jewish people.

■ Pellumb Ranxha

Representative | Christians for Israel Albania

As Christians, we rejoice in our salvation through the Cross and resurrection of our Lord. Now reconciled with God, we won't be subject to judgement on judgement day, *John 5:20-24*. Saving and judging authority is given by the Father to the Son, the Messiah of Israel. Yet we are accountable to God for what He has entrusted to us; *2Corinthians 5:10*. We see a vivid portrayal of that accountability in *Joel 3*, where the Lord proclaims His judgement on the nations. Perfect love is manifested in the cross; almighty power is pictured in that judgement.

Why such a judgement? Because the nations have scattered His people, divided their land and badly treated their young ones, *Joel 3:2-3*.

They have insulted and arrogantly treated the people of the Lord, *Zephaniah 2:10*. Nowadays the nations act against Israel in the UN, threaten war, and try to stop God fulfilling His promises for and through Israel. Thus, the nations fail to contribute to the restoration of Israel. It is a painful truth; they act in rebellion to God by mistreating Israel, while the Lord wants to bless them through Israel! (*Romans 11:12,15*)

In one way this is a call for repentance for the nations. On the other hand, it is a message of hope, joy, and comfort for God's people. The Lord comes back with His saints; revokes His judgement against Israel; the King of Israel dwells forever among the people of Israel; and they come to know Him. He removes their shame and fear, breaks the evil powers, and sets free the prisoners. Surely after the dark days, bright times are ahead for His people. Rejoice, daughter of Zion! (*Zephaniah 3:12-20*)

Therefore, we pray:

- that the church will comfort His people, *Isaiah 40:1*; proclaim the truth about Israel; and repent of the church's past and present sins towards Israel
- that our nations will do more for these little ones (Israel), *Mathew 25:40*
- for a repentant heart among nations in their relations with Israel
- that Israel will meet their Messiah when He comes and will rejoice in Him. The Lord has spoken, *Joel 3:8-9*; may our nations hear!

The Jewish Origins of Christmas

continued from page 6

For Western Christians, 25 December became the official birthday of Jesus, but even so, we also acknowledge 6 January (Christmas Eve for Eastern Orthodoxy) as the Feast of Epiphany, resulting in the familiar 'twelve days of Christmas'. The conception of Jesus is likewise celebrated on 25 March as the Feast of the Annunciation (to Mary).

Evidence for Christian belief that Jesus was born on 25 December goes back at least as early as the *Commentary on Daniel (4.23.3)* by Hippolytus of Rome in AD 202: 'He was born in Bethlehem, eight days before the kalends of January [December 25th]... He suffered in the thirty third year, 8 days before the kalends of April [March 25th].' In that case, emperor Aurelian was not the first to choose this date, seven decades after Hippolytus. Earlier Roman sun worshippers had celebrated a couple of dates in August, but they seem to have had no interest in either solstices or equinoxes at all.

As for the other older Roman winter festival of Saturnalia, this ran from 17 to 23 December, so a Christian holy day on 25 December could hardly have been intended as its replacement.

Presumably it was Christians who first noted the solar significance of the date of Christ's birth, calculated independently but coincidentally falling on the winter equinox in the Julian calendar. Jesus was truly the 'sun of righteousness' who had risen with healing in His wings (*Malachi 4:2*). Aurelian was hostile to Christianity, since its success was damaging worship of the Roman Empire's traditional gods.

So what better way to re-unite the various pagan cults around one annual festival, and at the same time recapture the winter equinox from the 'heretical' Christians, than to celebrate the sun-god on 25 December



Shepherds field with view of Bethlehem. | Photo: Shutterstock

as a picture of Rome's unconquerable paganism? Less than forty years later, Rome itself submitted to Christ.

So when was Jesus actually born? The date is not given in the Bible, and would sheep really have been out in the fields near Bethlehem in mid-winter? *John 1:14* says that 'the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us', which many take as a hint towards Sukkot. However, Messianic rabbi Jonathan Cahn has recently noted that one (uncensored?) manuscript of Hippolytus' commentary in the Vatican Library also preserves a contradictory observation that Jesus was born in the springtime. He points out that there is another biblical 'tabernacle' date at that time of year. The 'Feast of Tabernacles' is actually about 'booths', whereas the true Tabernacle (*mishkan*) was constructed by Moses on 1 Nisan (*Exodus 40:2, 17*), having been 'conceived' by God about nine months earlier on Mount Sinai. Jesus Himself

compared His body to God's sacred dwelling (*John 2:18-21*). Nisan also happens to be lambing season, when shepherds keep watch for new births in the fields even at night; so those near Bethlehem were ready to welcome the Lamb of God.

Whenever Jesus was actually born, we do not need to worry that celebrating His birth at Christmas makes us complicit with paganism. Whether on 25 December or 1 Nisan, we can rejoice that the Light of the World and Lamb of God truly came into the world to be our Tabernacle/Temple and make atonement for our sins – Yeshua our 'salvation'.

¹See the article by William Tighe, <www.touchstonemag.com/archives/article.php?id=16-10-012-v>, derived from Thomas J. Talley, *The Origins of the Liturgical Year* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1991): 88-99. <www.youtube.com/watch?v=ptIsXtTf6no>; see also his documentary *The Mishkan Clue*.

Marry the Land

■ Rev Willem JJ Glashouwer

President | Christians for Israel International

And they will return from the land of the enemy.”

(Jeremiah 31:16 NASB)

Basically, the 'lands' and the 'nations' from which the Jewish people have been returning to the Promised Land for over a hundred years now, are the lands of 'the enemy'. Deep down the nations and the countries hate the Jewish people and Israel. They are not 'neutral' but are 'the enemy'. Time and again this hatred will flare-up: verbally and physically. The only safe place for the Jewish people is Israel. Praise God – *Baruch Hashem* – the time has finally come that the Jewish people are able to 'return' to the Land of Israel.

God Owns the Land

Who is the owner of the Land of Israel? Israel? No! The Lord God is the Owner of the Land. “The land must not be sold permanently, because the land is Mine and you reside in My land as foreigners and strangers” (*Leviticus 25:23*). Only He has the right to give it or rent it out to people. Even Israel has no right to give this Land away, or to sell it, for they do not own the Land. He is the Land-Lord, the rightful owner. Israel is allowed to live in the land because He has decided to give it to them, as 'foreigners and strangers'.

He gave the Land to Israel: “To you I will give the land of Canaan as the portion you will inherit” (*Psalms 105:8-11*). When other strangers conquered the Land, occupied it for almost 2,000 years, the Land became utterly forsaken and desolate. It was 'possessed' by others, but not loved or taken care of by them-occupied territory.

A Love-Relationship

The land was utterly forsaken, until the Jewish people started to return, to fulfil the prophetic promise: “You shall no longer be termed 'Forsaken', nor shall your land any more be termed 'Desolate'. But you shall be called *Hephzibah* (my delight is in her), and your land *Beulah*



Rabbi blessing Jewish bride and bridegroom in modern Orthodox Jewish wedding ceremony in a synagogue. | Photo: Shutterstock

(married). For the Lord delights in you, and (to Him) your land shall be married. For as a young man marries a virgin, so shall your sons marry you; and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you” (*Isaiah 62:4-5*).

It is a love-relationship between the Jewish people and the land of Israel. The Jewish people are marrying the Land of Israel. They are not brought back by Almighty God to possess or occupy the Land that He owns, but to 'marry' the Land. In the process, God is marrying the Land of Israel and the City of Jerusalem. He is preparing the City of Jerusalem to be again His dwelling place on earth. To bless the world through His people from His Land and from His City.

For centuries, Western nations occupied and colonised big parts of land all over the world; to possess and plunder them for their own benefit. To give the name 'colonists' to those pious Jews who return to own the

Land God has given to them rightfully is a 'chutzpah': an unbelievable brutality. Like someone who murdered his father and mother and then asks the judge to be lenient to him because he is an orphan. The truth upside down.

Our Responsibility

“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—everyone who is called by My name, whom I created for My glory, whom I formed and made” (*Isaiah 43:5-7*). The prophet Isaiah does not say: Look, how the Jews are coming back home to Israel from the four corners of the world. But the prophet Isaiah does say: Bring My sons from afar and My daughters from the ends of the earth.

Let us all realise our responsibility in this process and continue to bring them home to Israel.

Walking in the Dust of Our Rabbi - Part 3a

■ Mandy Worby

Christians for Israel Australia

In the last article, we began looking at what it means to walk in the dust of our Rabbi, and we took a look at the difference between the Greek and Hebrew mindsets. Because the Hebrew mindset is primarily practical, physical and literal, it's important that we understand the correct context of the Bible and the events listed in it so that we don't inadvertently misunderstand what it means.

We learned that the Greek mindset is largely spiritual and analytical, but to be fair, that's not 100% of the time, gaining and remembering knowledge is important, but there has to be a practical outcome so that life skills are the end result. Basically, the premise is: you are told information, you study the information, you remember the information, and then you're tested to see how much information you remember and from those results you're deemed qualified or not.

The Hebrew mindset is practical and one of teacher and student, Rabbi and disciple, professional and apprentice. The teacher does something, the student observes and then replicates, and he keeps doing it until he gets it right and only then is he deemed qualified. He then, in turn, teaches others what he's learned.

With regard to Rabbis and their disciples, Jewish disciples didn't automatically join a Rabbi's classes; they had to be personally hand-picked and chosen by the Rabbi individually; and once they responded and accepted the offer of a discipleship, they were then committed to learn

everything from the Rabbi, following him everywhere, watching every nuance, absorbing every word, obeying implicitly every tiny instruction until the students finally looked and sounded exactly like their Rabbi. Somebody should be able to watch and observe them and be able to tell which Rabbi they followed. This is why various different groups among Orthodox Jews have specific dress codes because it connects them to specific Rabbis that they follow.

Walking in the dust of the Rabbi conjures up the image of a disciple walking so closely to his Rabbi that the dust stirred up by the Rabbi's steps settles all over the disciple; he literally steps into the very footprints of his teacher following him ever so closely so as not to miss a single word, or look, or expression. When Jesus called His disciples and said “Follow Me”, He was literally calling them to 'walk after' Him, live alongside Him day and night and learn from Him every moment of every day. To follow Him meant to emulate Him in every aspect of His life, His actions, His conversations, His mannerisms; they were, in fact, meant to become little mirrors of Him.

“Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognised that they had been with Jesus.” (*Acts 4:13*)

Jesus didn't hand them a textbook, although He did teach them constantly from the Scriptures; He didn't have them sit exams; His teaching was akin to an apprenticeship. Again, this is the Hebrew mindset while the Greek mindset is to study information, retain the information in your head, and answer an exam and with a passing mark, then

you are declared qualified. To the Jewish mind, you walk alongside, you watch, you listen, you apply, and you replicate what you see under the supervision of your teacher, and you keep doing it until you master it. You have more than a head full of knowledge; yes, you have knowledge, but you also have the practical understanding and application; and you are then able to teach and train others to both understand and do.

If the Rabbi says it, it's true and must be obeyed. This is what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. As a disciple walks closely after his Rabbi, his heart begins to change, he learns to love his Rabbi, to understand what motivates his Rabbi and what moves his Rabbi.

The disciple's love for his Rabbi grows and alters his own motivations and his great desire is to please His Rabbi. He begins to adopt mannerisms and phrases and habits that mimic his Rabbi and even begins to talk like His Rabbi, repeating His words to those with whom he comes in contact with. That's what the disciples did and the general community could tell when they were observed that they knew and had spent time with Jesus.

We are to walk as closely as we can to Jesus: obviously not physically because His physical presence is seated beside His Father in glory; but we have the Word of God - and every single word in both the Old and New Covenant Scriptures is the expression of Jesus Himself.

Part 3b will be published in the February 2020 Israel & Christians Today. These studies are based on the book 'Walking In The Dust Of Rabbi Jesus: How The Jewish Words of Jesus Can Change Your Life' by Lois Tverberg. www.ourrabbijesus.com

Blessing Bethlehem

■ Adam Eliyahu Berkowitz
Writer | Breaking Israel News

“The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as one of your citizens; you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I Hashem am your God.” (Leviticus 19:34)

Two rabbis are working hard to help the Christian Arabs of Bethlehem, the oldest Christian community in the world. Their efforts are based on the Torah imperative ‘to help the stranger in your midst,’ or, as one rabbi puts it, “Covenant land requires covenantal responsibility.”

Rabbi Pesach Wolicki and David Nekrutman of the Center for Jewish-Christian Understanding and Cooperation (CJCUC) launched Blessing Bethlehem in 2016 to help the persecuted Christians living in the city of Bethlehem and its surrounding areas. As part of their work, they distribute food and food vouchers to 120 Christian families in Bethlehem. Christian Arabs transport the parcels to a central location in Bethlehem and directly to the elderly. Much of their work must remain secret in order to protect the recipients.

The problem is acute as Arab Christians are an oppressed minority in Muslim controlled areas of the region. Christians make up about two per cent of Israel’s population. Approximately half of Israel’s 120,000 Christian Arabs are part of the Eastern Orthodox Church. Before Hamas took over Gaza, approximately 5,000 Christians lived in Gaza. Under Hamas rule, that number has dwindled to fewer than 1,000. Living under radical Islamist rule, the remaining Christians are sorely oppressed. In Judea and Samaria, about 70,000 Christians live under Palestinian Authority rule. Both Bethlehem and Nazareth – key New Testament towns – which were once overwhelmingly Christian, now have Muslim majorities. When Israel was founded in 1948, about 80 per cent of the population of Bethlehem was Christian. Today, approximately 12 per cent, or 15,000 Christians, live in the area of Bethlehem. Though Christian families are the largest landowners in Bethlehem, their property has often been subject to theft.

In 2012, Pastor Steven Khoury was interviewed by the Christian Broadcasting Network. Pastor Khoury refuted claims that the exodus of Christians from Bethlehem was due to pressure from Israel. He maintained that the Arabs, who claimed their ancestors were among the first followers of Jesus were leaving his birthplace due to systematic discrimination and persecution at the hands of the predominantly Muslim population and the Palestinian government aimed at driving their population out of their homeland.

“The Palestinian Authority controls Bethlehem but it is still in the Holy Land, making it part of the covenant. Covenant land comes with covenantal responsibility,” Nekrutman told Breaking Israel News, “God said that as a Jew living in Israel, I have the requirement to love the non-Jew living in the land with me. And that means to make

sure he is not religiously oppressed.” Much of the harassment is informal. Palestinians, Christian and Muslim, who advocate co-existence with Israelis are frequently attacked in what is termed the ‘Anti-Normalisation Movement.’ This is openly encouraged by Palestinian Authority officials.

“The PA claims there is religious freedom under their rule, but the reality is that there isn’t, at least not in the way we understand freedom of religion” Nekrutman said. “The Muslims can’t be blatantly anti-Christian in Bethlehem since Christian tourism is a major source of income. But unemployment is much higher among Christians than Muslims. They are forced out of their houses, and the demographic statistics reflect this.”

Nekrutman explained that the role of the Christian Arabs in the conflict between the Palestinians and Israel is complicated.

“Christian Arabs are frequently caught in an identity crisis that pits ethnicity against religion,” Nekrutman explained. “In Judea and Jerusalem, Christian Arabs generally live in the Palestinian areas. They are generally tolerated under Palestinian rule so long as they don’t flaunt their Christianity. As Arabs, they ethnically associate with the Palestinians. In the north of Israel, in areas like Haifa, you have Jews, Christians, and Muslims living side-by-side.”

“Their identity as Christian Arabs separates them ethnically from the Jews and religiously from the Muslim Arabs. This makes the Christian Arabs the clearest minority in the region, and they are caught in the middle of the regional conflict. Because of their identifying with Arabs, they rarely experience love from Israelis.”

This is a clear case of returning a favour, or, in Biblical terms, of those who bless Israel being blessed.

“This is a community who are Evangelical Arab Christians, which is a rarity in Israel,” Rabbi Wolicki said to Breaking Israel News. “This is important to Israel since even the Christian Arabs who live in Israel do not have a favourable perception of Israel. The Evangelical Arabs are beginning to change that.”

Rabbi Wolicki explained that even though this persecution is aimed at Evangelicals, Jews should treat it as if it was being directed at Judaism.

“They are being persecuted, but if the Jews were standing right where they are, we would be persecuted just as well,” the rabbi said. “These people are suffering because they are our friends. This makes it a Jewish problem.”

The Blessing Bethlehem project has opened doors, allowing Christian Arabs a rare experience of Jewish love for the stranger among them. Rabbi Wolicki related a powerful example of this. As part of his project, the rabbi decided to



Rabbi Pesach Wolicki and David Nekrutman

visit the recipients at a Christmas gathering. Since the 1995 Oslo Accords, Bethlehem has been administered by the Palestinian Authority, and it is forbidden for Israelis to enter. Rabbi Wolicki decided to visit nonetheless. An Arab friend drove him into the city and to a venue.

“There were 600 people in the room that even though they were born and raised in Bethlehem, they had never connected with Jewish Israelis before. I could tell by the looks on their faces that they had never seen a rabbi before,” Rabbi Wolicki said. “Several told me that until that Christmas Eve, their only experience with Israelis was facing IDF soldiers at security checkpoints.”

As an Evangelical, Pastor Khoury also encountered resistance from the Catholic and Greek Orthodox churches who see him as attracting their congregants.

“Since my imperative is Biblical, we have also tried to work with Catholics and Greek Orthodox,” Nekrutman explained. “They refuse to accept any aid from us because of the political implications of dealing with Jews in Judea.”

“Pastor Khoury preaches from the Old Testament, which the other Christian Arabs view as a Jewish book. They also reject replacement theology, which gets them in trouble with the Catholic and Eastern Churches as well as the Palestinian Authority.”

“The people suffer discrimination in their lives, but this is focused on the religious aspect,” Rabbi Wolicki said. “People have rocks thrown at them on their way to church. Their church in Bethlehem has been firebombed 14 times. Pastor Khoury has been shot four times, and his brother was murdered.

This article was originally published on 17th September 2018 on www.breakingisraelnews.com.

In the days before Christmas, the Khoury family spreads the Light in Bethlehem. With dedication they provide Christmas packages for the needy, so they can have a festive meal, but even more that people feel that they matter and that God cares for them. Emmanuel, God with us.
If you would like to donate to bless the Arab Christians in Bethlehem, fill out the coupon on the back page.

Israel's Story in Maps

■ Map 10 | Judea & Samaria Municipal authorities

There are six regional councils, four cities, thirteen local councils and a total of 142 Israeli towns in Judea and Samaria. As of April 2019, the Israeli population in these areas is close to 500,000.



■ Map 11 | The Oslo Agreements Israel no longer controls the Arabs

Under the Oslo Agreements, 40% of the land was turned over to Palestinian Authority (PA) civilian rule (Area B). Some of it (the large cities) was turned over to PA security control as well (Area A).

More than 95% of the Arab population living in Judea and Samaria live under Palestinian Authority rule (Areas A,B), vote in local elections, pay taxes to the PA which administers its own separate educational, legal, medical and social welfare systems.

The Palestinian Arabs living in Judea and Samaria, run their own lives, and there is no ‘occupation’ there.



A State Built on Charity



Young Israeli volunteers help teach young students at summer school. Because of their migrant background, they are in danger of falling behind. These volunteer programmes help to prevent this from happening. | Photo: Flashgo.

■ Ruben Ridderhof
Christians for Israel The Netherlands

At the base of every nation are the aspirations of people with a shared vision. Like the idealism of the American founding fathers, but also the national aspirations of the Kosovars, for example. Zionism, the national aspiration of the Jews, is such a vision as well. Achieving that vision would not have been possible without the Jewish value of charity.

Zionism emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century and, like many other emancipation movements at the time, matured at the beginning of the twentieth century. Jewish pioneers had already moved to Palestine



Jews were not the only ones being charitable when the state of Israel was founded. This photo from 1949 shows how local Arabs came to help the Jews with the construction of kibbutz Yasu, near Akko. | Photo: GPO

in smaller numbers from about 1850. At that time Palestine was still part of the great Ottoman Empire. To live in Palestine, money was needed. The Jews bought land from Arab landowners and established small settlements there. From there they began to develop the land, which at that time was either very dry or swampy. As Zionism gained momentum, resistance increased as well, and the need arose to defend themselves against hostile Arabs. It took huge investments to make the land fertile and profitable. The Jews who had moved to Eretz Israel, the ‘Land of Israel’ as pioneers, could not pay these costs themselves. That’s why they called on their friends and family in Europe to support them. That support turned out to be huge.

Jewish National Fund

As Zionism gained more momentum, it also became more organised. In 1901, the Jewish National Fund was established, an organisation that bought land in Palestine so that Jews could settle there. Afforestation projects and agricultural businesses were also set up through the Jewish National Fund.

Where did all that money come from? The Jewish National Fund would organise events where they would talk about Zionism and its progress in Eretz Israel. In addition, they distributed donation boxes that were placed in people’s homes, as well as in Jewish institutions. Hundreds of thousands of Jews all over the world were saving and raising money for the Jewish National Fund, and in that way giving wings to Zionism.

Keren Hayesod

In 1920 a new organisation was added: Keren Hayesod, “The Foundation Fund”. In addition to the Jewish National Fund, Keren Hayesod used the funds that were

raised to lay the groundwork of the Jewish State as it was being formed. For example, these funds were used to establish the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the first Israeli bank. Keren Hayesod was also committed to housing refugees from Germany following the rise of the Nazi Party in the 1930s. After the establishment of the Jewish Agency in 1929, Keren Hayesod became its fundraising arm.

Helping Each Other

When the State of Israel was proclaimed in 1948, it was the result of the dedication of countless people who gave unconditionally from a value of helping and loving your neighbour. And this value of charity did not end there, but only flourished in the Jewish State. Over the years, hundreds of thousands of Jewish refugees from the Arab world have found refuge in Israel. The Jewish Agency, Keren Hayesod and the Jewish National Fund have continued and are still to this day committed to helping new Jewish immigrants with great love and dedication, welcoming them with language learning programs, and finding work and housing. It doesn’t matter where they come from. Eastern Europe, India, Ethiopia. Everyone is being helped because helping each other, charity, is part of Israel’s DNA.



A donation box for the Jewish National Fund. | Photo: Jewish Museum Sydney

Biblical Names
By Kees de Vreugd

Immanuel

The meaning of the name Immanuel is given to us in *Matthew 1:23*: “God with us”. Matthew cites the prophecy of Isaiah as being fulfilled with the birth of Jesus: “Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.” (*Isaiah 7:14*)

Isaiah was prophesying when the king of Aram (Assyria), together with the king of Israel, comprising the ten tribes of Israel,

surrounded Jerusalem but they failed to take the city. The king of Judah, Ahaz, was invited to ask for a sign from the Lord. But with a show of piety, he refused to do so. Then the Lord Himself gave a sign: a young woman will be pregnant with a prince. She will call him Immanuel.

The circumstances in which the young Immanuel would grow up do not seem to be very hopeful. But in *Isaiah 8:8 and 10*, we see that just as the armies of the enemy sweep over Judah; “God is with

us”, that is, with Judah and its king. What this means, we find explained very clearly in a different context, in *2 Chronicles 13:12a*: “Now behold, God is with us (Hebrew: immanu) at our head.” God is leading as the actual army commander and is Himself fighting for Jerusalem.

That is the background to Immanuel: God fighting for the city He has chosen. And God is the real king of His people. The Davidic kingship is a reflection of

God’s kingship.

Matthew connects that name and prophecy to the annunciation of the birth of Jesus. It is about the hope and expectation of Israel: in Messiah Jesus, God is standing up for His people and His city. Something of an echo of this name I hear at the end of the Gospel when the apostles are sent on behalf of Israel to all nations: “And lo, I am with you.”

Short News

'Private' Sabbath Bus Budget Approved



The Tel Aviv municipality has approved an initial budget for operating public transportation on the Sabbath. Under the plan, a few cities in the greater Tel Aviv area, among them Givatayim, Ramat Hasharon, and Kiryat Ono, will operate a shared transportation system on the Sabbath. These cities are calling on other cities to join them in expanding this system. The network of interurban routes to be operated is a private travel service of the municipality; passengers will not be charged, and the local authorities therefore have jurisdiction over the service, not the central government. It is therefore not considered a 'local public transport', which is prohibited in Israel on Shabbat. | Photo: Globes

Sensor Technology Combats Oil Pollution

"Oil is one of the most common pollutants in the world," says Ran Pelta, PhD at Tel Aviv University. The acquisition of information about the earth's surface by remote sensing is now possible by the reflectivity of physical matter. Scientists have developed an algorithm that identifies the type of pollutant according to its reflectance spectrum and then maps it to show the impacted area. A remote sensor, which provides high-resolution data on soil contaminants, can be mounted on drones or satellites to find oil leaks in real-time and thus reduce consequential damage to nature and the environment.

Hospital Bedding Germ-Resistant



Hospital bed sheets and patient gowns are a major conduit for transferring dangerous bacteria estimated to infect millions of patients per year. Professors from Bar-Ilan University have developed a new way to bacteria-proof the fabrics used in a hospital, by using ultrasound waves to induce a physical phenomenon known as 'cavitation,' in which rapid changes of pressure in a liquid lead to the formation of tiny vapor-filled cavities. Antibacterial chemicals can then be propelled onto the molecular structure of the fabric at tremendous speed. | Photo: Shutterstock

The Coastal Plain



Panoramic view of sunset over the Mediterranean Sea from Carmel Mounts. Haifa. Israel. | Photo: Shutterstock

■ Kameel Majdali
Director | Teach All Nations Inc.

We are in part 2 of the 'Walk through the Land Series.' The goal is firstly, to help you understand the Bible better by learning about the land where most of the events in the Bible occurred, and secondly, to help you gain more benefit from your next holy land tour.

Last time, we focused on the Sea of Galilee, the most famous body of water in the world. In this article, we introduce you to the coastal plain.

The plain starts in the south at the Besor River or Nahal Besor ('river' or 'river bed' is called *nahal*), south of Gaza. It extends in a North-South direction 193 km or 120 miles to the Lebanese border at Rosh Haniqra. In 1,800 years of history, ancient Israel only controlled the coastal plain for 150 years. Yet, it plays an important role in the land and history of the Bible.

In general, unlike much of the country, the coastal plain is well-watered. It receives 400 to 640 cm (16 to 25 inches) of rainfall annually. It is graced with fertile alluvial soil and rolling hills.

The International Highway
The land of the Bible is a 'land-bridge' between 3 continents. On its eastern side of Philistia, approximately 16 km inland, is the strategic Afro-Eurasian international highway. This road connects Egypt and Africa with Syria, Assyria, Babylon and beyond. You literally cannot travel by land from Africa to Asia except by coming through this little land. As such, the land bridge was a tempting target and coveted prize for great powers of old, thus making the promised land a rope in a geopolitical tug-o-war game over the centuries.

Yet, despite its straight and simple terrain, travel on the international highway could be challenging with sand dunes, the Yarkon River which flows to and through Tel Aviv, and the low-lying areas that get marshy during the winter rain.

Though the international highway has been closed since the birth of Israel in 1948, it has an important prophetic role in the future. *Isaiah 19:23-24* declares: *In that day there shall be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians. In that day Israel*

shall be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land.

The Sand and the Sea
Here is an example of how geography influences history.

The coastal plain south of Haifa and Mount Carmel is very straight, with tiny sand-choked inlets. Where does the sand come from? **Answer:** The Sahara Desert. The Nile River carries the sand into the Nile Delta, where it flows into the Mediterranean Sea. The sea current carries it in a counter-clockwise direction and deposits sand on the northern coast of Sinai, the Gaza Strip, and Israel's coastal plain all the way to Mount Carmel.

Carmel is not a single peak but a mountain range, known as 'The Carmel.' Carmel juts into the Mediterranean at Haifa, resembling an 'antelope's nose,' as the ancient Egyptians called it. This promontory of Carmel serves a very important purpose: it is a barrier that prevents the Sahara sand going further north.

That's why the coastal plain north of Carmel has viable natural ports not filled with Sahara sand, such as in Acre, Tyre, Sidon, and Byblos. No wonder the Phoenicians were the great maritime nation of antiquity. South of Carmel there were no suitable ports and the Israelites focused on agriculture.

For our purposes, we will divide the coastal plain into three parts:

- 1.The Plain of Philistia (south);
- 2.The Plain of Sharon (centre);
- 3.The Plain of Acre (north).

Though all three subregions are important parts of the coastal plain, they all have their unique distinctives which make their individual histories very different. For example, the Plain of Philistia houses the 5 Philistine cities: Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Ekron, and Gath. Thus, it was well inhabited and had access to decent agriculture. The neighbouring region to the north, the Plain of Sharon, was different: it was sparsely inhabited, with limited agriculture, and was much neglected in the Old Testament period. The Plain of Acre, separated from the rest of the coast by The Carmel, related more to the Phoenicians than Israel.

Plain of Philistia
From the Besor River northward to Jaffa

and the Yarkon River, the Plain of Philistia is 80 kilometres (50 miles) North-South and 16 to 40 km (10-25 miles) East-West. Rainfall is 400-510 mm (16 to 20 inches) annually. The coastline is totally straight and the land flat, except for sand dunes and kurkar ridges. The red soil of the Plain of Sharon and the alluvial loess soil from the Negev, combined with the rainfall, produces grain, melons, and citrus groves (think of 'Jaffa oranges').

The northern region of the Philistine plain, between the Yarkon River and Aijalon, is called the Plain of Ono (*Nehemiah 6:2*), otherwise known as the 'Valley of Craftsmen' (*Nehemiah 11:35*), recognising that the Philistines were workers of iron. *Now there was no smith found throughout all the land of Israel: for the Philistines said, Lest the Hebrews make them swords or spears: But all the Israelites went down to the Philistines, to sharpen every man his share, and his coulter, and his axe, and his mattock (1 Samuel 13:19-20).*

Around the time Israel settled in the land on the east, the Philistines came from Captor from the west, namely the Aegean Sea region. *Amos 9:7* confirms this: *Have I not brought up Israel out of the land of Egypt? and the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Syrians from Kir?*

Once these two peoples met, it was 'war at first sight.' The Philistines were fierce enemies of the Israelites, especially during the days the judges, Saul and David. Though the name 'Philistines' implies uncivilised, in reality they were an advanced people in ironworks. Their drawback was the worship of false gods, like Dagon and Baalzebub. Famous encounters include Samson's one-man war with the Philistines, David's victory over Goliath, Saul's defeat and death by the Philistines on Mount Gilboa, and David's constant battles and victories. Afterwards, we hear little about them except for occasional references by the minor prophets. They eventually disappeared from history while the people of Israel continue until this day.

Apology from the Managing Editor:
In the October issue, the title for part 1 of this series was incorrect. The title printed said: 'Infamous Body of Water.' It should have read 'Most Famous Body of Water in the World'.

A Long Way Home



| Photos: Christians for Israel and Flash90

After you think about it for a while, it is quite exceptional: knowing that there is a country in the world where you can always go to—or better—can return to. Israel's gates are wide open for everyone who is Jewish.

But why would you exchange one country for another? For Jews, this is not something obvious. Sometimes they don't even know they have that choice—sometimes—it takes almost a whole lifetime before they take the plunge. Others just do not have the possibility of making the long journey. Others just deliberately choose to stay put.

1. When we first meet a Jewish person in Ukraine, our first offer of help is to supply urgently needed food. This is offered whether somebody intends to go to Israel or not. Each food parcel contains a flyer, in case there are questions, or if help is needed they know where to reach us.
2. For those who are curious about what Israel has to offer, there are seminars and fairs. In one day, you can learn quite a lot about Israel: what are the job opportunities, do they have good schools, can I bring my dog, can I return to Ukraine to visit my relatives?
3. Koen Carlier leads the Ukrainian team. He speaks with people, explains what he knows about the return to Israel from the Bible, encourages people and is always ready to help with advice and counsel.

4. And when people decide—sometimes after years of deliberation—that they want to go to Israel, there is an interview at the Israeli embassy or consulate. We offer transport to and from the interviews for those who want to attend.

5. When the day of departure has finally come we collect the people. They leave Ukraine with only a few bags, but with a lot of memories.

6. Close to departure while at the airport with all the luggage, there is an intense awareness among the people

**“See, I will bring them from the land of the north and gather them from the ends of the earth. Among them will be the blind and the lame, expectant mothers and women in labour; a great throng will return.”
(Jeremiah 31:8)**

that they are about to embark on an entirely new chapter in their lives which will materialise after they set foot on Israeli soil.

7. Nataliya Krizhanovski, one of Christians for Israel Aliyah fieldworkers in Ukraine, helps a man who cannot walk, to make aliyah. It is moments like these that so strongly remind you of *Jeremiah 31:8*.

8. That first foot on Israeli soil – even if it is the concrete of the Tel Aviv airport – is one of the most impressive moments of coming home to Israel. Finally home!

9. Your Israeli passport is waiting. Now we only have to find the right person belonging to the correct passport.

10. Home! Family embracing you. Tears of happiness. Reunited with the people you love and the country you dreamed of.

11. Studying will be necessary. English may be spoken throughout the world but Hebrew is the official language here. And you start at the back – Hebrew is read and written from right to left.

12. Much learning is required to bring them up to standard now that they are building a new life in Israel. Ethiopia and Israel may not be so far apart as the crow flies but as far as culture and the standard of education is concerned, there is a difference like night and day.

Masha Will Be Alone this Winter



"I am especially happy with the tea. It's so nice and warm, that's why I love to drink it."
-Masha

'When there's no more water coming from the faucet, it is the fault of the Jews'. It shows how deeply rooted the hatred of Jews is here.

Unfortunately, it doesn't end with 'innocent' songs. In the past year, several Jewish cemeteries were defaced with paint and destroyed, while statues were erected for anti-Semitic national heroes from the past.

In these fearful times, the visits we make are a tremendous encouragement for Jews. Especially for the elderly, who are often lonely because their families were murdered during the Holocaust.

For example, I recently visited an elderly lady, together with my good friend Rabbi

You can donate by filling out the coupon. On behalf of the Jewish community, thank you for your support!



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

Koen Carlier
Aliyah Fieldworker | Ukraine

Will You Help Masha?

Food Parcel Campaign 2019-2020

In Ukraine, thousands of elderly Jewish people still live in great poverty in cities and rural areas. They often live in dreadful conditions, like Masha in the photo. It's cold in her clay house, but she warmly welcomes us. The food parcels we bring are desperately needed to get through the winter.

With your help, we hope to put together 30,000 food parcels this winter and distribute them to Jewish families and Holocaust survivors. Will you help?

Poverty Among Jews in Ukraine

In Ukraine, there is an old folk song that starts with

Mendel Cohen from Mariupol in Eastern Ukraine. After the visit, the rabbi said: "She has been lonely all her life, but now she can die knowing that people are praying for her."

At each and every visit, we testify of God's faithfulness to His people Israel, and of the promises He makes in the Bible. Promises about hope and the return of the Jewish people to Israel!

Will you help? One food parcel costs € 10. We can get the products for a good price because the wholesale company knows that we use them for a good cause.



Koen Carlier: "The plan is to deliver 30,000 food parcels this winter. Your contribution is so important."

YES! I Want to Support Christians for Israel

CHRISTIANS FOR ISRAEL MINISTRY

☐ My donation for ministry costs, print & post

SOCIAL WELFARE PROJECTS

- ☐ Emergency Food Parcels Ukraine - € 10 | US \$11 ea.....
- ☐ First Home in the Homeland
- ☐ First Baptist Church Bethlehem
- ☐ Hineni - Soup Kitchen
- ☐ Holocaust Survivors - "I'm not Alone"
- ☐ Christian Friends of Israeli Communities (CFOIC)

ALIYAH - BRING THE JEWS HOME

- ☐ One person - € 135 | US \$165
- ☐ One family (5 people) - € 675 | US \$825
- ☐ One busload (25 people) - € 4500 | US \$5000
- ☐ First Home in the Homeland
- ☐ Bnei Menashe (India) (1 person) - € 900 | US \$1000

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)
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