

# ISRAEL

*& Christians Today*

INTERNATIONAL

February 2019

[www.c4israel.org](http://www.c4israel.org)  
[info@c4israel.org](mailto:info@c4israel.org)

CHRISTIANS FOR  
**ISRAEL**  
INTERNATIONAL

## 74. Rocznic Wyzwolenia AUSCHWITZ

## 74<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Liberation of AUSCHWITZ



International Holocaust Memorial Day.  
Former prisoners of Auschwitz-Birkenau at the memorial ceremony  
in Auschwitz to mark the 74th Anniversary of the liberation of  
Auschwitz Birkenau on 27 January 2019. | Photo: Shutterstock



## Highlights...

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



## Prayer Points



By Pieter Bénard  
Christians for  
Israel Prayer  
Coordinator

## JUDEA AND SAMARIA

- Pray for the protection of the Jews in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria. There is a constant stream of threats and incidents. Pray for safety, especially on the roads near intersections and roundabouts.
- The battle for the existence of Israel is being fought in parliaments and at conferences all over the world. We have the opportunity to call to God from our inner rooms: "Save, save Your People Lord."
- Pray for the retention of Biblical territory in Judea and Samaria. Give thanks for the Jewish residents who courageously continue to live there, even though many other Israelis do not understand them. Pray for peace with the Palestinians.

## ISRAEL AND THE NATIONS

- Give thanks for politicians and political parties in your country who stand up for Israel. Sometimes one powerful voice is enough to steer a debate, whose outcome had seemed clear, in Israel's favour. Pray for those who have the courage to make their voice heard.
- While the political differences between America and Europe (about how to deal with Iran's nuclear ambitions) continue to grow, Iran continues with its nuclear development and threatening of Israel. Pray that God will intervene and that Israel will live in safety.
- The UN has denounced Israel countless times, while countries with serious human rights violations such as Syria, North Korea and Saudi Arabia are scarcely challenged. Pray for the UN, that the representatives may turn away from their misguided ways.

## CHRISTIANS FOR ISRAEL

- Pray for the representatives of Christians for Israel who are 'ambassadors' for Israel around the world. Pray for them with *2Thessalonians 2:16-17*, "Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and God our Father, who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word."
- Give thanks for the amazing work that Koen Carlier and his Christians for Israel team are able to do in Ukraine, being a blessing to the Jewish people in a practical way. The food parcels are sometimes the difference between life and death.

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

## A New World Order

By Andrew Tucker, International Editor, Christians for Israel International

Major changes are all around us. Many of them concern Israel – hardly surprising, given that the history of the Jewish people forms the crimson thread through God's plan of creation, salvation and redemption of the world. Let's briefly examine four trends.

The first is in the geopolitical sphere. The USA and Britain are retreating as dominant players on the world stage. Brexit is causing a political crisis of immense proportions in Britain. The USA under Trump is withdrawing not only from Europe but also the Middle East, opening the way for Russia, Turkey and Iran to dominate that part of the world. China and Russia are on the rise.

The second, related trend is the battle within Europe and the Western world in general for the survival of the 'European project': the unification of Europe after WW2 that was intended to lead to prosperity and an end to the wars that had cost the lives of millions.

## Let us keep our eyes open to see and understand what is happening in the world around us...

A very significant development here is a new agreement signed by France and Germany on 22 January 2019 in the city of Aachen. This treaty consolidates France and Germany as the power-brokers in the EU and empowers Germany on the world stage.

According to one commentator, the Aachen Treaty "will not only drive Europe ahead, but it will also drive Europe closer together. It will replace the currently divided union and create a more united, stronger empire. President Macron's office stated that the increased cooperation favours the 'security and prosperity of our peoples in the framework of a more sovereign, united and democratic Europe.' The treaty sets the course for Europe to draw closer together on the military, cultural, social and political level. In other words, Germany and France seek to establish a European empire".

Aachen was the seat of Charlamagne, who was crowned Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire by Pope Leo X in 800AD. It was here that Charlemagne (of French/German descent) established an empire that would last 1000 years and cause the deaths of over 40 million Europeans in the Middle Ages. Charlemagne's empire inspired Hitler, who brought back his crown to Germany in 1938.

Are Mr Macron and Ms Merkel re-establishing the Holy Roman Empire dominated by France and Germany?

A third major shift is the convergence of security, trade, and finance. Watch the role played by the central banks in all of this. I was fascinated to read the most recent report by Christian Takushi, a Macro Economist & Geopolitical Strategist, who wrote just a few weeks ago



that "convergence in the military-security-food-energy complex is intensifying. This implies the growing likelihood of defence realignments, trade routes' and supply chain disruptions, but also wars and natural disasters among a

which Messiah will reign "in the midst of Jacob" (*Luke 1:32-33*). The book of *Revelation* speaks about the beast with ten horns and seven heads (*Revelation 13*).

Let us keep our eyes open to see and understand what is happening in the world around us; our hearts pure and undefiled so that we are not led astray; and our ears open to hear what the Lord is saying to the churches (*Revelation 3:22*).

| Photo: Juliana Kozoski, Unsplash

## Christians for Israel Mission Statement

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

## Jewish Festivals

**Rosh Chodesh Adar I** - *Beginning of new Hebrew month of Adar*  
5 February 2019

**Purim Katan** - *Minor Purim celebration during Adar I on leap years*  
19 February 2019

**Ta'anit Esther** - *Fast of Esther*  
20 March 2019

**Purim** - *Purim is one of the most joyous and fun holidays on the Jewish calendar*  
21 March 2019

**ISRAEL** & Christians Today

## News Team | Contact Details

**INTERNATIONAL EDITOR-IN-CHIEF**  
Andrew Tucker | [atucker@cfisrael.org](mailto:atucker@cfisrael.org)

**MANAGING EDITOR**  
Cathy Coldicutt  
Ph: +64 21 277 9198 | [newspaper@cfisrael.org](mailto:newspaper@cfisrael.org)

**INTERNATIONAL EDITORIAL TEAM**  
Andrew Tucker, Cathy Coldicutt, Ian Worby, Bryce Turner, Marloes van Westing, Rita Quartel, Marijke Terlouw and Marie-Louise Weissenböck

**INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER**  
Marloes van Westing | [international@cfisrael.org](mailto:international@cfisrael.org)

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# I Won't Be Silenced!

By Max Eisen, Holocaust Survivor based in Toronto

I don't know who you are. I can't imagine we've met. But you chose to spray-paint the word *Achtung* on my photo, which featured on a sign outside Beth Jacob Synagogue, promoting UJA (United Jewish Appeal) Federation of Greater Toronto's Holocaust education.

Perhaps, in this shocking act, you simply craved headlines. Or maybe you meant to offend and frighten Toronto's Jewish community. Whatever your 'reason,' you obviously knew that *Achtung* – German for attention – is a word that struck fear into the hearts of millions of Jews who heard it screamed by their killers.

Well, you've got my attention. And now I'll use it to tell more people, through this newspaper, the dangers of indifference to anti-Semitism. I will turn your dark act into a sliver of light.

The sign you defaced bears my image because I bore witness to the genocide of the Jewish people in Europe. Out of an extended family of more than 60 loving members, all but three of us were murdered in the Holocaust.

Ironically, I would survive Auschwitz-Birkenau only because of a terrible beating by an SS guard. My injuries sent me to the camp hospital where a Polish political prisoner working as a surgeon gave me a smock and made me clean the operating room. Had he not done so, I would have ended up in the gas chamber along with the other prisoners unable to return to work.

After liberation, I moved to Canada, where I met my wife, had children, and rebuilt my life in the greatest country in the world. I had survived, but not without images of inhumanity beyond the darkest imagination. As much as I may wish to forget, I can never betray a promise I made to my father, before he was murdered, that I would bear witness to all that I saw.

This is why I share my story through programmes run by UJA of Greater Toronto's Neuberger Holocaust Centre, as featured on the sign you vandalised, as well as Friends of the Simon Wiesenthal Centre. It's why I lead groups of young Canadians on life-changing educational trips to Auschwitz-Birkenau with March of the Living Canada. And it's why I volunteer with the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA), which advocates for stronger hate crime laws and human rights laws to protect all vulnerable groups.

My promise to my father is also why I wrote my memoirs, a nightmarish process of recalling my experience in detail. At age 89, my time is limited. But, when I am no longer here, my voice will still be heard.

## To the vandal who targeted me: I won't be silent about anti-Semitism.

Even today, events remind me that the Holocaust took place because countless individuals gradually normalised grotesque acts of evil. During the trial of SS guard Oscar Groening, one of two such trials at which I testified, he described an incident of the SS finding a crying baby that someone had desperately hidden in a bundle of clothes. Groening didn't refer to the guards' decision to smash the baby's head against a train car as murder or even cruelty. He simply noted that the crying stopped, as though such barbarism were a part of the job. His choice of words showed how an entire society could turn



A photo of Holocaust survivor Max Eisen was defaced with the word 'Achtung.'

dehumanisation into a matter of routine. What we often forget is that the Holocaust started in a German society that, by many standards, was 'normal.' Germany was a place of high culture and higher education. A few years before the Holocaust, it was considered among the most progressive and advanced countries in Europe. From this, we should learn that anti-Semitism and hate in all forms thrive

when dangerous words are met with complacency and indifference. To think ourselves immune is to remove that which inoculates us: awareness, self-scrutiny, and vigilance. I am an eye-witness to the power of words, which is why, when you use *Achtung* as a weapon, I will not be frightened or silent. I will continue using my testimony – my words – to help heal this world. Given the shocking violence that took place on Toronto's Danforth in July 2017, our great city is especially in need of healing.

# Australia: Jerusalem an Immovable Rock

By Andrew Tucker, International Editor, Christians for Israel International

Last October, Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison announced that the Australian government intended to consider moving the Australian embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. It was a bold statement, for which he was heavily criticised. He announced a review process in which all interested parties would be consulted.

When the time finally came to make a decision, however, the Australian government fell into the age-old trap of trying to craft a compromise policy that would please all people.

The result, unfortunately, is a compromise statement about Jerusalem issued on 15 December 2018 that pleased almost no one and offended almost everyone.

In formulating its new policy concerning the Israel-Palestine dispute, however, the Australian government gets into very murky water. It is on the status of Jerusalem that the government, in my view, goes astray.

The PM rightly emphasised that a Palestinian state must come into existence

as a result of negotiations, and observed that there is a 'rancid stalemate' between Israel and the PLO. He emphatically stated that he wanted to "question the conventional wisdom" about how the goal of two states could be achieved.

But unfortunately, he ended up simply repeating the same old mistake of limiting the recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital to 'West' Jerusalem and repeating the universal mantra that Jerusalem must be divided into 'West' and 'East' Jerusalem.

The Australian government decided that "Australia now recognises West Jerusalem, being the seat of the Knesset and many of the institutions of government, is the capital of Israel", and that "furthermore, recognising our commitment to a two-state solution," the government is also "resolved to acknowledge the aspirations of the Palestinian people for a future state with its capital in East Jerusalem".

As a result, Australia will establish a defence and trade office in Jerusalem, and only move the embassy in support of and

after final status determination". This reflects a failure to recognise the facts of history, and a very well-meaning but nevertheless distorted perception of international law. Moreover, acknowledging Palestinian aspirations for statehood with its capital 'in East Jerusalem', and moving of the embassy only as and when a State of Palestine has been established pursuant to negotiations, will not assist the negotiations, nor will they make the longed-for Palestinian state more likely. This is because they ignore the real causes of the stalemate: the structural promotion of terror by the Palestinian Authority, the continued refusal of the PLO to recognise Israel as a Jewish State, the ambitions of most Palestinian groups to destroy the Jewish State and replace it with an Islamic State, and the failure of the Palestinians – notwithstanding billions of dollars of foreign aid – to create the conditions necessary for statehood.

## Short News

### Concern About anti-Semitism

Every three years leaders of Jewish communities in Europe are asked what the particularly important issues are for their community. A 2018 survey by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee showed that concern about anti-Semitism is growing, support for Israel is increasing and that the vast majority intends to stay where they are.

### More Jews to Israel



In the past year, approximately 5% more Jews have left for Israel than the year before. In total, 29,600 Jews came to Israel, mostly from Russia. | Photo: flickr

### Prevent Smuggling

During a farewell visit to the Gaza Strip, outgoing Chief of Staff of the Israeli army, Eizenkot, said: "We thwarted the smuggling of 15-20,000 rockets to Hamas in the Gaza Strip." He added: "I hope for a long ceasefire until the end of 2019 - until then we can complete the barrier. To this day I do not believe that anything else can be done in Gaza."

### A New Bio-Toilet Creates Household Energy



The new HomeBiogas invention is a bio-toilet that feeds directly into a backyard bio-digester to create household energy. Millions of people around the world lack sewage lines and even basic toilets, but the HomeBiogas Bio-Toilet does not need regular connections. Instead, users flush the toilet with a manual pump using just 1.2 litres of grey water. The waste is flushed directly into the HomeBiogas solar bio-digester, where it is broken down by bacteria and transformed into bio-gas for household needs, along with other waste such as food scraps and animal manure.

While compost toilets can require manual emptying and can attract pests, the HomeBiogas system is completely sealed, and there's no need to have any direct contact or hand-remove waste.



# C4I UK Welcomes a Fresh Vision

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

**The activities of Christians for Israel have expanded to almost 40 countries. The United Kingdom was one of the first countries where Christians for Israel was established.**

Some 20 years ago, conferences were being organised and the Israel & Christians Today UK newspaper was being published. The number of subscribers increased rapidly to 400, with an extra 1500 copies printed for distribution into churches. The first pioneers who set up the UK branch have left, and conferences have not been held for some years. However, this situation changed last year. James Patrick, an Oxford theologian, was approached by Christians for Israel and was impressed with our biblical vision on Israel and our mission. He recognised a close resemblance between his biblical understanding and the vision which Christians for Israel is spreading. James says: "I was born in Papua New Guinea.

I came to the UK for university study in 2000, and became acquainted with the Jewish community. I am now actively involved in both Christian and Jewish communities. I have chosen to remain single to be more effective in the work which I feel God has called me to."

James completed bachelors, masters and doctoral degrees in biblical studies in Cambridge and Oxford. He is connected to an extended network of theologians, pastors and church leaders. In a recent Israel & Christians Today (UK edition) James wrote: "I am keen to meet up with church leaders and teachers, whatever their political views about the Middle East, to discuss how the Bible can shape our beliefs and actions."

Last year, James was officially appointed as our National Representative. We are very happy and thankful that the Lord provided a new and inspired representative in the UK. He has already



James Patrick speaking at a European Coalition for Israel forum

written a few excellent articles in the recently launched UK edition of our newspaper. Let us pray that the Lord will bless James Patrick and that he, the board

and volunteers around him, will be effective and influential in their relationships with churches and Christians in the UK.

# C4I Asia 'Standing with Israel'

By Chan Siew Fong, Christians for Israel Asia Regional Trainer

**The Christians for Israel Asia 'Standing with Israel' Conference (training the trainers) was held in Jakarta on 4 - 5 December 2018.**

The conference was the result of months of preparation by Hizki Laluyan in the Netherlands and Wilson Ng in Kuala Lumpur. Together they worked in concert with Christians for Israel Indonesia leaders, Pastor Dr M. Ferry H. Kakiay, (Deputy Bishop of Gereja Bethel Indonesia with over 6000 churches), Pastor Brigjen Harsanto Adi, (a former General and current President of the Indonesian Pastors' Association) and Dr Henoah Budiyanto from Gereja Bethel Indonesia.

In this 'Training the trainers' conference, every delegate, equipped with Rev W.

Glashouwer's book, *Why Israel?*, study guide and workbook written in the Bahasa Indonesia language, received training to take back to their church leaders. The aim was that each delegate would, in turn, use these materials to spread the message about Israel to their church members. The success of this conference will in time, be gauged, not only from how many came to this conference, but also by how many leaders train their bible study leaders to convey the message about Israel to members of their congregations.

On the first day of the conference, training was held at Gereja Bethel Indonesia (GBI), Fatmawati, Cilandak, South Jakarta. Pastor Lumahan (C4i Philippines) explained the reasons for standing with Israel.



Rev Conrado Lumahan exhorting the Indonesian pastors and leaders to stand with Israel.

Kuen Yoon and Siew Fong, regional trainers in Asia, then took the participants through the key points in each chapter of the *Why Israel?* workbook. 35 pastors and church leaders attended this training. They felt empowered to stand in solidarity with Israel and to use the *Why Israel?* workbook for training.

On the following day, 236 bible college professors and students, national leaders, pastors and church leaders gathered at Gajah Mada Plaza Tower, Jakarta for an introductory speech by Pastor Brigjen Harsanto Ali followed by presentations regarding Israel by Pastor Lumahan, Siew Fong and Kuen Yoon. A panel discussion followed allowing questions from the audience. This segment of the training was particularly well received. We received wonderful feedback from the participants who were grateful for the clarity of our explanations. Questions included the size of the promised land, why we should stand with Israel even though most Jews

have rejected Christ as Messiah, and how, because of that rejection, the early followers of Jesus took the message of salvation to the Gentiles. A key clarification was that standing with Israel does not require embracing Judaism.

That evening, Pastor Lumahan, Kuen Yoon and Siew Fong also spoke at a combined meeting from Pentecost Holiness Harvest Church and Obaja Bible School. 75 bible students, teachers and church leaders, mostly young adults, listened with rapt attention and asked questions, hungry for the message on Israel.

Encouraged by the success of this conference, Christians for Israel Indonesia leaders have proposed a longer conference in 2019, at more venues and with topics taught at greater depth. There is much work to be done, considering that Indonesia's Christian population is 24 million and the total population of the country was 264 million in 2017.



Regional trainer Kuen Yoon teaching the Indonesian trainers how to use the workbook *Why Israel?*



# Our Journey Continues

By Rev Henk Poot, Christians for Israel Netherlands

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

## Mount Gerizim

We continue our journey, still in the upper north of Israel’s heartland. As I wrote last time: there is so much to see here. Every step of the way is a step on biblical ground.

I previously mentioned the two mountains that arise here: Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal. Both face the biblical *Shechem* (also spelt *Sichem*) that extends into the valley between both mountains. Behind it runs the wide and long valley that slowly descends in the direction of the river Jordan. Here the people of Israel entered the Promised Land with their new leader Joshua. Mount Gerizim is the more widely known of the two mountains. A single road meanders upwards from the foot of the mountain to the top. On top is the village Har Bracha (the mountain of the blessing), that



Volunteers helping out in a vineyard picking grapes | Photo: Flashgo

harbours a yeshiva where soldiers combine their military service with studying the Bible and Jewish tradition.

## Picking Grapes

This is where the famous rabbi Melamed lives. I have been there quite often, even in the wintertime when an icy wind was blowing over the plateau and we interviewed each other in the dining room, at lunchtime, about our faith in God and the Messiah. Of course, we did that in the warm summer too, when the



Samaritans in a religious meeting at Mount Gerizim | Photo: Flashgo



View overlooking Mount Gerizim, with on the right the red rooftops of Har Bracha | Photo: Deror Avi/CC Wikimedia Commons

grapes were being picked in the vineyards. As a matter of fact, this work is done by a Christian family and all sorts of volunteers, who fulfil their part of Isaiah’s prophecy: “Strangers will shepherd your flocks; foreigners will work your fields and vineyards. And you will be called priests of the Lord; you will be named ministers of our God.” (*Isaiah 61:5-6a*).

This is only the picking though; the winemaking process is being done without ‘foreign’ intervention - that wouldn’t be kosher.

## Samaritans

Mount Gerizim is also known for the Samaritan village that is located there, one of the two remaining villages in present-day Israel. At Pesach, they celebrate the biblical feast of the Exodus from Egypt, and they still bring their sacrifices to where their temple once stood. Mount

Gerizim has always been very important to the Samaritans, more important even than Jerusalem (*John 4:20*). Maybe that has to do with the fact that they only consider the Books of Moses as their Bible.

## Hear Israel

That automatically takes us to the *Book of Deuteronomy*. Chapter 11 tells how God orders Israel, when entering the country, to stop between the two mountains. On Mount Ebal the Israelites were to build a stone altar, coated with white chalk and with the words of the Law written on it. The altar is still on one of the sides of Mount Ebal. After that, some tribes were to position themselves opposite Mount Gerizim, and the others opposite Mount Ebal. Levites, accompanied by the Ark of the Covenant, would bless the people from Mount Gerizim and pronounce a curse over all who turn their backs on God’s Word (*Deuteronomy 27:11*). That is what happened here. This is also where Joshua read the words of the Law: “There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded that Joshua did not read to the whole assembly of Israel, including the women and children, and the foreigners who lived among them” (*Joshua 8:35*). The message was clear: before Israel enters the country to inhabit it, it had to listen to what God says. That stamps Israel as a nation too. It is the people of *Shema Yisrael*, ‘Hear O Israel’, and guided by God’s words it will be able to be what it is (a holy people) and fulfil its calling to make God’s name known amongst the nations.

Having descended from Mount Gerizim, the mountain of the blessings, we begin our journey southwards. Following the trail of the patriarchs, we shall travel an ancient road, eventually leading us to Beersheba.



## Short News

### More Marinas



The Israeli Ministry of Transport wants to build nine new marinas along the Mediterranean coast. The number of landing stages would be extended from a little under three thousand to ten thousand. The plan has provoked passionate reactions among environmental activists and the public. | Photo: Flashgo

### Death Penalty

The Israeli government is in the process of adopting a law to allow terrorists to be punished with the death penalty. This was already legally possible but only in the case of a unanimous judgement by three judges. Under the new law, only a two to one majority will be necessary to invoke a death sentence. In Israel many favour the death penalty for terrorists.

### Aid to Palestinian Children



Anyone who is born deaf in the Gaza strip or the Palestinian Authority-controlled parts of Judea and Samaria (West Bank) has a problem. There is no help available in the form of cochlear implant technology. This is something the Israeli doctors at the Hadassah hospital in Jerusalem really care about. They help children from these areas. “It is a difficult process, but thanks to the close liaison between the Palestinian Authority and the Peres Centre for Peace we succeed”, says Dr Michal Kaufman, head of the cochlear implant department. | Photo: Flashgo

### Medical Cannabis Next Big Cure-All

Medical cannabis research was born in Israel. Israeli scientists remain at the forefront of discovering how compounds found in the herb can help untold numbers of people suffering from conditions including cancer, chronic pain, diabetes, epilepsy, asthma, insomnia, autism, PTSD, inflammatory bowel disease, Parkinson’s, multiple sclerosis, Crohn’s and Tourette syndrome, among others. This could be one of the biggest healthcare breakthroughs of the decade.



# 6<sup>th</sup> Thesis: The Mystery

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

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

**Thesis 6:** We believe that there is the mystery of the hardening in part of Israel for our sake, but that there is also the blindness of the Church for Israel, and a veil over the nations with regard to Israel.

**Elaboration:** With the Apostle Paul we acknowledge that a ‘hardening in part’ and temporarily has come upon Israel. This will only be the case ‘until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in’ and one day all Israel shall be saved. With great anticipation and fervent prayers we are expecting that glorious future for the people of God.

**Clarification:** The understanding of this matter is no less than the understanding of a mystery (Greek: *mustērion*), that the Apostle reveals to the members of the church in Rome, in order that they may not become conceited and come to wrong opinions and conclusions by their own reasoning – words that we, living in the 21st century, should fully take to heart! When Jesus was rejected as the promised Messiah, the message of salvation came to the Gentiles, to the nations. It was the Apostle’s desire to provoke his fellow Israelites to jealousy by this ‘success’ of his mission. In other words, Paul wanted to engage all Israel in this mission to the Gentiles (*Romans 2:19 and 3:2 with Romans 11:11-12*).


While Christians sometimes have understood it as their calling to provoke to jealousy all those of Israel who have not yet received the revelation about Jesus (*Romans 11:11*), when has the Church over the centuries ever tried to provoke Israel to jealousy by showing unconditional love? With few exceptions by individual Christians, Christianity at large did hardly anything, but added to their affliction.’

## Reflection by Rev Cornelis Kant

In *Romans 11:25-27*, Paul says: “I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers and sisters, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. And in this way, all Israel will be saved as it is written: ‘The deliverer will come from Zion; He will turn godlessness away from Jacob. And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins.’”

Paul speaks about a temporary hardening of a part of the Jewish people until.... He calls it a ‘mystery’. The early Church, on the contrary, did not understand that the rejection of Jesus as their Messiah by the larger part of the Jewish people was a divine mystery. They just saw it as stubbornness and unwillingness to believe. Many Christians in the first century felt confirmed in this view about the Jews when Jerusalem and the Holy Temple were destroyed by the Romans. They saw this as a divine sign of rejection and curse of the Jewish people. Judaism had become obsolete, and the Christian Church was now the true Israel.

Despite the wrong way in which many people form their way of thinking and their theology, all God’s covenants with and promises to the Jewish people remain and will be completely fulfilled. The prophet Isaiah writes: “On this mountain, He will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations (...) He will remove his people’s disgrace from all the earth. The Lord has spoken” (*Isaiah 25:7-8*). In beautiful metaphorical words, he speaks about a sheet that covers us as nations, and also about the removal of the disgrace inflicted on the Jewish people by its opponents. Just as Paul writes: “For God has committed them all



### Twelve Theses of Faith on Israel

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

to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all” (*Romans 11:32*).

Anti-Jewish and anti-Semitic thinking and feeling within the Christian churches over the ages led to misinterpretation and abuse of Bible verses. In *Galatians 6:12*, Paul wishes God’s peace and mercy upon all Christians and upon ‘the Israel of God’, echoing *Psalms 125 and 128* where the poet wishes ‘peace be on Israel’. What a beautiful expression of God’s continuous love and communion with Israel, His people.

# Israel’s Greatest Threat is Iran

By Yochanan Visser, Correspondent in Israel

Israel’s security situation remains the number one topic on the political agenda in the Jewish state.

There have been huge changes in the last eight years following the beginning of what has been dubbed ‘The Arab Spring’, the (Islamist) uprising against regimes across the Middle East.

Israel managed to stay out of the Syrian fray to a certain extent and has improved its ties with a range of Arab countries while at the same time has been battling the growing Iranian entrenchment in Lebanon, Syria and the Gaza Strip.

In 2018 it became clear that the Israeli military has shifted its focus from counter-terror operations to sophisticated and intelligent warfare aimed at trimming Iran’s growing influence in the Middle East. Israeli leaders, including PM Netanyahu

and the top brass of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), started to discuss openly what the IDF and the Israeli air force (IAF) were doing against the growing Iranian threat to the Jewish state.

At the same time, there have been reports of multiple airstrikes against Iran-related targets in Syria.

The goal of this relentless campaign was to stop the Iranian military build-up in Syria and Lebanon.

On 10 May 2018, the first confrontation took place between the Quds Force of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps in Syria and the IAF, which changed the way Iran acted in the war-torn country.

After Qassem Soleimani, the shrewd commander of the Quds Force, ordered the launch of 30 missiles at northern Israel, the IAF reacted by launching a devastating



bombardment which destroyed 80 targets linked to the Quds Force and the Syrian army. In one fell swoop, the IAF delivered a devastating blow to the Iranian axis in

Syria, and continued after that by targeting every delivery of sophisticated weapons to the Iranian axis, Hezbollah in particular.



Continued from pg 6

The latest IAF action in Syria took place in the night of 13 January 2019, when Israeli warplanes bombed weapon storage facilities in the vicinity of Damascus International Airport.

In a departure from standard procedure, Prime Minister Netanyahu openly admitted that Israel had bombed weapon storages. At the start of the weekly cabinet meeting on Sunday 13 January 2019, Netanyahu made the following statement:

“Just in the last 36 hours, the air force attacked Iranian warehouses with Iranian weapons at the international airport in Damascus. The accumulation of recent attacks proves that we are determined more than ever to take action against Iran in Syria, just as we promised.”

Outgoing IDF Chief of Staf Gadi Eisenkot, furthermore, revealed that as a result of the IAF campaign against Iran in Syria Soleimani decided to pull out his troops

from the border region with Israel.

At about the same time, the Quds commander shifted his focus from Syria to Lebanon and Gaza.

Iranian civil planes started to deliver weapons bound for Hezbollah directly via Beirut International Airport. The Quds Force had reportedly been assisting Hezbollah with the conversion of crude rockets into GPS guided missiles on Lebanese soil.

After Netanyahu exposed Iran’s activities in Lebanon and revealed the existence of a network of terror tunnels underneath the border with Israel, it became clear that this part of the Iranian plan to start a multiple-front war against the Jewish state had failed as well.

Then there was Gaza, where Hamas reconciled with the Islamist regime in Tehran at the end of 2017.

This reconciliation, and the forming of a new militia in Gaza by the Quds Force,

based on the Hezbollah model, caused the so-called Kite Jihad which destroyed thousands of acres of forests and agricultural fields in southern Israel during the summer of 2018.

At the beginning of November 2018, Iran ordered her Gazan proxy, Islamic Jihad, to escalate the conflict along the southern front. More than 460 missiles were lobbed at Israel in less than two days, triggering a devastating response by the IAF which destroyed 150 military targets in Gaza.

All these events are related to the on-going and relentless attempt by Iran to close in on Israel and to prepare the Iranian proxies for a multi-front war which aims to liquidate the Zionist project in the land of Israel. So far, Israel has the upper hand.

*Yochanan Visser is an independent Middle East reporter and analyst who has worked for several news sites in the U.S., Israel and The Netherlands.*

# ‘Palestine’ is Becoming a Member of the International Community

By Andrew Tucker, International Editor, Christians for Israel International

On 15 January 2019 at the United Nations headquarters in New York, President Mahmoud Abbas assumed Palestine’s presidency of the Group of 77 and China - the largest bloc at the UN, which represents 134 countries.

In his speech, Abbas restated the PLO’s position that Israel is the cause of all problems in the Middle East: “The establishment of peace and security in the Middle East will significantly enhance the opportunities for realisation of sustainable and stable development for all countries of the region,” he said. “Regrettably, however, Israel’s continued colonisation and occupation of the State of Palestine undermines our development and capacity for cooperation and coordination and obstructs cohesive future development for all peoples of the region.”

At the same time he used the opportunity to restate Palestine’s ambitious claims which it considers are based on international law: “Palestine is committed to a peaceful solution that brings an end to the occupation and the realization of the independence of the State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, living side by side in peace and security with the State of Israel on the basis of the 1967 borders, and the just resolution of all final status issues, including for the plights of our refugees and prisoners in accordance with the relevant international resolutions.”

Meanwhile, the PLO has also announced plans to push ahead with its bid for ‘Palestine’ to be admitted as a UN member state. The PLO/Palestine applied for UN membership in 2011 but that application has never been determined. Under the UN Charter, a state that is not yet a UN member can be admitted to the UN if it can establish (a) that it is a state; (b) that it is ‘peace loving’; and (c) that it is able and willing to comply with the UN Charter.

The Palestinians know that the US will veto their application for UN membership,



Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas

but they want to have at least 9 votes in favour to show that only the US veto is preventing them from becoming a full member state. Of the 15 Security Council members (5 permanent members and 10 non-permanent members) 5 current members will almost certainly vote in favour of the admission: China, Indonesia, Kuwait, South Africa, the Russian Federation. 10 of the 15 Security Council members have already recognised the State of Palestine: China, Côte d’Ivoire, Dominican Republic, Equatorial Guinea, Indonesia, Kuwait, Peru, Poland, South Africa, and the Russian Federation.

It is highly doubtful whether ‘Palestine’ constitutes a state under international law, though opinions on this matter in the legal community are divided. And over 130 nations have now recognised ‘Palestine’ as a state. So, politically-speaking, the Palestinians have a lot in their favour.

Under international law a state only exists if (in addition to having a defined population and territory) it has a government that can effectively govern independently of all other states, and can enter into diplomatic relations. Given the

many problems between the PA, Fatah and Hamas, and the PA’s dependence on Israel in so many ways, it is absurd to say the Palestinians have an effective, independent government. Similarly Palestine does not have the capacity to enter into relations with other states and can hardly be called a ‘peace-loving’ state.

So the fact that so many states recognise Palestine as a state shows most political leaders are more concerned about politics than the rule of law.

The results could be catastrophic for the Jewish people, and for Christians in the Palestinian territories. As Abbas’s recent speech in the UN indicates, if Palestine is admitted as a UN member state, it will have even more political power to demand full compliance with its claims. These include full Islamic control of the ‘Holy Basin’ (i.e. the Old City of Jerusalem and adjacent territory - which contain important Jewish, Christian and Islamic sites), and the removal of all Israelis (a synonym for Jews) from the so-called ‘Occupied Palestinian Territories’ – including the Old City of Jerusalem.

## Short News

### Temple Tax Weight Found



An Israeli archaeologist is showing a small inscribed stone weight found in November 2018 while sifting rubble that was dug up near the Western Wall (Kotel) at the bottom of the Temple Mount. The inscription reads ‘beka’ in archaic Biblical Hebrew. This is what the census tax (or Temple Tax) is called in *Exodus 38:26* and that in later years was paid when visiting the Temple (*Matthew 17: 24-27*). Because no half-shekel coins were in circulation during the first Temple period, pilgrims weighed out the correct amount of silver with these stone weights. Again, further proof of the Jewish history in Jerusalem. | Photo: Flashgo

### Ethiopian Immigrant



Eighteen-year-old Sintayeh Shafrao from Ethiopia participated in the 2018 annual Israeli Bible contest and won! He had to promise to return to Ethiopia afterwards, however, because Israel has currently stopped the immigration of Ethiopians with Jewish roots. But after some encounters with ministers and policy-makers, the Ethiopian teenager was allowed to stay after all. In November 2018, his family was allowed to immigrate into Israel as well. This was possible because *Christians for Israel* initiated their application via official authorities. Shafrao also appealed to the Israeli government to allow immigration into Israel for the eight thousand Jews who are still waiting in Ethiopia. | Photo: Flashgo

### Football and Shabbat

When an Israeli TV-show asked its viewers what they thought of important football matches on Shabbat, they were in for a surprise. Although a small minority of the football fans observe Shabbat, 70% of the respondents thought that no matches should be played on Shabbat. This was not only to enable religious fans to join the matches but also to avoid compelling religious players to play on Shabbat.



# Israel is a 'Treasured Possession'

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

When I speak or preach about the Jewish people as God's chosen people, often people react with a feeling such as: "and what about us..." or "we are still God's people too..." It feels like some sort of jealousy or allergic reaction, as if God does us an injustice when He expresses His love and election of Israel. Let us never forget that we only live by God's grace through Jesus Christ. We can never claim God's love. To see what is really going on between God and Israel, let us consider *Deuteronomy 7:6*: "The Lord God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth." God wanted a people for Himself as a treasure. Israel as a light and blessing for the world, especially by bringing forth the Messiah, is thus preceded by being a treasured possession for the Lord Himself. That is why the Lord often speaks about

Israel as His bride. God's relationship with Israel is not a chilly one that is only about rules and laws.

On the contrary, it is a compassionate relationship based upon an intense deep love. *Isaiah 62* says: "But you shall be called My Delight Is In Her, and your land Married, for the Lord delights in you (...) and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you." This kind of speaking about Israel in terms of a marriage shows how deep God's love is for Israel as His 'treasured possession'. In *Ezekiel 16*, the Lord expresses His love with the following words: "And you grew up and became tall and arrived at full adornment. Your breasts were formed (...) when I passed by you again and saw you, behold, you were at the age for love (...), and you became mine."

This text is full of compassion. It makes us



humble when we realise how wonderful God's love and grace is towards us, that we also are beloved by God and brought into a

deep bond with the Jewish people through Jesus Christ, the Messiah and King of Israel. | Photo: flickr

## Theologians Replace Replacement Theology

By James E Patrick, Israel & Christians Today, UK

On 16 November 2018, few people outside the small meeting room 605 of the Colorado Convention Center in Denver, United States, were aware that a new theological reformation was being birthed.

The huge Society of Biblical Literature (SBL) and American Academy of Religion (AAR) conferences draw thousands of theologians and biblical scholars from across the world for annual meetings every year to one of several big American cities. As with Pentecost in *Acts 2*, when Jesus chose the biggest international gathering of Jews as the setting to launch his Church, so also the eve of SBL/AAR was selected as the best time for the inaugural meeting of the Society for Post-Supersessionist Theology.

Supersessionism is the technical theological term for replacement theology or fulfilment theology. It refers primarily to the belief that the Church has replaced Israel as God's chosen people, and that Israel's role as a nation was fulfilled and

abolished when Jesus first came to embody Israel as the promised Messiah. So 'post-supersessionism' is a way of theologians saying that they have moved on from replacement theology, defining that as an idea that belongs in the past, outdated and no longer valid for Christian theology.

The Society was founded by a small group of mainly American theologians, led by

**Supersessionism is the technical theological term for replacement theology or fulfilment theology.**

Kendall Soulen whose 1996 book *The God of Israel and Christian Theology* was the first full-scale academic critique of replacement theology. The new committee of the Society also includes a Catholic scholar (Holly Taylor Coolman), an Anglican non-dispensational scholar (Gerald McDermott), and two Messianic Jewish scholars (Mark Kinzer and David

Rudolph). Through the Society's website [www.spostst.org](http://www.spostst.org), membership is open to any theologian who agrees with the mission of the Society.

What makes this Society unique are its three fundamental beliefs: (1) God's covenant with the Jewish people is irrevocable; (2) Messiah Yeshua (Jesus) is truly God and the Saviour of all,

reaffirming the 'core Christological convictions' of the early creeds of the Church; (3) the basic identity of the Church is as 'a table fellowship of Jews and Gentiles united in the Messiah'. This holds together the key beliefs of both the Jewish people and the Gentile Church, and also explicitly includes Messianic Jews as an essential part of what the Church should look like.

The way the beliefs of the Society are described is deliberately vague, allowing for 'a family of perspectives'. This is necessary, to involve theologians from backgrounds and perspectives as diverse as possible, while still remaining within the accepted boundaries of orthodoxy. Only with such a group will it be possible to find common ground for starting to re-think the misguided and damaging theological ideas of earlier Christian theologians, going all the way back to the second century AD.

In addition to annual meetings before SBL/AAR, the Committee will be considering the possibility of a hub for resources, and other ways of countering supersessionism with more persuasive views. The website will soon publish write-ups of all speakers' presentations from the inaugural conference. This is still a 'day of small things' (*Zechariah 4:10*), but 'pray for us that the word of the Lord will run quickly and be glorified' (*2Thessalonians 3:1*).

## Letters of the Aleph-bet: Resh ר

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

The *resh* is the twentieth letter of the Aleph-Beit. It is the letter 'ר'. The ancient sign, from which also the Greek Rho (sign: ρ) and our R originate, depicted a head. The Aramaic word '*resh*' means '*head*', as does the Hebrew word '*rosh*' – in itself a remarkable meaning for a letter that is located almost at the end of the Aleph-Beit! One could say that the Hebrew word '*resh*' depicts someone who bows his head.

In Hebrew, the word '*head*' also has the connotation of '*beginning*' or '*principle*'. Hasidic tradition notes that there are four '*capitals*' (literally: '*head-letters*') in

the Aleph-Beit, just as the Jewish calendar contains four different New Year's days. The first of these is the *aleph* which is, of course, the beginning of the Aleph-Beit. The next is the *Hei*, meaning '*exhalation*' – ie. the expression of air by which every letter is pronounced. The third '*capital letter*' in the Hebrew alphabet is the letter *Yod*, which means '*dot*' – in writing, every Hebrew letter starts with a *dot*. The *resh*, finally, conveys the idea of '*meaning*' or '*knowledge*'.

Together, these four letters form the word *Aryeh*, meaning '*lion*' – the first of the four

animals in the prophet *Ezekiel's* vision of the heavenly throne chariot (*ch.1*). But you can also form the word *yir'ah* with them, meaning '*fear*', or '*respect*'.

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (*Psalms 111:10*). *Proverbs 1:7* uses the word '*knowledge*' instead of wisdom. For true knowledge and wisdom, you have to be receptive.

This receptiveness arises from fear: respect for the Lord, through which the ego is, as it were, made subordinate to the reality outside oneself because one is open for the Source of reality, the Creator.

With the letter *Qoph*, we saw already that the *resh* could also represent the '*Rasha*', meaning '*the evildoer*'. However, the '*rasha*' can repent from his evil ways, and return to the *Qadosh*, the Holy God. In the way of repentance, the *resh* changes from '*Rasha*' into *Rosh*, meaning '*head*'.

Finally, it is interesting to note that the numerical value of *resh* is two hundred. In the Talmud, two hundred '*zuz*' (an ancient Jewish coin) represents the poverty line. Somebody who possesses less than two hundred '*zuz*' is entitled to appeal to the charity of the community.



# US Withdrawal Increases Threat

By Johannes de Jong, Director of Sallux

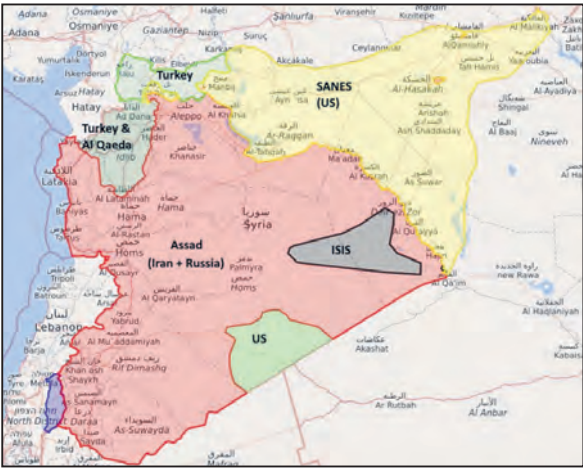
**US withdrawal from Syria creates Israel's gravest security situation in the 21st century.**

The security situation of Israel cannot be seen separated from what is happening in the countries around Israel. This is true in particular when it comes to the threat from Iran and the Iranian expansion in Syria. Iran is trying very hard to use Syria as a highway and base to build up military power against Israel. This is the reason that Israel is regularly bombing Iranian targets in Syria. The harsh reality is that almost everyone involved agrees that the US withdrawal from North-East Syria will make things much worse for Israel.

The US has a 2000-strong force in the Self Administration of North-East Syria (SANES). SANES is unique in the Middle East. In 2013 SANES was established in the combined regions of Jazira (utter North-East Syria), Kobane and Afrin (utter North-West Syria). It was established as an alliance of Kurds, Syriac-Assyrian Christians and Arabs living in these regions. It is based on secular democratic and power-sharing governance. It has full freedom of religion and full equality and equal freedoms for men and women. Even those who convert from Islam to Christianity can establish their own churches publicly. There is, for example, an increasing number of Christian Kurds. The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) are the army of SANES. SANES hosts hundreds of thousands of displaced people from Syria and Iraq.

Since 2014, the International Coalition and the SDF have increasingly worked

together in successfully defeating ISIS (which is not finished yet). US Army is present in Jazira, Kobane and liberated areas (Manbij, Raqqa, Deir Ezzor). US Army was never present in Afrin. Turkey invaded Afrin in January 2018 and destroyed it. The Yazidi's and Christian Kurds there were driven away or forcefully converted to Islam by the jihadists that Turkey used in the attack at Afrin. Tens of thousands of Kurds were driven away from Afrin.

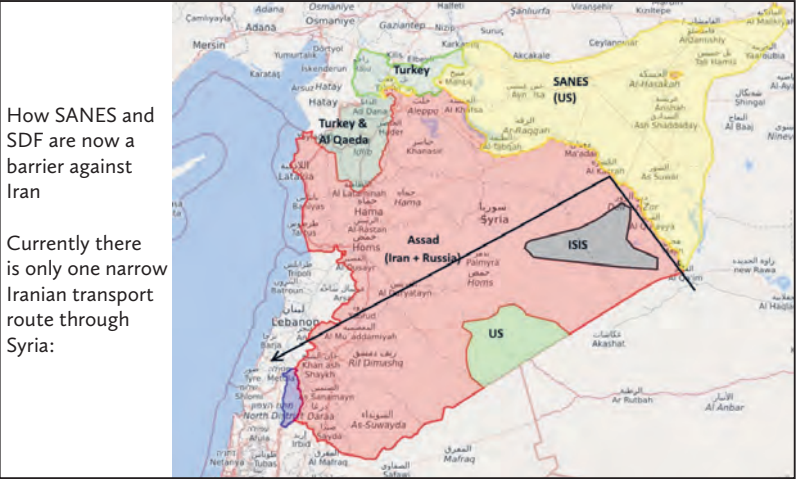


Map based on Liveuamap Syria

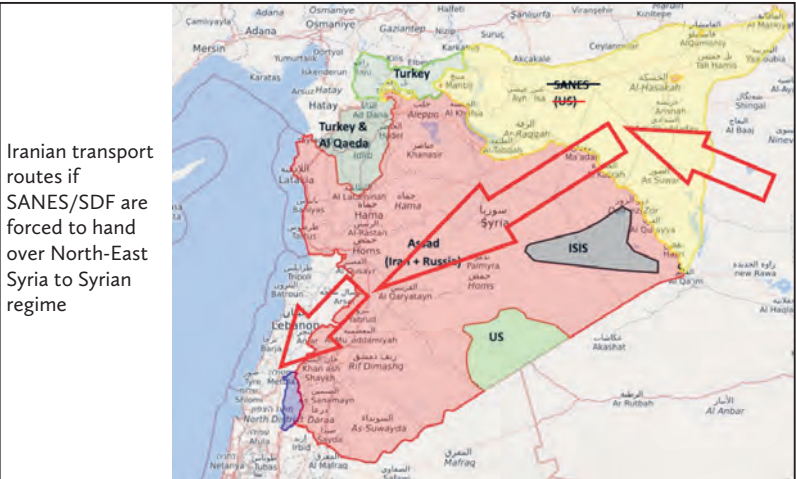
As you can see on the map, one-third of Syria is now part of SANES and defended by the SDF. From this map, it is clear that SANES is strategically located between Iraq and the Iran/regime-controlled part of Syria. So this 2000 US force helps a 50.000 SDF force to be a critical barrier against Iran.

If the US leaves, without the protection of SANES against Turkey the following will happen. Moscow promised SANES and SDF protection against Turkey if they merge with the Assad regime. If there is no other solution, this will for sure happen as Turkey would otherwise destroy and murder both the Kurds and

the Syriac-Assyrian Christians (as we have seen in Afrin). If that merger happens, there will be no barrier anymore against Iran as Moscow and Assad will instruct the SDF to let them through. Here you see the difference:



Currently there is only one narrow Iranian transport route through Syria:



Iranian transport routes if SANES/SDF are forced to hand over North-East Syria to Syrian regime

This means that Iran can increase its troop movement and military build-up by 400%. This increase is possible because three additional major routes will become available that each are easier and better than the current route. That will create an unprecedented Iranian pressure on Israel and the whole Arab region.

There are attempts to solve the situation with a mixed force of French and Arab troops to replace the US. It is very unclear if that can succeed in time. It is very unclear how the US wants to protect SANES as economic sanctions alone will

not stop Turkey from invading. SANES will only not merge with the Assad regime if it is certain that Turkey will be stopped from invading North-East Syria. If the US gives Turkey a 20-mile-zone in Northern Syria, SANES will for sure merge with the Assad regime before that happens.

This means that all those who care for the future and security of Israel should ask President

Trump to postpone the withdrawal until SANES is really safe against any Turkish aggression.

*Johannes de Jong is director of Sallux. Sallux is a Christian political thinktank at a European level, and has been involved in the situation in North-East Syria since 2014.*

## Israel's Story in Maps

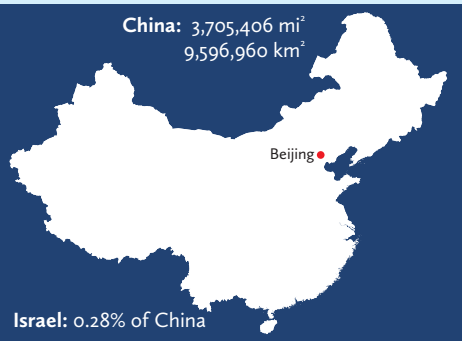
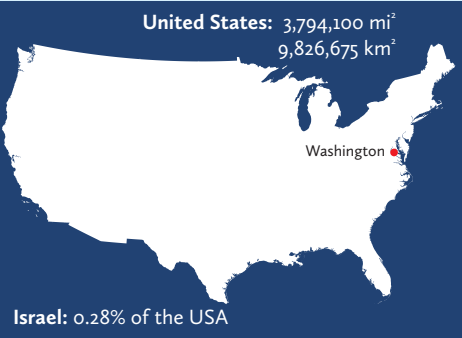
Courtesy of CFOIC Heartland

The State of Israel is so often the focus of the world's attention totally out of proportion with its physical size, and yet misinformation over its borders – modern and historical – is a favourite tool of those who oppose Israel's very existence. Israel's history of thousands of years is dotted with conflict, and yet so many do not understand just how small this amazing land is. Here we begin a series excerpted from the resource 'Israel's Story in Maps', a remarkable story indeed.

### The Land of Israel - 3D Illustration



### Map 1 - Everything's Relative





# Dreadfully Direct Psalm 2, Part 4c

© Johannes Gerloff, Theologian, Journalist, Lecturer and Author

**This is the sixth instalment of a longer article written by German theologian and journalist Johannes Gerloff on *Psalm 2*.**

God's answer to the rebellion of the nations is the appointment of his Anointed One in Zion. Rashi paraphrases the words of God in the mouth of the psalmist: 'Why are you raging? I have appointed him to be prince and king in Zion, the mountain of my holiness.' And Radak refers back to the original historical context of *Psalm 2* narrating: 'After David had conquered the fortress of Zion, the Philistines gathered to fight against him.' Then the Jewish exegete explains the thoughts of God: 'How can they consider eradicating the kingship of the house of David? Though I made him king and anointed him!'

This scene is reminiscent of *Psalms 110:1*, a psalm 'of David' the 'prophetic saying of the Lord says to my Lord' is transmitted: 'Sit at my right hand until I place your enemies at the footstool of your feet.' The text here describes 'not just any human being, but the one who 'is my saint,' anointed by me with the Holy Spirit.' In this way 'both [the son and Zion] were authenticated by God's promise' (2 Samuel 7:13).<sup>ii</sup>

But, 'history makes no mention of a king of Israel being anointed on Zion.'<sup>iii</sup> Indeed, this statement is difficult to understand if you only have King David or Jesus Christ in mind. Therefore, the repatriation of the people of Israel to Zion and the establishment of a king on Zion in the future must also be considered here. God will do this, even if 'the Gentiles are raging.' The return of the people of Israel is preparing the installation of the anointed king on Mount Zion.

With the affirmation 'I have set My king on Zion' (*Psalms 2:6*), any competition to Jerusalem is eliminated. It is not in Geneva, New York, Brussels, Moscow, Berlin, London, Paris, Beijing or Washington that the fate of humanity is decided, but in Jerusalem. At the same time, any other claim to power over this city is declared invalid. Neither the League of Nations nor the United Nations, neither the Pope nor the Islamic world has any power to decide what happens to Jerusalem, but only He 'who sits in heaven.' This is one of the fundamental statements of Scripture.

The psalmist here does not use the traditional name, 'Yerushalayim,' Jerusalem, to refer to the central city on the mountain ridge between the

Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan Valley. He speaks of 'Tsion/Zion', a term used much more frequently in the *Book of Psalms* than the name 'Jerusalem.'<sup>iv</sup>

'Tsion' is a 'designation' or 'marking,' the 'grade' that a student receives at school. 'Tsion LeShevah' is an 'award,' a 'honourable citation.' 'Tsion-Derech' is a 'signpost,' or 'landmark.' Luther says, 'The name Zion designates a control room.'<sup>v</sup> And Hirsch explains 'Zion' as a 'landmark and monument to humanity.'<sup>vi</sup>

'Zion' demands attention and thus gives alignment, provides orientation. Those who are influenced by the biblical word live 'Zion-oriented.' That is, they do not orientate themselves according to the great and powerful of this world, nor according to the Zeitgeist nor political correctness. Rather, they look at Zion and know: 'Torah, i.e. instruction, will proceed from Zion' (*Isaiah 2:3*). To live 'Zion-oriented' is not just about looking at Zion, but fundamentally being guided by Zion.

Zion is defined as 'the mountain of my holiness' or 'my holy mountain.' It is God's holiness that is decisive for the character of this mountain. Zion is the place where the Almighty Creator and Mover of the universe is grounded, moored to this earth. Paul testifies that the 'glory'

belongs to the people of Israel (*Romans 9:4*). The living God has bound His glorious presence, which is called 'Shekhinah' in rabbinic teaching, to this nation. And in our time, after millennia of separation, she returns to Zion together with the Jewish people.

Endnotes:

<sup>i</sup> Johann Georg Walch (ed.), Dr. Martin Luthers Sämtliche Schriften. Vierter Band. Auslegung des Alten Testaments (Fortsetzung). Auslegung über die Psalmen (Groß Oesingen: Verlag der Lutherischen Buchhandlung Heinrich Harms, 2. Auflage, 1880-1910), 268.

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

<sup>iii</sup> Cf. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Psalms 1-35, Commentary on the Old Testament vol.5/1*. Translated by Francis Bolton (Peabody, Massachusetts/USA: Hendrickson Publishers, February 1989), 94.

<sup>iv</sup> Amos Hakham, *Book of Psalms, books 3-5, Psalms 73-150* (Jerusalem, Hotzaat Mosad haRav Kook, 6th edition, 1990/Hebrew), 7.

<sup>v</sup> Walch (ed.), Dr. Martin Luthers Sämtliche Schriften, 270.

<sup>vi</sup> Samson Raphael Hirsch, *Psalmen* (Basel: Verlag Morascha, 2. Neubearbeitete Auflage 2005), 9, referring to Jeremiah 31:20; 2 Kings 23:17; Ezekiel 39:15; compare Isaiah 2:3; Jeremiah 30:17.

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

*The full text of this article, including extensive footnotes, can be found at [www.c4israel.org/teaching-articles/](http://www.c4israel.org/teaching-articles/)*

## Purim: A Celebration of Bravery

By Dr G.H. Cohen Stuart, Theologian and Certificated Israel Tour-Guide

The name Purim, Lots, is taken from the book of *Esther 3:7*. Ordered by, and in the presence of Haman, the lot (*pur*) was cast to determine the best day to extinguish the Jewish People. Purim celebrates the failure of Haman's plot (the final solution to the Jewish question). That single failure has never lost its horrible and shocking reality.

### The Steps of Purim

Purim is celebrated in steps, representing different aspects of the feast. The first step is set during the morning service on the Sabbath before the feast. The usual Torah reading is followed by a special reading from *Deuteronomy 25:16-19*. There, Israel is called not to forget to blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven after entering the promised land. What is the connection with Esther? The last king of Amalek (1 Samuel 22) was Agag. The Agagite Haman was his descendant.

The plot of Haman was a continuation of the cowardly assault by Amalek on Israel's rear, right after the exodus from Egypt (*Exodus 17*). The reading of *Deuteronomy 25* reminds Israel that it is the most important struggle in all of TaNaKh: "The Lord will have a war against Amalek from generation to generation" (*Exodus 17:16*). It is not just a fight against (now extinct) Amalek, but a combat against any form of anti-Semitism – until today.

When in the evening the celebration starts, the second preparation is also finished. Convinced of the seriousness of Haman's threat (*Esther 4:14*), Esther put

out a call via her uncle to all Jews in Susa, the capital of the empire, to fast with her for three days. Then she risked her own life to save her people: "If I perish, I perish" (*Esther 4:16*). To commemorate this, 13 Adar (in 2019 on 20 March) is a fast day. According to tradition, upon entering the throne hall, she said: "My God, my God, why have You forsaken me" (*Psalms 22*).

### Celebrate with Masks

The fast ends at sunset, when the 14th of Adar begins. Synagogues fill up with people. Many visitors are dressed up, often masked. That masquerade is not to forget that people often act differently than who they really are. Haman, too, kept up the appearance of a loyal servant to King Ahasuerus, while in fact, he was not just after blotting out the Jews, but in particular after royal power (hence his arrogant suggestion, *Esther 6:6-9*). Mordecai, by refusing to kneel before Haman (*Esther 3:3*) appears to be a rebel, but at the same time prevents a conspiracy against Ahasuerus (*Esther 2:19-23*). In the second part of the book, the masks fall.

Everything is turned around (*Esther 9:1*). The day on which Haman had wanted to destroy all Jews becomes a day of punishment for Jew-haters. When the masks have fallen, Haman appears to be a Jew-hater, Esther a Jewess, Mordecai her uncle, and the Jews loyal subjects to King Ahasuerus. Haman's accusation (*Esther 3:9*) of a nation that does not observe the king's laws, is shown to be a lie.



Both in the evening and the following morning, the entire book of Esther is read. As 'the memory of Amalek' is to be blotted out, the name of Haman, when read, is made inaudible by trampling the feet and the noise of rattles and tooters. It causes young and old to read the text attentively.

The morning service is followed by a festive meal. During the preparations, neighbours and friends bring each other gifts and deliver food packets to people with limited income so that they can celebrate the feast (*Esther 9:19, 22*). From all neighbours, you can expect plates with sweets and Haman's ears, the special Purim cookies. It is the only feast in Judaism where one is allowed to drink without limits, to the extent that one does not know anymore whom to bless or to curse, Haman or Mordecai.

Pesach celebrates the Divine intervention in history. In the Purim story, the Jewish people act themselves. No name of God appears in the book of Esther, though hidden references were discovered in the text. Against the divine intervention of the exodus, Purim seems just a secular happening.

This least religious of Israel's feasts is one of the most beloved, not just in secular, but especially in strictly religious circles. According to rabbis, Purim is the only feast that will be celebrated in the coming new world (*olam haba*): the victory over anti-Semitism and Jew-haters. | Photo: flickr

*Dr G.H. Cohen Stuart is a theologian and in Israel a certificated tour-guide. He lives with his wife, partly in Jerusalem and partly in the Netherlands.*



# Moshe and His Family

**The project that Christians for Israel has been very actively supporting from the beginning is the Jaffa Institute which is led by Rabbi David Portowicz. Who is being helped?**

Firstly, children from disadvantaged families and orphans, and children of parents who are not coping with home life. And secondly, families. Here is an example of one such family.

Moshe is a single father of nine children. The family lives in Kfar Saba in Israel. After the mother abandoned the family, child protection representatives came to tell Moshe that his children would be placed out of the home if he did not take care of them properly. Since the family was so large, it was likely that they would end up in different homes. Moshe quit his job to take care of his children and keep the family together. Moshe lives in social housing and receives a social assistance benefit. However, that is not sufficient to

pay for all expenses. Besides the poverty they face, Moshe's daughter has a genetic disorder that causes her intestines to grow at a different pace compared to the rest of her body. As a consequence, she often needs surgery.

**Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and He will reward them for what they have done.** Proverbs 19:17

## Thanks to You

The Jaffa Institute provides this family with a food package every two weeks. Moshe tells us that he put one package away once for an emergency. Weeks later his daughter came home from school. She wanted a fried egg, but there was no oil left and no money to buy new oil. All of a sudden Moshe remembered the package. He opened it and found a bottle of olive oil. He called it 'the miracle of Hanukkah!' (With Hanukkah, it is commemorated among other things how the Lord



provided for a small jar of oil, which kept the Menorah of the temple burning for eight days.)

Every month is a challenge, but Moshe is grateful for all the help his family receives. He hopes that the extra support will help

his children to grow, focus on school and in the end become independent adults.

*Support the children in Israel through the Jaffa Institute by filling out the coupon on the back page.*

# The Gift of Healing and Hope

By Anemone Rüger, Christians for Israel Project Coordinator - Holocaust Survivors in Israel and Ukraine

**A fragile woman is trying to sit up on her bed, welcoming us with an expectant smile as we enter her semi-dark room in an old Soviet housing block. A row of preserving jars filled with vegetables for the winter is sitting under the table. A member of the Kremenchug Jewish community is helping us find needy Holocaust survivors and Jewish seniors.**



Sima (pictured left) was a one-year-old when the invasion of the Wehrmacht (German army) in June of 1941 brought World War II to her Ukrainian home town. Like all other Jewish men of military age,

her father was drawn into the Red Army (the army of the Soviet Union) and sent to the front lines. He died in a German camp for prisoners of war. Her mother escaped with her, always fleeing East, until they ended up in Alma-Ata, Kazakhstan. No sooner had mother and daughter returned to their heavily destroyed home city in 1949 than Sima's mother died of the hardships of her odyssey.

Eight-year-old orphaned Sima grew up with her grandfather. When she graduated from school, she immediately started working as a seamstress in a textile factory. Her current pension of about 50 Euro pays for no more than the most basic food items, let alone direly needed medication. There is no such thing as health insurance.

## Loneliness

Then we meet Boris in the synagogue of Kremenchug. Much like Sima, he escaped the Holocaust and survived the war by fleeing with his mother and two sisters – first to Stalingrad, then to Russian Saratov.

"When we came back in 1943, 95% of the city was destroyed. People met us saying, 'What do you want here?!' – Then they sent us away to the village," says Boris. He starts crying as he mentions his father, who returned from the fighting having suffered severe injuries and eventually died much too early. "I had such a good papa, and that is an understatement."

Boris retired a long time ago. His worst enemy is loneliness. And sometimes hunger, too. But this changed last October. Now Boris joins his fellow seniors in the canteen of the synagogue for a warm meal at lunchtime every day, provided by Christians for Israel.

## Changing Lives

Life also changed for Sima. She now regularly receives the medication she needs. A volunteer from the synagogue goes shopping for her, with the help of Christians for Israel supporters. Nearly 500 Holocaust survivors and seniors in Ukraine now receive regular support through Christians for Israel

However, in cities like Kremenchug or Bila Tserkva, where despite many years of Aliyah the Jewish communities still number several thousand. Many remain who are dependent on external support as they are not able to manage a move to Israel, either due to their old age, or for lack of relatives who might otherwise be there for them.



Photo above: Soup Kitchen in Kremtschug

There are many other cities in Ukraine where the team members of Christians for Israel travel thousands of kilometres in the long winter months to deliver urgently needed food and other aid to the needy of the Jewish communities.

A few months ago, we commemorated the 80th anniversary of the Reich Pogrom Night of the Nazi regime, which for millions of Jewish people was the beginning of the end.

What a divine gift if we can bring healing and hope to God's chosen people, especially in a country where they are so much in need of it.

*Please consider joining this effort by donating for food parcels (€ 10) so that the Jewish people in Ukraine don't go hungry this winter. You can donate by filling out the coupon on page 12.*

Photo below: Preserves in Sima's home





# Looking Back on Aliyah in 2018

By Koen Carlier, Christians for Israel Ukraine

Although the year 2019 is already a few weeks old, the start of a new year always presents a good opportunity to pause for reflection and look back on the previous year. The practical help our supporters provide, especially with free transport to a consulate and the Israeli embassy and after that to an airport, is appreciated enormously.

By providing transport we make families feel safe and can also help in their struggle to collect all official documents. Without these, they cannot get an exit visa and begin building a new existence in Israel. At the moment we have eight minibuses and three passenger cars at our disposal to do our work, a necessity in a country the size of Ukraine.

## Leaving is Always Difficult

In the past year, we assisted families from places we had not visited before. Also, a number of Holocaust survivors asked us

to help them with their departure to Israel. Our two hiding places (in Kiev and the east) were fully occupied, especially by families coming from the Ukrainian war zone and by families waiting for their departure flights and who were living far from an airport. If possible, we avoid night-time travelling, especially during the cold winter months. However, it remains a problem if families have fled without the intention to go to Israel. But because of the dead-end and dangerous situation in the east, they choose to leave anyway. In that case, often documents must be obtained from the archives. That usually presents quite a fuss, and what's more, it is dangerous to return to the war-zone.

## Helping Where Possible

In Ukraine, we organised 20, and in Russia 12 aliyah seminars (informative meetings about emigrating to Israel).



Holocaust survivor Svetlana (second on the left) from the village of Dzigovka survived the ghetto of Yampol. She hopes to go to Israel soon, with her daughter and grandson. Here she is on her way to the Israeli embassy in Kiev.



During the cold Ukrainian winter the Aliyah team travel long distances on icy roads

We organised six consul days together with several other Christian organisations and the Israeli embassy. These are meetings where professional and practical explanation is given about the possibilities of making aliyah for Jews who wish to move to Israel. We have experienced excellent cooperation with the Jewish Agency and a number of rabbis when we have visited new places. We are grateful for that. The visit of the Dutch Chief Rabbi Binyomin Jacobs and his wife Blume in October last year was a real boost, especially for the rabbis and their parishioners who live very isolated.

Isaiah 11:12 clearly writes about the work that we are allowed to do here for so many years already: "He will raise a

banner for the nations and gather the exiles of Israel; He will assemble the scattered people of Judah from the four quarters of the earth." | Photo: Christians for Israel

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

# ISRAEL

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

**Christians for Israel - International**  
Leon Meijer, Chairman  
Rev Willem J.J. Glashouwer, President  
Rev Cornelis Kant, Executive Director  
PO 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 - East Africa**  
PO Box 34479, Kampala, Uganda  
Tel: +256 392 865 461 | c4iuganda@yahoo.com

**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 - UK**  
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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