

# ISRAEL

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CHRISTIANS FOR  
**ISRAEL**  
INTERNATIONAL

Understanding Israel and world events from a Biblical perspective

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The Christians for Israel leadership during our Forum in Jerusalem (March 2019). Together we bring the good news about God's faithfulness to the Jewish people to the world.

## Israel: A Sign of Hope for all Nations

In *Matthew 24*, Jesus' disciples asked Him about the 'signs of His coming' and the 'end of the age'. Jesus said there will be wars and rumours of wars. Nations will rise against each other, there will be famines and earthquakes – but these will be just the beginning of the 'birth pangs'.

At the end of this age, leading to the coming of Christ (first for those who are ready for Him, then in glory for the whole world to see) there will be a growing 'wickedness', lack of love, and even hatred by all nations of true followers of Jesus. It will be a time in which those who profess faith in Christ will be hunted.

But in the midst of this persecution, Jesus says, there will be two positive signs, beacons of hope in the darkness. The first of these is the fig tree whose twigs get tender and its leaves come out, showing 'the summer is near' (*verse 32*). This speaks about the national restoration of Israel.

The other sign of hope is that 'this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations'. When that happens, 'then the end will come' (*verse 14*).

Over the last 100 years, we have no doubt seen a rise of wickedness in the world and falling away in the Church.

But we have also seen both those signs of hope being fulfilled: the restoration of the Jewish people to the land, and the 'gospel of the kingdom' going to the nations.

**We feel immensely grateful and privileged to be part of God's amazing work of restoration at the 'end of this age'.**

Renewed interest in the 'gospel of the Kingdom' came about as a result of the spiritual revival that began in Europe in the early 1800s, following the massive upheavals caused by the French Revolution. Bible-believing Christians and Jews began to study God's word afresh and realised that the great hope offered by the Bible is the coming Kingdom of peace and prosperity on earth when the Messiah comes. This idea of the kingdom on earth under Messiah had been lost (or denied) for centuries by most Church denominations.

It is a message that to this very day challenges the established theology of most church denominations.

Since the early 1970s, there have been many renewed efforts to bring this gospel into the nations.

This year is the 40th anniversary of the ministry of Christians for Israel – bringing good news about God's faithfulness to the Jewish people to the world.

We feel immensely grateful and privileged to be witnesses of God's amazing work of restoration at the 'end of this age'.

In this edition of *Israel & Christians Today*, we wish to share with you some of the highlights of our ministry. We do so not out of pride, but out of thankfulness for what God achieves despite our own weakness.

Many Christians are awakening to the significance of these events. Yet many are still asleep. There remains so much to be done to raise awareness in the church around the world of what is happening - to bring the 'gospel of the Kingdom as a testimony to all nations'.

**Will you help us?**

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Meals on Wheels



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







Short News

Blueprints for Ventilators



Saving human lives is important for the Israel division of Medtronic, a medical device company. Therefore, they provided the blueprints of its ventilators free of charge to companies who are seeking to produce them. The CEO stated: “Our goal is to prolong lives—to save lives, in fact. This is what’s needed right now, in the emergency situation we’re in, and this consideration comes before everything else.” The company is not afraid that this decision will have a negative impact on the firm’s profit.  
| Photo: Flash90

Compensation Nazi-looted Art

Heirs of Jewish art historian Curt Glaser will receive financial compensation from the ‘Kunstmuseum Basel’ (Switzerland). Glaser was director of Berlin’s ‘Kunstbibliothek’ – the city’s historical art library. Glaser lost his job when the Nazis seized power in 1933 and he had to sell most of his art at an auction at a very low price. Part of his collection was purchased by the ‘Kunstmuseum Basel’. Glaser then fled to Paris and later to the US where he died in 1943. It took years before the heirs and the museum reached a compromise.

Jackals Take Over



While the majority of Israel stays inside, some seize the opportunity: jackals are taking over Tel Aviv’s main park. Normally these animals would look for scraps in secluded areas of the park. But since there are hardly any visitors, they need to find their food elsewhere.  
| Photo: Flash90

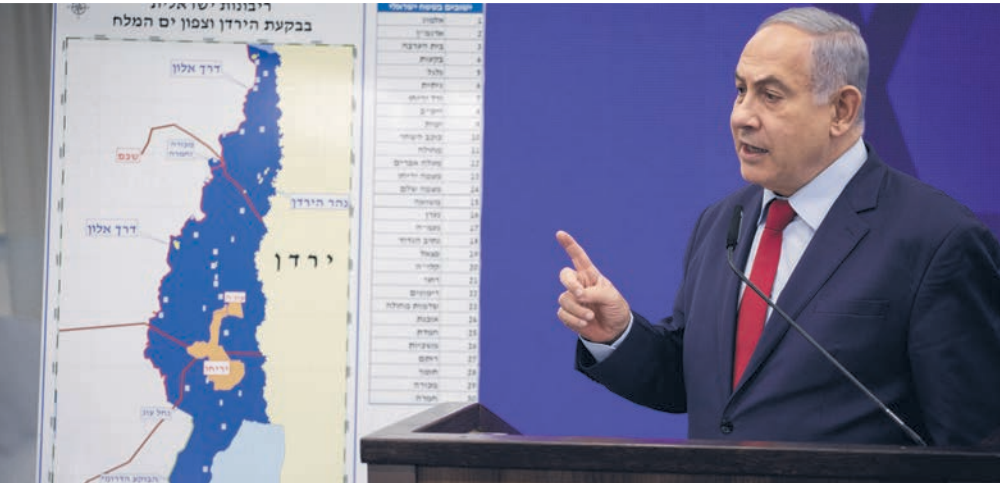
Iranian Spy Captured

Israel’s Shin Bet security service has charged a citizen with spying on behalf of Iran. The spy was asked to carry out terror attacks and collect information about Israeli defense and strategic sites. “This investigation shows again that Iran and its proxies are working to recruit and take advantage of Israelis for the interests of Iran,” the Israeli security service said.

Israel Plans to ‘Annex’ Land in West Bank

■ Israel & Christians Today Staff

The new Israeli government’s plans to apply Israeli law and jurisdiction to the settlement blocs in Area C of the West Bank, and the Jordan valley, have led to outrage in the international community. Jordan’s King Abdullah has warned that should Israel move forward with plans to annex parts of the West Bank, it would lead to a ‘massive conflict’ with his country. According to an interview published by the German daily Der Spiegel, Abdullah insisted that a two-state solution was ‘the only way forward’ in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. “What would happen if the Palestinian National Authority collapsed? There would be more chaos and extremism in the region. If Israel really annexed the West Bank in July, it would lead to a massive conflict with the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan,” he said. “I don’t want to make threats and create an atmosphere of loggerheads, but we are considering all options. We agree with many countries in Europe and the international community that the law of strength should not apply in the Middle East. Leaders who advocate a one-state solution do not understand what that would mean,” he told the German Daily. France, Ireland, Sweden, Belgium, Spain and Luxembourg have reportedly expressed support for threats of punitive action in a bid to deter the new Israeli



Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu delivering a statement to the press in Ramat Gan. | Photo: Flash90

government from carrying out the move with a green light from Washington. Annexation of settlements and the Jordan Valley has been a key campaign promise of Netanyahu and his Likud party in recent elections. Slightly fewer than half of Israelis back the idea, and fewer than a third think the government will actually go through with it, according to a recent survey of Israelis. President Donald Trump’s Mideast peace plan allows for the possibility of US recognition of such annexations provided Israel agrees to negotiate under the framework of the proposal that was unveiled in January. According to the proposed plan, the US will recognise an Israeli application of

sovereignty over parts of the West Bank following the completion of a survey conducted by a joint US-Israel mapping committee and Israel’s acceptance of both a four-year freeze of the areas earmarked for a future Palestinian state and a commitment to negotiate with the Palestinians based on the terms of Trump’s peace deal. Alone among most governments, the Trump administration has said it will support the annexation of West Bank territory claimed by the Palestinians for an eventual state as long as Israel agrees to enter peace talks. US Ambassador David Friedman said that Washington is ready to recognise Israeli sovereignty over parts of the West Bank should it be declared in the coming weeks.

Denmark’s Fake Bible

■ Rev Dr Petra Heldt  
Director | Ecumenical Theological Research Fraternity | Jerusalem

The misrepresentation of Holy Scripture by the Danish Bible Society (DBS) has been met with a crescendo of international protest demanding the withdrawal of the falsified Bible. The March 2020 Danish Bible, has omitted or replaced the word ‘Israel’ in all but two places of the more than 60 Greek occurrences in the New Testament and in 9% of the Hebrew Bible. On April 26, the Bible Society of Israel (BSI) issued a gracious but unambiguous statement asking DBS to “take measures to correct” the translation. BSI said it was ‘troubled’ by what it found when researching the translation. Amongst the analyses it presented were: *Matt. 2:21*: “and he rose and took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel.” [speaking of Mary, Joseph, and Jesus’ return from their time in Egypt]. In the DBS translation the phrase “land of Israel” is changed to simply “home”. *Luke 4:25*: “many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah”. In the DBS translation “many Jewish widows in the time of Prophet Elijah.” [This is an anachronism:

the word ‘Jewish’ was not in use in Elijah’s time, and he was a prophet in the northern kingdom, not in Judah.] In the Hebrew Bible, BSI counted the term ‘Israel’ 2,521 times, of which in 205 cases the word was omitted/replaced. *Isa. 43:1*: “But now thus says the Lord, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: ‘Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.’” In the DBS translation “O Israel” and “O Jacob” have been removed. *Jer. 33:7*: “I will restore the fortunes of Judah and the fortunes of Israel...” In the DBS translation “Judah and Israel” changed to “all my people”. It is difficult not to see an intentional technique that eliminates the homeland of Israel and replaces it with a home for others; and that replaces the God of Israel with the god of you. While any translation has to wrestle with the meaning and culture of the text from one language to another, the extraordinary decision of the DBS staff to deprive their readers of some of the key points of the Christian faith is mind-boggling. Above all, the Danish Bible Society separates Israel from its Land. Apart from other key issues of the faith, it denies the reader the

knowledge of the intrinsic connection between the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament, and between Israel and its Land. It falls in the trap of which the Apostle Paul warned, “It is not you that support the root, but the root that supports you” (*Romans 11: 18*). Its version of the Bible robs the Christian faith of its Jewish roots. It presents a new story of the Christian faith. For Christians and Jews, the Bible is serious. Any tampering with its words, above all with the word Israel, is unacceptable and rejected, unequivocally. The attempted murder of Israel, from time eternal until our day, is too real to let people play, whimsically, with its land, its people or its name. While the international protest against this Bible translation grows, while the Danish Bible Society of which the Archbishop of the Danish Lutheran Church is the president, cannot be far off the Danish Lutheran Church, and while the reputation of the Danish churches that will use the Bible 2020 is at stake, together with the trust in the Christian faith by Christians and Jews in Israel and worldwide, Denmark really does need to discard its fake Bible. The full text of this article can be found at <https://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/15973/denmark-bible-translation-outrage>



# Israel’s New Government

■ Yochanan Visser  
Christians for Israel Correspondent Israel

On 17 May 2020, Benyamin Netanyahu became Israel’s Prime Minister again. This happened after 72 Israeli lawmakers voted in favour of a bill that recommended giving ‘King Bibi’ as his supporters call him the task to form Israel’s next government.

On Thursday, 7 May, President Reuven Rivlin officially assigned the task of forming Israel’s next government - Netanyahu’s fifth in a row - to the current Prime Minister, despite indictments for alleged bribery, breach of trust and corruption.

“According to the request of a majority of Knesset members, presented to me today Thursday 7 May 2020 / 13 Iyyar, according to the provisions of Article 10(a) of Basic Law: The Government (2001), and according to the provisions of Articles 10(b) and 10(c) of Basic Law: The Government (2001), I hereby inform you that you have a period of 14 days to form a government,” read the letter sent to Netanyahu and signed by the President.

Leftist political parties such as Meretz and the Movement for Quality Government again filed petitions to the High Court of Justice to strike out the coalition deal which provides for Netanyahu to become vice-Prime Minister in November 2021 but chances are close to zero that they will succeed. The Israeli High Court of Justice earlier rejected similar petitions to the court demanding that the court disqualify Netanyahu forming Israel’s next government. The Court ruled that no legislation preventing a member of Knesset from forming a government while under indictment. Netanyahu has performed the near impossible after he failed to form a right-wing coalition after the rightist parties did not obtain a majority of Knesset seats in the third election Israel experienced in one year. The magician, as even his opponents now call him, succeeded in breaking up the Kachol Lavan (Blue and White) party that was founded in March 2019 with only one goal: to dethrone Netanyahu, who has been Israel’s PM since 2009.

Kachol Lavan, which has only 15 MK’s in the new Knesset, got a large number of ministerial posts in the new cabinet in exchange for joining the Netanyahu-led government and agreed to sign a rotation deal for the premiership. Under the deal, Netanyahu will continue to be Israel’s Prime Minister for one and a half years and will then step down after which Kachol Lavan leader, current Speaker of the Knesset and ex-IDF chief of staff Benny Gantz will become Israel’s PM.

Gantz changed his mind about Netanyahu after the Corona crisis paralysed Israel’s economy and society and broke his election promises that he would never sit with the Likud leader in the same government. That decision was necessary, said Gantz, because of the dire state of affairs in Israel where more than 26 percent of the workforce became jobless as a result of the Corona crisis and where whole sectors collapsed. Telem and Yesh Atid - the other parties who formed Kachol Lavan together with Gantz’ Resilience party - will now lead the opposition. They will be joined by the right-wing Yamina party led by Naftali Bennett that according to Likud sources, demanded too many ministerial posts in the new government.

The other right-wing parties such as the ultra-orthodox Shas and United Torah Judaism (UTJ) will join the new government but Health Minister Ya’acov Litzman of UTJ lost his job as Health Minister. Litzman has been heavily criticised for his role in the Corona crisis because he looked too much to the interests of his own voters, the ultra-orthodox Jews, and initially refused to implement measures aimed at preventing gatherings of people during prayer services. Litzman also failed to expand Israel’s health system which is one of the smallest in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

Kachol Lavan leader Benny Gantz now serves as Israel’s Defense Minister until November next year when he will take over from Netanyahu and will become Israel’s PM

while the party’s number two Gabi Ashkenazi became Israel’s new Foreign Minister.

The new government has to deal with the implementation of the new peace plan of US President Donald J. Trump which envisions Israeli sovereignty over parts of the so-called C-area in Judea and Samaria as well as the whole Jordan Valley that is deemed Israel’s eastern security belt. Trump’s plan also envisions the creation of a Palestinian state in the remaining areas of the so-called West Bank (Judea and Samaria) but the Palestinian leadership has rejected Trump’s plan out of hand.

The new coalition deal in Israel stipulates that implementation of Israeli sovereignty in areas that have been under Israeli control since June 1967 will take place around the beginning of July.

The sovereignty issue has now, temporarily, disappeared from the political agenda because Prime Minister Netanyahu’s trial has begun.

The Israeli PM was summoned by the court in Jerusalem to appear for its first hearing of his case on Sunday, 24 May. The trial is expected to be drawn out for a long time and could even be years before there is a verdict.



From left, PM Netanyahu, President Rivlin and Benny Gantz, Mr. Netanyahu’s main challenger, at a memorial in Jerusalem. | Photo: EPA

# Understanding the Times

■ Dr Emilie Noteboom  
Director of Outreach, European Coalition for Israel

Eighty years ago on 18 June 2020, Winston Churchill delivered his famous ‘finest hour’ speech to the House of Commons. On the heels of the ‘Battle of France’ being lost he rallied his countrymen for the Battle of Britain that was to come, ending his speech with these legendary words (*copied in the style of his typed speech notes*):

I expect that the Battle of Britain is about to begin.  
Upon this battle depends the survival of Christian civilization.  
Upon it depends our own British life and the long continuity of our institutions, and our Empire.  
The whole fury and might of the enemy must very soon be turned on us.  
Hitler knows that he will have to break us in this Island, or lose the war.  
If we can stand up to him, all Europe may be freed, and the life of the world may move forward into broad, sunlit uplands.  
But if we fail, then the whole world, including the United States, including all that we have known and cared for, will sink into the abyss of a new Dark Age made more sinister and perhaps more protracted by the lights of perverted Science.  
Let us therefore brace ourselves to our duties, and so bear ourselves that if the British Empire and its Commonwealth last for a thousand years, men will still say,  
“This was their finest hour.”

Three weeks later the Battle of Britain did come. It and the battle for ‘the survival of Christian civilisation’ were fought, and five years later ultimately won. All Europe was freed. The world’s descent into ‘the abyss of a new Dark Age’ that had already

We commemorated the 75th anniversary of this great victory early May and paid tribute to the men and women who ‘braced themselves to their duties’ at such terrible cost in human life and suffering. How fitting to celebrate the peace and liberation their sacrifice has gifted us, and honour men like Churchill who, as the sons of Issachar of old ‘had understanding of the times’ to know what ought to be done (*I Chronicles 12:32*).

Churchill’s understanding of his times was remarkable. As early as 1934, he had been a lone voice warning that war with Germany was coming, imploring the British government to prepare to meet it. Did he recognise as insatiable the ‘might makes right’-undercurrent that permeated German politics from the early 1930s onwards to eventually brutalise everything the Third Reich touched? Was it Germany’s shocking treatment of its loyal Jewish citizen s —many of whom had faithfully served the Fatherland in the First World War— that alerted him to the destructive cancer that was festering in Germany in the 1930s? After all, treatment of a society’s Jews is the proverbial canary in the coalmine and the fail-proof measure of the moral health of a society...

When war broke out, what was it that made Churchill recognise it for the battle for the survival of Christian civilisation that it was? What was it that convinced him that the world would plunge into the abyss of a new Dark Age if Hitler were to prevail —long before the atrocities for which the Thir d Reich is most infamous had been committed? Churchill must have grasped the essence of a Christian civilisation for him to recognise a counterfeit even in embryonic form. His knowledge of history must have guided him in this, as must have his thorough familiarity with the Bible, in his time the prerogative of the

educated. The seminal influence of the Bible on Churchill is reflected even in the style of his speeches, which he wrote in blank verse format with paragraphs of indented type after the style of the Psalms. There are other suggestions to offer. The most compelling one in my view is that the God of Israel gave Churchill eyes to see and a mind and heart to understand, along with preparation and ability to lead the war effort. Churchill hints at this when he writes in his memoirs about 10 May 1940, the day King George VI had asked him to form a government: “as I went to bed about 3 a.m. I was conscious of a profound sense of relief. At last I had the authority to give directions over the whole scene. *I felt as if I were walking with destiny, and that all my past life had been but a preparation for this hour and for this trial* [emphasis added].”

History has vindicated Churchill’s sense of walking with destiny and having been prepared for all that winning the Second World War would mean. He was the man for the hour, prepared and used by God to defeat Hitler. The evil the Nazis perpetrated, particularly against the Jewish people, is a bottomless pit from which continues to reverberate the anguished cry ‘where was God?’. In the silence that follows this unanswerable question, I grieve over what man has done to his fellow man and think of the fact that God prepared and destined a man like Churchill, and with him many others, to have ‘an understanding of the times’ to know what ought to be done so as to triumph in the fight against this evil done to His people. May Churchill’s readiness and his example encourage us to do the same and to walk in the ‘good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do’ (*Ephesians 2:10*) for the blessing of His people and the fight against evil.

begun was reversed. ‘Broad, sunlit uplands’ beckoned yet again.



Short News

EL AL in Crisis



Before the COVID-19 Israeli airline EL AL already had financial difficulties. The airline had asked the Israeli government for help to restructure the company. The additional losses from the coronavirus outbreak will have a deep financial impact on its operations. Without help, EL AL is likely to close according to chairman Eli Defes. EL AL stressed that an airline is essential for a country like Israel, which is surrounded by hostile nations. | Photo: Flashgo

Researchers Isolate Coronavirus Antibody

The Israel Institute for Biological Research has isolated a key coronavirus antibody that successfully neutralised the aggressive virus in lab tests, Israeli Defense Minister Naftali Bennett announced on 4 May 2020. Bennett said this is a ‘significant breakthrough’ toward a possible treatment for the virus. The institute has been collecting blood plasma from Israelis who have recovered from Covid-19. It is expected that antibodies in the plasma can form the basis of an effective treatment. The governmental research institute, which normally works on defense projects, is now directing all its efforts toward novel coronavirus research, including developing both a treatment and a vaccine.

Despite Covid-19, 40,000 Palestinians Return to Work



Many Palestinians have returned to Israel to work. Most are employed in harvesting or construction. 40,000 are to resume their jobs at the beginning of June 2020. In March, Israel sealed off the West Bank after the first cases of coronavirus became known. In that area, 353 cases of Covid-19 have been confirmed. For the first time, Palestinian police officers are keeping order among the workers to ensure that the passage is quick and smooth. For the Palestinians, the income from work in Israel means economic survival in the face of a lack of jobs in the autonomous territories.



The Eilat Mountains and view of the Red Sea and the Edom Mountains in the distance. | Photo: Shutterstock

Biblical Borders of Israel

■ Johannes Gerloff  
Theologian, Journalist, Lecturer & Author

On the political stage of the Middle East, I have never seen anyone ask about the biblical borders of the Promised Land. I know of no politician who pursues an agenda of translating prophecies of the Bible concerning the borders into political reality. However, I come across Christians with the question of when the state of Israel will reach its biblical borders. And in past years, secular journalists and political analysts have given public thought to whether certain Israeli politicians dreamed of a ‘greater Israel within biblical borders’. It is, therefore, appropriate to outline what the Bible actually says about the borders of the Promised Land.

The land is limited

First of all, it should be noted, that the land to which the Hebrew people were led by Moses was never borderless. It always had its limits. Egypt, in the southwest of the land of Canaan, is as obviously a foreign country from a biblical perspective, as was Assyria in the northeast. The fact that the Promised Land is limited may also be recognised by the acknowledgement that it can become too small.

Consequently, the immigrating people of God may not simply take whatever they like when they think they are capable of it. The Bible does not support international law based on majority decisions, nor does it accept as rightful owner whoever prevailed in a conflict as the more successful.

The creator sets borderlines

According to the Bible, it is the one, true, living God who distinguishes between language groups and ethnic entities (*Genesis 11:9*), causes nations to migrate (*Amos 9:7*) and set the limits of the peoples.

A crucial factor in this is people’s obedience to the Word of God. Therefore, from a biblical point of view, the borders God sets for a nation are never an unchangeable ‘Law of the Medes and Persians’ carved in stone.

The borders of a country depend on the relationship of the respective people with the living God. Their course may, therefore, indicate something about this relationship.

What belongs to the Promised Land

The Bible thinks from the centre. Beginning with the story of the patriarchs up to the New Testament, it is clear that the centre of the Promised Land is Zion, the city of Jerusalem. The prophet Ezekiel calls this city the ‘navel of the land’ (*Ezekiel 38:12*). Jerusalem is the place that the Lord has chosen from all the tribes of Israel.

Jerusalem is located on a mountain ridge that stretches north-south and reaches a height of over a thousand meters above sea level. In the Bible, it is mentioned as ‘mount of the Amorite’ or ‘Mountains of Israel.’ South of Jerusalem is Judea, with its capital Hebron. North of Jerusalem the ‘Land Benjamin’, the ‘Mountains of Ephraim’ or later ‘Samaria’, with its centre Shechem, present-day Nablus. Mt Carmel (*Jeremiah 50:19*) forms an extension of this mountain range towards the northwest.

Seen from Jerusalem to the west, the mountainous region declines to the hilly country, the ‘shefelah’ in Hebrew. This is followed by the coastal plain and the natural and therefore never controversial western border of the Promised Land, the Mediterranean, also known as ‘Sea of the Philistines’ or ‘the Great Sea.’

To the east, the central Israeli mountains drop sharply into the Syrian-African rift valley, which is the lowest point on the earth’s surface at the Dead Sea at more than 400 meters below sea level. South of the Dead Sea, the ‘Aravah’ separates the Negev desert in the west from the Edomite Mountains in the east and extends to the northern tip of the Red Sea, wherein our time the Jordanian town of Aqaba and the Israeli resort town of Eilat are within sight of each other.

From the foot of Anti-Lebanon mountain ridge, the southern tip of which is Mt Hermon, the river Jordan flows through the Sea of Galilee from the north towards the Dead Sea, thereby forming a natural eastern border. In biblical Hebrew, the Dead Sea is called ‘the salt sea’ or ‘the eastern sea.’

The Negev desert is a natural border at the southern end of the Promised Land, which is sometimes referred to in the Bible as the

‘ends of the land’. This borderline is flexible depending on weather conditions and technical skills of the people who live in that part of the country. In Solomon’s time Ezion Geber is mentioned, a port town on the Red Sea in the area of today’s Eilat.

In the north and east, geographical and climatic conditions offer fertile cultivated land – and consequently cause for confusion, discussions, friction points and armed conflicts. Therefore, it is especially in the north and east that there have been many changes in the borders of the Promised Land, due to the relationship of the people with their God. The Bible alludes many times to these natural geographic and related climatic conditions.

The East Bank of the Jordan

Originally the areas of the tribes Edom, Moab and Ammon were foreign lands untouchable for the Hebrews. After leaving Egypt, God had explicitly told them concerning the territory of the Edomites: “I will not give you anything of their land” (*Deuteronomy 2:5*). The same was true of the lands of the Ammonites (*Deuteronomy 2:19,37*) and Moabites (*Deuteronomy 2:9*). Therefore, the area east of the Jordan was considered ‘abroad’ in the book of *Ruth (1:1)*.

However, that changed already in the time of Moses. The area ‘from the Arnon up to Mt Hermon’, the territories of Moab and Ammon, but then especially the ‘Land of Gilead’ and Bashan (*Jeremiah 50:19*), today’s Golan Heights, were added to the settlement areas of the Israelites. The prophet Obadiah even foresees Israel taking possession of the ‘mountains of Esau’ (*Obadiah 19*).

The expansion of the country of Israel ‘from Dan (at the foot of Hermon) to Beer Sheva (in the northern Negev)’ is proverbial in Biblical language. From the very beginning, however, Mount Lebanon, the area ‘where you reach Hamath’ (today the city of Hama in Syria), and ‘up to the Euphrates’ were mentioned as the northern border of the Promised Land.

Republished with permission. This article is the first instalment of a two-part series. The second article will be published in the August issue.



# It All Began in Prayer



Karel van Oordt addressing church delegates in the Netherlands in the early years.



Karel van Oordt (centre) during his last visit to Israel in August 2012 for the dedication of the restored Montefiore Windmill.

## ■ Sara van Oordt-Jonckheere Christians for Israel | Netherlands

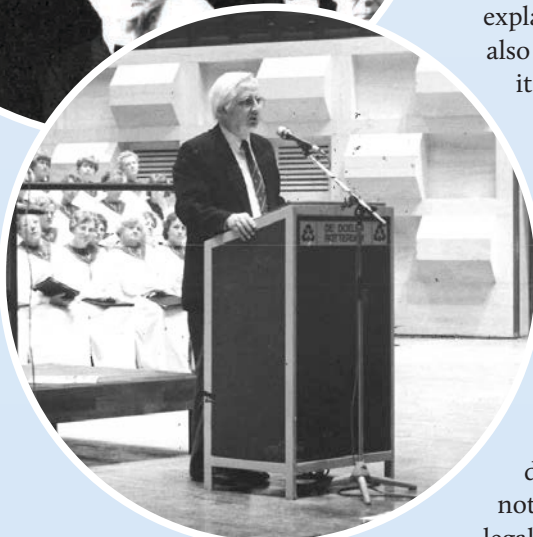
**It was in the turbulent years of the 1970s and 1980s that Christians for Israel and the Israel Products Centre were born. Two organisations, built on two foundations: support for Israel, and prayer for the Jewish people. A story about how a small group of Dutch people standing on barricades for Israel grew into an international movement. What obstacles did they face? What were the victories? A fascinating 40-year journey through history.**

A man, on his knees, in his bedroom. That image would stick with young Karel van Oordt (1928-2013) forever. His father, Wijnand Egbert Pieter van Oordt (1901-1972), was a businessman who daily humbled himself before God for Christianity in its state of division, and who prayed ardently for the restoration of Israel. His wife Simonne passed away shortly after the birth of their youngest daughter. Wijnand was left with four small children: Hannie, Piet, Karel and Marietje. Karel van Oordt followed in his father's footsteps. Prayer was the foundation of Christians for Israel: in the bedroom, on the knees.

Father Wijnand was owner and director of AAKO, a dyestuff trading company for the textile industry.



Karel van Oordt in the early days



Over time, a chemical products department was added. The management of this division was entrusted to his son Karel. In the late 1960s, Karel decided to import chemicals from Israel, and this immediately became a great success.

### Oil boycott

On 6 October 1973, Egyptian and Syrian armed forces invaded Israel on Yom Kippur, the most sacred Jewish holiday. Israel was taken completely by surprise by the Arab offensive and suffered heavy casualties. The situation was so critical that the survival of the state was feared. Israel received support from the west, including from the United States and the Netherlands. Against all odds, Israel won the Yom Kippur War.

## He wanted to focus on his two passions: to serve the church and to support the Jewish people.

This was the moment in which the 'oil weapon' was fully deployed by the Arab League. Oil production was reduced every month. The Netherlands, among others, had actively supported Israel during the war. Oil exports to Israel's allies were completely stopped. The oil crisis broke out, with disastrous consequences for the global economy.

The oil boycott was not an isolated case. In the 1970s and 1980s, the Arab League imposed boycott measures on all western companies doing business with Israel. The Arab boycott covered two aspects: a 'product' boycott and a 'personal' boycott. The product boycott meant that all companies doing business with the Arab countries had to declare that their products were not from Israel, or from a company that was on the Arab 'blacklist' - a list of companies compiled by the Central Bureau for the Boycott of Israel in Damascus. Former director of the Dutch-based Centre for Information and Documentation and Israel (CIDI) Ronny Naftaniel explains: "That's where the trouble started. The boycott also included companies with Jewish shareholders. But it went even further. For example, the Egyptian Omar Sharif was on the Arab boycott list because he had given Jewish actress Elizabeth Taylor a kiss in a film. All companies having ties with Israel and with Jews were severely punished."

The second aspect of the Arab boycott was a personal boycott. Companies had to issue a so-called 'non-Jew statement' that stated that an employee was Christian or Muslim, and had no ties to Israel.

Naftaniel: "Companies simply issued that declaration, also in the Netherlands. But that was not the only thing: these declarations had to be legalised by the Chamber of Commerce. An extremely

antisemitic measure, to which the government turned a blind eye."

It was not until 1995 that the Arab boycotts were lifted.

### Battle against boycott

In the midst of the boycott battlefield, Karel van Oordt became convinced that he had to put his love for Israel into concrete action. In addition to his company AAKO, he founded a company to actively fight the Arab boycott. He called that company AAFAB (nobody knew this, but the name was an acronym for AAKO Fighting Arab Boycott).

Sometime later, he was asked by the kibbutz movement in Israel to establish a few private limited companies to help the ailing kibbutzim in Israel. One company he called KiNeMon (Kibbutz Needs Money), followed by the company MoDoNee (More Dollars Needed). More and more Israeli companies approached Karel for support. In 1979, he sold his company AAKO at the age of fifty. He wanted to focus on his two passions: to serve the church and to support the Jewish people. Together with a few business people, he founded IP-80 in Jerusalem. Karel felt that Christians were doing too little for Israel. The goal of the organisation was twofold: to give economic support to Israel in the anti-Israeli climate of the time, and to reach the churches with the message of God's faithfulness to Israel. Because that is where Karel's heart was. A few months later IP-80 was separated into Christians for Israel and the Israel Products Centre.

Christians for Israel and Israel Products Centre grew steadily. In 1989, Pee Koelewijn (1940-2002) joined Christians for Israel, as editor-in-chief for the newly-established Dutch-language newspaper Israel Aktueel. From that moment on, the work of Christians for Israel gained momentum, with all kinds of activities in the churches, media and politics. There was a lot of media attention, feathers were ruffled. Not everybody thanked them for that.

### Grim atmosphere

The atmosphere around Israel grew grimmer. After 1973, there was increasing anti-Israel sentiment, both in Israel and worldwide. In 1992, over fifty activists demonstrated at the entrance of concert hall De Doelen in Rotterdam, where Christians for Israel's "Israel Family Day" was being held. There were serious blows. Two -false- bomb threats were reported.

### Prayer for Israel

In addition to expressing support for Israel, intercession was central to Christians for Israel. Pieter Bénard joined Christians for Israel around 1990, and started to write prayer letters, and to organise prayer meetings for Israel. Pieter: "Prayer groups sprang up all over the Netherlands. Sometimes, those consisted of four sisters who were praying every week. But some congregations prayed for Israel once a month. Many of those groups are still active today."

*Continued on page 7*





Karel van Oordt in the early days



Wreckage of the bus that was bombed by terrorists was displayed in the silent march, The Hague 2004

Continued from page 6

Over the years, people have become more and more aware of the importance of intercession."

Pieter Bénard is convinced that intercession is definitely effective: "If you ask me: what is a special answer to prayer? Then I would say, the very fact that Israel still exists. Israel is God's miracle! If I go through the prayer letters from 1992 up to the present time and read about the wars, enmity, terror, ridicule, antisemitism, anti-Zionism, protests, Jew-hatred, anti-Israel tendencies in the UN, UNESCO, EU, many NGOs, churches and evangelical movements, then the survival of Israel is the result of God's faithfulness to His people, and the result of the countless faithful intercessors around the world."

The turmoil in Israel persisted. The 1993 Oslo Accords promised independence to the Palestinians and secure borders to Israel. But the result was disappointing. Tensions ran high. Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat called for a second intifada (= Palestinian violent uprising) in 2000. Hundreds of terrorists committed suicide attacks in Israel. It was then that Christians for Israel started organising tours to Israel.

Former Christians for Israel Netherlands Chairman Pim van der Hoff: "We started our tours as Christians for Israel in 2001. We did this in response to an urgent request from the then Minister of Tourism of Israel, Benny Elon. Tourism in Israel had plummeted to an all-time low because of the intifada. On our first trip, we went to Israel with two hundred people. It was great. That we were the only ones who dared to come was greatly appreciated in Israel."

#### Unforgettable

In 2004 the Arab world, supported by many other states, asked the International Court of Justice to issue an Advisory Opinion condemning Israel for the construction of the security fence. Roger van Oordt, son of Karel and director of Christians for Israel in the Netherlands: "We wanted to show that this wall was erected by Israel to stop the hundreds of terrorist attacks that plagued the country during the violent intifada. So we brought a bus to the Netherlands that had been destroyed by a terrorist attack in Israel. Eleven people had died in that bus and dozens of people were injured. We wanted to put the bus wreckage at the entrance to the Peace Palace in The

Hague, and walk through The Hague in a silent march with the photos of the victims killed."

Christians for Israel needed permission for this demonstration by Mayor Deetman of The Hague. Roger: "Deetman was afraid that the photos of the victims would provoke too many emotions and would lead to countermeasures, thereby disrupting public order. In a fast-track procedure, the judge ruled in our favour. So on Monday morning, 23 February 2004, we walked with four thousand people in a silent march in The Hague. That became world news."

#### Where do we go from here?

Christians for Israel has grown into an international movement represented in more than forty countries worldwide. The message of God's faithfulness to His people can be heard up to the far reaches of Africa, Asia and Australia. It started with prayer in a bedroom in the Netherlands. Now hundreds of thousands of Christians are praying for Israel and the Jewish people. Intercession has remained central to the work of Christians for Israel for the past forty years. It started on its knees, and so it will continue.

# Sharing God's Love for Israel

## ■ Rev Cornelis Kant

Executive Director | Christians for Israel International



The international work of Christians for Israel has grown enormously since Christians for Israel International was established in 1998. Branches were established first in USA, Canada and Germany, and shortly afterwards in the UK. Step by step, people in many

countries came into contact with the message about Israel and were touched by it - at conferences, lectures or by reading our publications. A desire and calling arose to share this message about Israel in the churches in their own countries. Small teams of volunteers were set up to spread the message in their own countries with lectures, newsletters and other tools of communication.

Everything arose and grew out of a deep sense of calling, faith and voluntary engagement. Of course, we often meet resistance or financial setbacks, but ultimately it is God who provides and makes our mission fruitful.

Over the last twenty years we have been able to reach hundreds of thousands of Christians with the message that has remained the same everywhere: God remains faithful to His people Israel and will fulfill all His promises for Israel and the Jewish people. Israel's place in our faith is not finished, but God has a great future for his people. So now we have grown into a global family in 42 countries, and partnerships with several global and national ministries.

The dissemination of the message about Israel started with visits to connect with the local churches, and was followed up with conferences, newsletters, newspapers and books. Today, modern social media such as Facebook, YouTube and WhatsApp are being used more and more.

Our friends come from all different denominations and churches, and it is remarkable to see how a shared biblical vision on Israel creates unity in diversity. We meet each other at the biennial International C4I Forum in Jerusalem and hold regular regional teaching and training conferences.

The first goal of our ministry is to spread the message of God's faithfulness to Israel. But we don't want to just talk about Israel - we want to give practical blessing to the Jewish people through projects such as: helping Jewish Holocaust survivors in Ukraine and Israel, facilitating Jews who want to go to Israel on Aliyah, food kitchens in Israel, and helping children from vulnerable families in Israel, Jews and non-Jews. People who are touched by the message about Israel also want to support Israel with offerings and prayers.

Many Israelis are deeply touched when they notice that there are Christians who love, support and pray for them. In addition to Christians for Israel, many other Christian organisations have emerged with a focus on Israel and the Jewish people. We try to work together as much as possible - each ministry fulfilling its own calling with regard to Israel and the churches.

Our newspaper *Israel & Christians Today* has evolved into a unique publication full of biblical, political, historical and practical information about Israel and the Jewish people. It is published in Dutch, German and English,



Rev Cornelis Kant and the team from Christians for Israel Tanzania

and we have also launched editions in Danish, Portuguese, Italian and Korean. In addition to physical distribution, the newspaper is also distributed digitally. In the coming period we also want to make more use of modern tools of communication and social media.

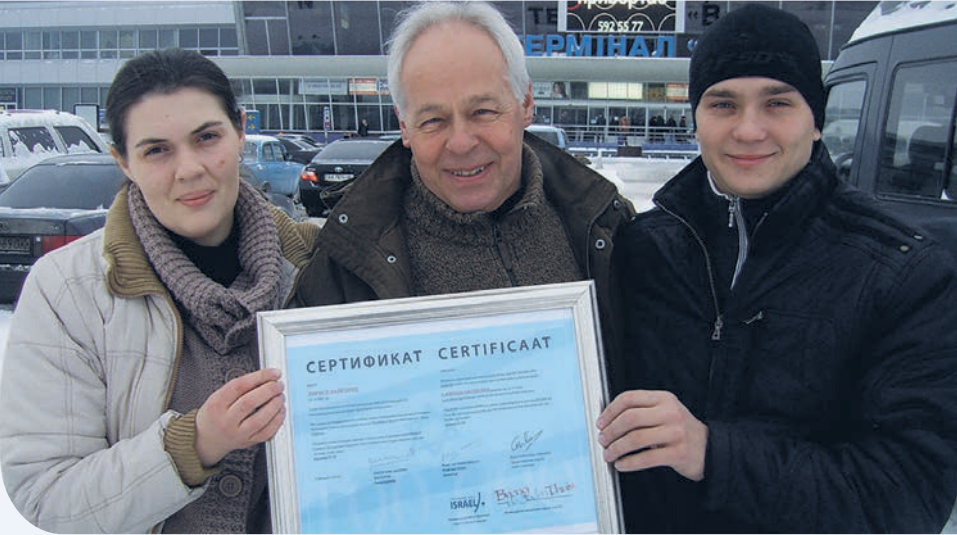
With the gifts of friends from richer countries, we can support our teams in poorer countries to spread the message. We have no policy of being present in as many countries as possible. We just want to be present wherever the Lord opens doors to bring the message.

We are very grateful to God for His blessing over the past 40 years and we trust that He will show us the way forward with this important work - until Jesus comes.

*Rev Cornelis Kant has been Executive Director of Christians for Israel International since 2018. He is an ordained pastor in the Dutch Reformed Church. Based in The Netherlands, he is responsible for overseeing the international development of the ministry.*



# Witnesses of Great Things



Pieter Bénard in 2010 with Larissa Vaisburd, the hundred thousandth Jew whom we as Christians for Israel could assist to return to Israel, together with her husband Ruslan.



Pieter Bénard and Koen Carlier

*It has been 24 years since Christians for Israel started the campaign 'Bring the Jews Home'. Yet even before 1996 and the fall of the Iron Curtain, the return of Jews, and in particular, Soviet Jews, was a topic that stirred many Christians. Koen Carlier (Aliyah fieldworker Ukraine) and Pieter Bénard (former prayer coordinator at Christians for Israel) look back to that time.*

## Of their own accord

"I grew up in a reformed family," relates Pieter Bénard. "Faith was present, but not defining. Only later I really came to faith, and from that moment on three things became important of their own accord: a personal relationship with Jesus, love for Israel and intercession, particularly for Israel."

The love for Israel also came of its own accord to Koen, who came to faith as a teenager. "In that time, the early eighties, Christians were already expecting that the Jews would return from the Soviet Union. That touched me so deeply. I wanted to be involved in that!"

## Let my people go

Pieter: "Around that time, I lived in Jerusalem with my wife and children, where we worked for the Near East Ministry. I became involved in the establishment of the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem in 1980. Within a few weeks, the topic of Russian Jews had already become one of the key elements of our work." It was a time when stories about *refuseniks* came out. Stories about Jews who wanted to leave Communist Russia to emigrate to Israel, but were kept from going there by the Soviet authorities. "In 1984, we started to pray weekly and to demonstrate on Saturday mornings before the Russian embassy in The Hague (Netherlands). 'Let My people go'. We continued to do that for seven years. Then communism fell. I later heard from the Israeli ambassador how encouraging those demonstrations were for him. He lived not far from the Russian embassy at that time and on Saturdays heard us demonstrate, sing and pray."

## Return

In 1991, what was left of the Soviet Union, fell apart. The way was paved for Jews and a large migration flow was initiated. "But that was only the beginning", Koen relates. "I read about the work of Exobus in the newsletter of the Christian Embassy. Picking up Jews by bus from a city and then crossing the border with them in order to put them



In the early days of *Bring the Jews Home*, Jews were picked up by coaches and taken to the airport.

on an airplane to Israel. The notice said that they were looking for drivers. I knew: this is what I wanted to do. Together with my friends, Nick, David and Ben Vandeputte we prepared and headed to Ukraine, where we got to work. Before 1994, there were no direct flights from Ukraine, so we had to cross the border to Warsaw, Vienna, Budapest or Bucharest by bus. That meant we sometimes had to wait at the border for hours."

## Bring the Jews home

"I started working at Christians for Israel in 1994", says Pieter. "It was Pee Koelewijn, one of the founders of Christians for Israel, who strived to support the return of the Jews. I thought it was great! Eventually, Christians for Israel officially started its campaign in 1996. We made a video of the work, so thousands of people learned about the return of the Jews from the former Soviet Union. Numerous Christians started to support the campaign!"

## Ukraine

Since the beginning, the work of *Bring the Jews Home* focused mainly on Ukraine. Why is that? Pieter: "We didn't realise this in the beginning, of course. In our perception, it was just 'the Soviet Union'. When we came there for the first time, we discovered all sorts of regional and provincial names, of which we couldn't make any sense."

Koen: "In the time of Tsarina Catherine the Great, an edge of the empire was allocated to Jews to live there. Ukraine means 'edge'. So, most of the Jews from the Soviet Union lived there."

## Intercession

"You know what I find so beautiful?", Pieter begins. "Every year, Intercessors for Israel organises a prayer meeting in Israel, in which they pray for Israel. In 1991, that meeting fell at the same time as the Gulf War was going on. People were praying with their gas masks on. Then one of the attendees decided to do something, besides praying. He launched the initiative to sail from Odessa to Haifa with ships to bring Jewish immigrants. I also remember when we met you, Koen, in Belgium for the first time. You showed us where you always prayed and we prayed together. I find it so beautiful to see that all this work has originated from intercession for Israel!"

## Influx

Koen: "When the Soviet Union's borders opened up, Israel did not know what was happening to them. Monthly, ten thousands of people came into the country. Hotels, holiday homes, everything was used to absorb the influx. It really was a *balagan*, which is the Hebrew word for chaos. Fortunately, many organisations pitched in and, eventually, the integration of the Soviet Jews turned out to be a great success. There were very bright people who turned out to be a great blessing to Israel's economy. That influx has decreased over the years. It is now more gradual. We don't need ships or big buses any more to transport the stream of Jews wanting to leave for Israel. Nowadays we drive smaller passenger vans because many Jewish families live in remote areas. But since the conflict in eastern Ukraine broke out in 2014, the stream of

Jewish migrants has increased considerably. And we expect a great exodus after the coronavirus crisis too."

## Cooperation

When it comes to the practical application of the return to Israel, the Jewish Agency is virtually always involved. This is also the case in Ukraine. Koen: "In the beginning, there was a sort of iron curtain between our organisations. Like: let the Christians do their thing, but keep them at a distance. Of course, Christians have often had a conversion agenda and they are still apprehensive about that in the Jewish world. But over time, the relationship has thawed and even become very warm. Now, we organise many things in cooperation with the Jewish Agency, such as information sessions on the possibilities of going to Israel. And although people come and go at the Jewish Agency, the good relationship is passed on."

## Testimony

"The return of the people of Israel to the promised land is such a tremendous testimony of God's faithfulness to His people. It really is a very powerful message," Pieter relates. "There are sometimes people that say: you are creating a *self-fulfilling prophecy*. But you just can't maintain that position. The fall of Communism, the massive return to Israel, Israel's miraculous capacity to integrate the influx, they are all signs of God's promises."

Koen: "The work of *Bring the Jews Home* has given numerous Christians an insight into the topicality of God's promises to Israel. It has opened the eyes of many Christians in the West to the prophetic Word."

## Future

Seeing so many Biblical promises being fulfilled of course raises expectations for the future. Pieter: "In *Jeremiah 16:15* it says: 'but it will be said, 'As surely as the Lord lives, who brought the Israelites up out of the land of the north and out of all the countries where He had banished them.' For I will restore them to the land I gave their ancestors.'"

I consider the Soviet Union to be the land of the north, but it also says out of all the countries where He had banished them. And we do see the Jews returning from so many other countries. It is the promised return to Israel and that means that God's other promises will be fulfilled. As the Jews talk about it: the Messiah's footsteps are approaching."



Ben Vandeputte and Koen Carlier with one of the buses which they used for transportation in 1995



# Proclaim it in Distant Lands



Conference in Nepal 2019



Pastor George of the Cook Islands together with Graham Simpson, Rev Willem Glashouwer and Bryce Turner

**This year, Christians for Israel celebrates its 40th anniversary. What started as the mission of one single man has grown into a global organisation, with representatives and activities in over forty countries.**

Rev Willem Glashouwer, at present President of Christians for Israel International, had never heard of Christians for Israel till founder Karel van Oordt showed up on his doorstep, about 35 years ago. Van Oordt was looking for a successor to the chairmanship of the board of Christians for Israel. He introduced himself and said: “We prayed about it as a board and think you should be the next chairman.” At that time, Willem was still recovering from major brain surgery and had just gone back to studying theology in order to get ordained. He had never met Karel van Oordt before. Willem and his wife Marianne had been working at the Evangelical Broadcasting Company in the Netherlands for twenty years, he as a producer and executive director of the television department, she as an anchorwoman. Willem told Karel: “I was brought up with Israel. My parents hid Jews in our home during the Second World War, and later on, Aunt Corrie (ten Boom) came to visit from time to time, but that’s the extent of my connection to Israel. Of course, I know that they are the Chosen People of the Bible, and in the Netherlands, we (the Dutch people) have always had a good relationship with Jewish people for centuries. But that’s about it!” “We will help you with that”, Van Oordt insisted.

After praying and thinking it through for a week, Willem and Marianne decided to move forward. They took this step reluctantly because they felt far from being experts on Israel. Glashouwer became chairman of Christians for Israel in the Netherlands, finished his degree and became a pastor in the town of Katwijk, in the western part of the Netherlands. In later years, he became involved fulltime.

## Revelation

Although Rev Willem Glashouwer’s father was a well-known pastor, who was closely involved with Israel, the subject was quite new to his son. “As a teenager, I had strongly rebelled against the church and faith. I considered myself an agnostic. This changed when I got radically converted at eighteen years old.

From that moment on, I started discovering for myself who God was, and that the Bible is the absolute reliable Word of God. That’s why I started studying theology.



President Chaim Herzog (President of Israel from 1983-1993) receives a work of art from Rev Willem Glashouwer. | Photo: Alfred Muller

This was when Bible criticism was prevalent, and the link between God’s promises and modern-day Israel was hardly spoken. As the brand new chairman of Christians for Israel, I started intensely studying the Bible on the subject of Israel. This resulted in the book ‘Why Israel?’ It was a revelation to me that God speaks so much about Israel, and also about the restoration of present-day Israel. Apparently, more people were impressed by my findings, because without ever asking for it, people from all kinds of countries started translating this book. It has now been published in over forty languages.”

## Sign of hope

The work of Christians for Israel grew, was and is greatly blessed, and expanded to other countries on all five continents. In 1998, it started in the USA with the

publication of *Israel & Christians Today*, a quarterly newspaper at the time. More countries followed. Now, in 2020, Christians for Israel has representatives in over forty countries and will continue to fulfil its mission to bring a Biblical understanding of God’s plan with Israel.

Rev Willem Glashouwer: “We are called more and more to spread our Biblical message about Israel around the world. For God’s Word will endure forever and will not budge an inch. Israel is the great sign of hope. God will not let go of what His hand began. He leads the history of the world to the goal set by Him. And that goal is the coming of His Kingdom and the coming of the King of that Kingdom. Across everything, we hear His footsteps. He is coming! Who knows how soon.”

## Countries in which Christians for Israel has Affiliates and Representatives



### We have Affiliates and Representatives in:

Albania, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Cook Islands, Denmark, Fiji, Germany, Greece, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Niue, Philippines, Romania, Samoa, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Korea, Switzerland, Tanzania, Thailand, Tonga, Uganda, Ukraine, USA, Vanuatu and Vietnam.

### We have Partners in:

Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, French Guyana, Guatemala, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Russia, and former Soviet Union, Suriname, United Kingdom, Uruguay.



Jewish Festivals

Rosh Chodesh Tamuz

Beginning of new Hebrew month of Tamuz

22 June 2020

Is the beginning of the Hebrew month of Tamuz. Tamuz is the 4th month of the Hebrew year. It corresponds to June or July on the Gregorian calendar. *Rosh Chodesh Tamuz begins at sundown on 21 June 2020.*

Tzom Tammuz

Fast commemorating breaching the walls of Jerusalem before the destruction of the Second Temple

9 July 2020

The Seventeenth of Tammuz (*Hebrew: Shiv'ah Asar b'Tammuz*) is a Jewish day of fasting commemorating the breach of the walls of Jerusalem before the destruction of the Second Temple. It falls on the 17th day of the Hebrew month of Tammuz and marks the beginning of the three-week period of mourning leading up to Tisha B'Av. Like other minor fasts, Tzom Tammuz begins at dawn (first light) and ends at nightfall (full dark). *Tzom Tammuz begins at dawn on 9 July 2020.*

Rosh Chodesh Av

Beginning of the new Hebrew month of Av

22 July 2020

Marks the beginning of the Hebrew month of Av. Av is the 5th month of the Hebrew year, corresponding to July or August on the Gregorian calendar. *Rosh Chodesh Av begins at sundown on 21 July 2020.*

Shabbat Chazon

Shabbat before Tish'a B'Av

25 July 2020

Shabbat Chazon (*Sabbath of vision*) takes its name from the Haftarah that is read on the Shabbat immediately prior to the mournful fast of Tisha B'Av, from Isaiah's prophetic words of rebuke and doom in the *Book of Isaiah 1:1-27*. It is also referred to as the Black Sabbath due to its status as the saddest Shabbat of the year (*as opposed to the White Sabbath, Shabbat Shuvah, immediately preceding Yom Kippur*). *Shabbat Chazon begins at sundown on 24 July 2020.*

Tish'a B'Av

The Ninth of Av, fast commemorating the destruction of the two Temples

30 July 2020

Tisha B'Av (*Hebrew: the Ninth of Av*) is an annual fast day in Judaism, named for the ninth day (*Tisha*) of the month of Av in the Hebrew calendar. The fast commemorates the destruction of both the First Temple and Second Temple in Jerusalem, events which occurred about 655 years apart, but on the same Hebrew calendar date. Tisha B'Av is never observed on Shabbat. If the 9th of Av falls on a Saturday, the fast is postponed until the 10th of Av. Tish'a B'Av begins at sundown on 29 July 2020.



Hundreds of people praying at the Western Wall. | Photo: Unsplash

All Israel

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

“And so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, “The Deliverer will come from Zion, He will remove ungodliness from Jacob.” *Romans 11:26*

It is written here in plain terms: all Israel will be saved. Not a single translation or explanation can avoid it. it is possible to translate: ‘then, all Israel will be saved, as it is written...’, but ‘all Israel’ is all Israel. Or is it not?

Then the questions arise. Does Paul mean all Israel in his own time, or in the end time (as a matter of fact, Paul experienced his own time as the end time), or throughout the ages? And there are still expositors who say: “Not all that is Israel, really belongs to Israel (*Romans 9:6*). All Israel is the church, existing of believers from Jewish and gentile

origin.” They call that a ‘spiritual Israel’. I believe that the key to understanding this verse lies indeed in *Romans 9:6*. But the question is: how do you read that verse? Contrary to most translations, in its context, it appears most logic to read *verse*

**The Deliverer is taking up the broken-off branches, cleansing them, and planting them back into the land. So, all Israel will be saved.**

*6b* as a question: “Are not all those Israel, who are descended from Israel?” Then Paul goes on to say: “But it is not so that all descendants of Abraham are children (vs. whom God had promised and with whom He would continue His covenant with Abraham).”

And then everything falls in its place. Look at the prophecies Paul is quoting in his argument in *Romans 9, 10 and 11*. They are all about the restoration of the ten (‘lost’) tribes. In my opinion, even the “fullness of the gentiles” (*verse 25*) refers to this

restoration (*Genesis 48:19*). The ten tribes will be united with the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin under the Messianic King in the land of Israel. Note that Paul in these chapters consistently speaks of

‘Israel’, and not of ‘the Jews’. He is not concerned with just one tribe, but with all Israel, that is, the entire nation, existing of the twelve tribes. The Deliverer is taking up the broken-off branches, cleansing them, and planting them back into the land. So, all Israel will be saved.

David Pawson (1930-2020)

Christians for Israel mourns the passing of David Pawson on 21 May 2020 at the age of 90. David was a British evangelical Bible teacher.

A prolific author and speaker, since the 1970’s Pawson had a huge international ministry teaching and writing. His teaching was characterised by clarity, lucidity and absolute faithfulness to the Bible. Pawson was a strong opponent of ‘replacement theology’.

His books *Defending Christian Zionism* and *Israel in the New Testament* argue that the return of the Jewish people to the Holy Land is a fulfilment of scriptural prophecy, and that Christians should support the existence of the Jewish State (although not unconditionally its actions) on theological grounds. Pawson argues that prophecies about Israel in the Old and

New testaments relate specifically to the Biblical people of Israel (not to the church). He was an outspoken critic of Dispensationalism.

In Israel in the New Testament Pawson points out that many Christians read the Old Testament prophecies on Israel in a symbolic and spiritualised way because the nation of Israel is not as prominently present in the New Testament as it is in the Old Testament. Pawson explains this is a huge misunderstanding. In the course of 280 pages, he carefully demonstrates that dozens of passages in the New Testament speak about both a historical and a future significance of Israel and the Jewish people in God’s redemptive plan. For many Christians, this book has been an eye-opener.

Christians for Israel was honoured that David provided a number of



foundational teachings at our European Teacher Training conference in Netherlands in 2016. David Pawson’s life was a testimony of God’s love. He will be sorely missed.

See [www.davidpawson.org](http://www.davidpawson.org)



# Ruth as the ‘Type’ of Israel

## ■ Rev Cornelis Kant

Executive Director | Christians for Israel International

**The book of Ruth is traditionally read in the synagogue during the Feast of Pentecost (Shavu’ot).**

As a Gentile woman Ruth joins her Jewish mother-in-law Naomi, who is returning to Israel and says: “Your people will be my people and your God my God.” Her love for Naomi is stronger than her self-interest. As the story develops, we notice Ruth is being blessed abundantly by God for that attitude. Boaz later confirms this: *May the Lord repay you for what you have done. May you be richly rewarded by the Lord, the God of Israel.* Ruth is a symbol, a type, of Christians who love Israel and the Jewish people. Yet the meaning of this beautiful story reaches further. Naomi, a widow like Ruth, is poor and forced to sell her family plot of land. In getting new perspectives for the future, she needs a ‘guardian-redeemer’. A ‘guardian-redeemer’ (Hebrew: *go’el*) is someone who buys your family plot back for you until the jubilee year, so it remains your property forever (Leviticus 25:25). Boaz turns out to be the guardian-redeemer. Ruth lies down at his feet on the threshing floor and says to Boaz: “I am your servant Ruth”, she said. “Spread the corner of your garment over me since you are a guardian-redeemer of our family.” This is going to cost Boaz money, a ransom, but he is committed to it with his heart and soul.

Boaz even goes a step further. He doesn’t only offer economic perspective and rehabilitation to Naomi and Ruth; he also marries Ruth as his wife. And that’s where this wonderful story takes on a deeper significance. Isaiah calls God the Redeemer of Israel: *Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel, And his Redeemer (go’el), the Lord of hosts: I am the First and I am the Last; Besides Me there is no God (Isaiah 44:6).* This also reminds us of the Messiah, Jesus. He is also the King of Israel. In Revelation He calls Himself the first and the last, the alpha and omega. The relationship between God and His people Israel is also described as a marital bond between groom and bride:



| Photo: Lightstock

*“Do not fear disgrace; you will not be humiliated. You will forget the shame of your youth and remember no more the reproach of your widowhood. For your Maker is your husband—the Lord Almighty is his name—the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer (...) The Lord will call you back as if you were a wife deserted and distressed in spirit” (Isaiah 54:4-6).*

**The synagogue traditionally reads from the book of Ruth during the Feast of Pentecost (Shavu’ot).**

God is the ‘guardian-redeemer’ of Israel, who was like a poor and abandoned widow. But God will restore and marry his people Israel, just as Boaz married Ruth, and

will provide Israel a great future.

A wonderful parallel is drawn here between Ruth and Boaz on the one hand and Israel and God on the other hand. This is reflected by the terms King, Redeemer (*go’el*), widow and marriage. No longer being a foreigner in Israel Ruth becomes a full part of Israel. The witnesses at the city gate told Boaz: “May the Lord make the woman who is coming into your home like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the family of Israel”.

Ruth even becomes David’s great-grandmother. Ruth is a wonderful story with a wonderful message. Ruth is not only a type for Christians who love Israel, but also a type for Israel itself, who will be redeemed and married by the King of Israel.

# Do Gentiles Have to Become Jews to be Saved? Part 2

## ■ Mandy Worby

Christians for Israel Australia

Last time we talked about the mind-set of the Jewish people after thousands of years of dealing with judgment for disobeying God’s laws. Circumcision was non-negotiable and so were the dietary laws. God told His people that if they touched an unclean animal, let alone ate an unclean animal, they would be cut off from their people. They took these laws very seriously. So we need to be a little more understanding about the Jewish believers in Acts 15, who were actually part of the Pharisaic denomination when they taught Gentiles coming to faith in Jesus that they needed to be circumcised and observe the Law of Moses and the dietary commands.

I don’t think they had animosity toward the Gentile believers. They wanted to ensure the Gentiles were properly saved and they only had their own experiences to use as guidelines. Remember, any Gentile who wanted to belong to the God of Israel before Jesus came, had to convert to Judaism, be circumcised and obey all the Jewish Laws. The view point of the Jews during the first decade after Jesus ascended is very understandable.

But that is where the Council in Jerusalem comes into play. It is really important for Gentile believers to



Matza, Tallit and Kosher Kiddush. | Photo: Shutterstock

understand the decision of the Council so they don’t get caught thinking that they now have to embrace all things Jewish in order to please God and be a ‘proper’ Christian.

Acts 15 is the account of the Council meeting. Jesus’ half brother James was the pastor there. Apparently some of the leaders among the Jewish believers taught that in

order for a Gentile to be saved, they needed to be circumcised and observe the laws of Moses. Basically, they were teaching that Gentiles were required to become Jews who could then become believers in Jesus. This caused disagreement because Gentiles were already being saved but were not converting to Judaism!



# ‘Annexation’, the ICC and ‘Palestine’



Fatou Bensouda, Chief Prosecutor for the International Criminal Court (ICC) briefs the Security Council

## ■ Andrew Tucker and Dr Matthijs de Blois

The status of the Old City of Jerusalem, the ‘Holy Basin’ (the area around the Old City), Judea and Samaria is complex. It is gradually becoming the subject of an international dispute that could even lead to military conflict.

The recent coalition agreement between Prime Minister Netanyahu and Benny Gantz allows the Prime Minister to bring ‘the agreement which will be achieved with the United States on the imposition of sovereignty’ for approval to the cabinet and Knesset from the beginning of July. It is not clear what the government intends to do.

Many news reports use the word ‘annexation’. ‘Annexation’ applies to a situation where a state seeks to incorporate into its own territory adjacent territory that does not belong to it and has been acquired by force. Like the Nazis did with Austria in 1938. But the status of these territories is different.

### The current status of the ‘occupied territories’

The legal regime applicable in the territories (re-)gained by Israel in 1967 (commonly referred to as the West Bank) is extremely complex and cannot be described in detail here. With the exception of Jerusalem, Israel has not incorporated them into Israel, but has encouraged Israelis to live there (ie. has facilitated ‘settlements’) and has gradually applied a complex web of civil and criminal laws and administrative measures. The whole matter is made even more complex by the complicated arrangements agreed under the Oslo Accords, dividing the West Bank into Areas A, B and C, each with different legal and administrative arrangements, and the creation of the Palestinian Authority and other Palestinian institutions.

In our view, the term ‘annexation’ is not applicable to the West Bank. This is because there are very good arguments to support the view that Israel in fact already has sovereignty over the West Bank.

This is certainly (in our view) the case in ‘East Jerusalem’, where Israel immediately applied Israeli law and jurisdiction to the whole city after the Six-Day War in 1967. It also appears to apply to Area C, that remains under full Israeli control.

However, the vast majority of states, academics and international institutions consider that none of the ‘occupied territories’ belongs to Israel - though they usually fail to explain why they think this to be the case.

The Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), Ms Bensouda, argues that these territories belong to the Palestinian people. The Prosecutor has been ‘examining’ ‘the Situation in the State of Palestine’ for five years and recently decided she thinks that Israel’s policies of establishing ‘settlements’ in East Jerusalem and the West Bank constitutes a war crime. She has submitted two documents to the Court recently arguing that ‘Palestine’ should be

considered a State, even though it does not meet the normal criteria of statehood under general international law, and that all of these territories (ie. ‘East Jerusalem’ and the ‘West Bank’) belong to this State of Palestine.

### Palestinian narrative

The ICC Prosecutor portrays all Palestinians as victims – not only with respect to the alleged Israeli war crimes (settlements) but more generally in their pursuit of self-determination. She asserts that the Palestinians are the rightful sovereign owners of the land and that their ‘right to statehood’ has been and continues to be obstructed by Israel. Israel alone is the wrongdoer.

She makes no mention of Palestinian terrorism, or of peace offers that have been rejected by the Palestinians, or of the institutional Palestinian incitement to terror or the payment of salaries to Palestinian terrorists in Israeli prisons. In the eyes of the Prosecutor, the Palestinians bear no responsibility for the lack of a Palestinian state or the break-down of negotiations. Israel, on the contrary, is depicted as an Occupying Power that has no claims to sovereign title and is preventing the establishment of a Palestinian state.

The Prosecutor relies on two arguments to support the view that the Palestinian people have sovereignty over the ‘Occupied Palestinian Territory’: 1. sovereignty over all of the ‘occupied’ territories is ‘best viewed as residing in the Palestinian people under occupation’; and 2. the Palestinian people have a right to a State in the occupied territories.

These arguments are, of course, contradictory – either the Palestinian people are ‘under occupation’ or the State of Palestine exists. It cannot be both at the same time.

### Territorial sovereignty: to whom does the West Bank ‘belong’?

The Prosecutor dismisses Israel’s assertion that sovereignty over the territories is ‘in abeyance’ (meaning that the sovereignty is temporarily suspended). Sovereignty lies with the Palestinian people. She states that Israel cannot claim sovereignty over the territories.

The argument that ‘sovereignty over all of the ‘occupied’ territories belongs to the Palestinian people as people under occupation’ is completely novel. Contrary to the Prosecutor’s assertion, this line of thinking is not shared by most international lawyers.

She rejects out of hand the arguments (articulated by a number of leading international law jurists) that Israel has sovereign claims to these territories based on the rights flowing from the Mandate and the legal doctrine of *uti possidetis juris*, which would imply that the borders of the Mandate territory have become the borders of the State of Israel.

The Prosecutor ignores the fact that the Mandate expressly was intended to ensure the ‘establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people’.

This view of sovereignty leads the Prosecutor’s to continue to fundamentally misread the Oslo Accords. She proceeds on the premise that at the time the Accords were signed Israel had no territorial or criminal law jurisdiction to transfer to the PLO. But, for the reasons given above, she fails to establish the validity of this premise.

### Statehood under international law

The Prosecutor argues that international law requires a ‘case-specific application’ of the law when it comes to the determination of Palestinian statehood.

One of her main arguments is that the Palestinians have a ‘right’ to statehood. But the right to ‘self-determination’ does not automatically entail statehood. The International Court of Justice recognised the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people in its 2004 Wall Advisory Opinion but did not find that there is a Palestinian State.

The Prosecutor relies heavily on UN statements/ decisions. This overstates the normative value of UN resolutions. General Assembly resolutions are, in general, not binding under international law. Although they may provide evidence establishing the existence of a rule, this depends on factors such as its content, the conditions of its adoption, and whether states intended the rule to have a binding character. Even then, objections, explanations of vote, interpretations and public statements expressed by Member States must be considered in order to contextualise and qualify consensus or majority vote decisions.

### What next?

First, concerning the ICC: it is to be hoped that the ICC will reject the Prosecutor’s flawed reasoning, and decide that ‘Palestine’ is not a state. The ICC case also shows how important it is that other states who oppose Palestinian statehood should clearly and unambiguously record their opposition to Palestinian assertions of statehood and territorial sovereignty.

Second, concerning Bibi’s proposed ‘annexation’: Israel has over the last 50 years been unclear about what it considers the status of the territories to be. Except for Jerusalem, it has not treated these territories as part of the State of Israel, yet at the same time it has gradually applied more and more Israeli laws to Israelis living in the territories. The result is a complex web of legal and administrative measures in which Israelis are treated differently from non-Israelis. All of this is clearly unsustainable in the long term. The proposed measures may bring some clarity. On the other hand, applying Israeli jurisdiction over parts of the West Bank, and not other parts. It will threaten the continued viability of the Oslo Accords, and is likely to attract much international condemnation.

Andrew Tucker is Director and Dr. Matthijs de Blois is Senior Fellow at The Hague Initiative for International Cooperation (thinc.). More information can be found at [www.thinc.info](http://www.thinc.info)



# Elizabeth Finn, a British Mother in Israel

## ■ Rodney Curtis

Historical Theologian | University of Bristol

Elizabeth Anne Finn (1825-1921) was an outstanding woman who deeply loved the Jewish people. She lived in Warsaw, London, and, significantly Jerusalem, where she married James Finn (1806-1872), the second British Consul in the city. He was recommended for that post by Lord Shaftesbury. As the daughter of Professor Alexander McCaul (1799-1863), she was born in Warsaw, where her father had been sent in 1821 to establish a mission station for the *London Jews Society* (LJS). Elizabeth should be regarded as a notable Christian philosemite in her own right, not just as the daughter or wife of famous Christians who also loved Jewish people.

Elizabeth had no formal education, but she came from a well-educated home. A former rabbi and Jewish convert taught her Hebrew in Warsaw, Poland. As she was used to Jews visiting their Warsaw home, she was soon fluent in Hebrew, then German and Yiddish. Her skills extended to those of a pioneer photographer in Jerusalem, and also as an archaeologist and philanthropist. Arnold Blumberg, in his introduction to his reconstruction of the Finns' jointly written private consular diary, considers that "Elizabeth was a strong willed and intelligent wife... she was the stronger one of the pair". She lived to see the Balfour Declaration promoted worldwide in 1917, which was a direct result of her restorationist heart for the Jewish nation. She died aged 96 at Hammersmith in London.

### Living at Palestine Place, Bethnal Green in East London

Elizabeth recorded a unique insight into life at 8 Palestine Place, the LJS mission centre. She arrived in London aged six with her family in 1831, before her father became the Principal of the Missionary Training College. By the age of 12, she was holding Hebrew classes for the schoolchildren at Palestine Place. "My father took an active part in making the condition of the Jewish people made known to the people in England. They knew very little about it *and cared even less*." She had observed that her father "learned to love and admire the Jewish people in Warsaw". On Saturdays, her father and others from the LJS held debates with local Jews at Aldermanbury Hall in Spitalfields. In her *Reminiscences*, she gave an eye-witness account of watching the red glow in the sky as Parliament burnt down in 1834. In 1837, she also attended the procession in Fleet Street, when 30,000 people paid their respects to King William IV at his funeral.

### Her social vision for Jerusalem from 1846

Elizabeth Finn had a unique link to Jerusalem, marrying James Finn in January 1846 just before they set out for Jerusalem to take up his appointment as British Consul (1846-1863). That appointment included the role of being 'the Protector of Jews in the East'. Proselytising was forbidden in Jerusalem, so the LJS refocused its efforts

towards charitable work, carefully seeking not to aggravate Jews, Muslims or other Christian denominations. Whilst living in the city, Elizabeth had five children, two dying in infancy, and she added Arabic and Ladino to her languages.

Yaron Perry, a Jewish historian from the University of Haifa, makes a searing criticism of this Jerusalem mission: "by sending a motley crew of foreign nationals... the London Society revealed its lack of confidence in its own ability to sustain a significant presence in Palestine". On the contrary, community building activity was a key motivation behind the Finns' formation of the Jerusalem Literary Society and a museum from 1849. The Finns used their own books to establish the original library. Their meetings encouraged exploration of Palestine and the collection of local antiquities, and many link this group with the foundation of the famous Palestine Exploration Fund. The Finns petitioned extensively for the poor Jews in the city, so much so that James was accused of being "too supportive" of the Jews by officials in England; he ignored them.

**"I knew that the State of Israel would be resurrected, for Prophecy promises this!"**

An insight into Jerusalem life is found in their joint diary, which shows evidence of both of their handwriting. In 1850, James purchased land for a Jewish convert to Christianity, stating that "it is my great object and desire to see the land of Israel cultivated by *Christian Israelites*, preparatory to the time when the land will be restored to their nation". He further petitioned in 1854 for the Ashkenazi Jews to be allowed to build a synagogue in Jerusalem. The Finns purchased land at Talbiyeh, just outside the old City, to teach farming skills. Talbiyeh has been claimed to be the first kibbutz. Another site was later purchased near Bethlehem. Together they also tried to help the local Arabs as much as possible, which confirms their Christian love for all types of people, and refutes Perry and other critics like him who try to dismiss them as mere conversionists. The effectiveness of their efforts, and their achievements as compassionate advocates for all communities, completely refutes the negative tropes from these dismissive Jewish scholars.

By the time James died in 1872, aged 66, Elizabeth had established a soap factory, which employed local Jews. She also taught needlework in an attempt to provide employment for women and older people, which eventually employed 150 impoverished Jews. She founded the *Sarah Society* to visit poor women and provide gifts of food, mainly funded from England. This work is continued today at Christ Church in Jerusalem, being described as their 'Mercy Fund'.



Elizabeth Anne Finn (1825-1921). | Photo: Wikipediaia

### Her enduring legacy

Another Jewish scholar, Lask Adams, is appreciative of Elizabeth's work on behalf of the Jews: "she was a remarkable person in her own right; who by her agricultural plantations helped shape the direction of the Jewish destiny in Palestine quite as much as her husband". Further praise comes from Albert Hyamson, the President of the Jewish Historical Society of England in 1917: "to her is due the honour of being the first in modern times to place rakes and spades in the hands of Jerusalem Jews". He also highlights the *Sarah Society* as evidence of the genuine love shown for the Jewish people by Christians in Jerusalem. In 1882, she founded in London the *Society for the Relief of Distressed Jews*, to support Russian Jews suffering from the pogroms in Russia. John Simon, a Jewish leader in England, expressed his "astonishment that a Christian should take such an interest in his afflicted people".

Her memory lasts until today, as she and her daughter Constance founded the *Distressed Gentlefolk's Aid Association*, now known as *Elizabeth Finn Care*. Constance exclaimed in 1948: "I knew that the State of Israel would be resurrected, for Prophecy promises this!" At Constance's death in England at the age of 99, representatives from the newly established Israeli Embassy in London attended her funeral as a mark of respect towards the Finn family, recognising their work of establishing British support for the State of Israel. Alexander, Elizabeth's son also born in Jerusalem and later Consul General to Chile, made the prescient comment in 1923: "the lack of anything like national unity among [the people of Palestine]... would render entrusting them with a measure of self-government a somewhat hazardous experience." Yet despite the challenges of the complicated mixture of peoples and culture in Jerusalem, Elizabeth set a noble example of love for both Jews and Gentiles, there and afterwards in London.

## Biblical Names

By Kees de Vreugd

## Isaac

In Hebrew, Isaac is *Yitzchak* (*the ch pronounced as in Loch*), meaning 'He will laugh'. There is much laughter already in the history preceding his birth. Sarah laughed when she heard that she would have a son, a burst of bitter laughter, in which self-mockery and unbelief were mingled: "After I have become old, shall I have pleasure, my Lord being old also?" (*Genesis 18:12*). Don't make me laugh! Abraham had heard God's promise even earlier, and then 'Abraham fell on his face and

laughed' (*Genesis 17:17*). In other words he 'doubled-up' with laughter. Did Abraham believe God's promise or not? When Sarah laughed, she was reproached for her disbelief of God's power. Remarkably, God responded to Abraham's laughter with the order to name his son Isaac.

It is said, however, that he who laughs last laughs best. When the son was born he was named Isaac, just as God had told Abraham. Sarah said, "God has made laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh with me" (*Genesis 21:6*). The mocking laughter, furtively

behind the tent-cloth, had disappeared. Instead there is a real joy, for the child had indeed been born. This laughter does not need to stay hidden in the tent, it echoes all around. This laughter is infectious.

And Isaac? He is the child of the promise. God has made a covenant with him. There would be a lot of moments in his life, though, in which he would not be laughing for long. When he was a little boy, Ishmael, his older half-brother, mocked him and laughed at him. Sarah saw it. This was not the laughter she had meant, and so

Ishmael was sent away with his mother.

In the Bible stories, Isaac only rarely laughs, just as he only rarely speaks. His life seemed forever marked by the radical event on Mount Moriah, that in Jewish tradition is called the 'binding of Isaac' (*Genesis 22*). There he spoke to his father, but when it turned out that Isaac himself was to be the burnt-offering, he fell silent. Fortunately he also knew joy with Rebekah, his wife. In the Hebrew of *Genesis 26:8*, the being together of Isaac and Rebekah rings as a joyful laughter.



## Short News

### Israel Tests Blood of 100,000 People for Herd Immunity

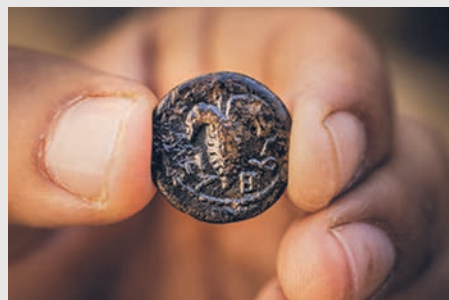


Although it is unknown if antibodies against Covid-19 can stop reinfection, the data will help health authorities plan and prepare for a second wave. Israel's health organisations are testing the blood of 100,000 citizens, as well as healthcare workers, for Covid-19 antibodies. The sampling will provide insights into how widely the coronavirus has spread, how quickly restrictions can be eased, and whether Israelis have sufficient 'herd immunity' against a second outbreak. Israelis who agree to the antibody test will provide information about their exposure to Covid-19. Those shown to have Covid-19 antibodies will also be retested for the virus. | Photo: Israel21c.org

### Israeli Drone Manufacturer Wins Award

The Percepto company from Modi'in in central Israel received an international award for its autonomous drones on Sunday. The US consulting firm Frost and Sullivan praised Percepto's docking stations, to which the flying objects return independently for recharging. The drones allowed many companies to continue operations despite shortages of manpower during the Corona pandemic. For example, the equipment can measure buildings and check them for defects. They can also distinguish between humans, animals and other objects.

### Rare Bar Kokhba Revolt Coin Found



The Israel Antiquities Authority on 11 May 2020 revealed a coin issued during the Bar Kochba revolt, an uprising against Roman rule in Judea in 132-135 AD. The coin was discovered near the Temple Mount in Jerusalem's Old City and includes the words "Year Two of the Freedom of Israel" and "Jerusalem." Dr Donald Tzvi Ariel, head of the Israel Antiquities Authority's coin department, said of the thousands of coins found in the Old City, only four have been from the time of the Bar Kochba revolt, though many more have been discovered elsewhere in the country. | Photo: Sci News

# Introducing the Plain of Acre



Acre, Israel. | Photo: Unsplash

## Kameel Majdali

Director | Teach All Nations Inc.

*Out of Asher his bread shall be fat, and he shall yield royal dainties. Genesis 49:20*

We continue our 'walk through the land' (Genesis 13:17) series, helping us to learn more about the Bible by understanding the land where much of it took place. We still find ourselves on Israel's coastal plain, which consists of three subsections: Plain of Philistia (south), Plain of Sharon (Center), and Plain of Acre (north). Our focus will be on the last of these.

Remember that the entire coastal plain stretches 187 kilometers or 116 miles. Nearly 60% of Israel's population lives on the plain, especially clustered around the major cities of Tel Aviv-Yafo and Haifa. Not only is it Israel's most Jewish section, of which Jews comprise 96%, but is the third most Jewish area in the world.

The Plain of Acre starts in the northern suburbs of the port city of Haifa and goes northward 32 kilometers (20 miles) to the Lebanese border at Rosh Ha Niqra, a seaside rock grotto and tourist site. The breadth of the plain is 8-14 kilometers (5 to 9 miles), from the Mediterranean to the hills of Western Galilee and Armageddon Valley. It is a fertile region which contains a lot of agricultural communities, namely kibbutzim and moshavim, with islands and islets off the coast. Cities in the region, from north to south, include Nahariya, Acre (Akko), and Haifa.

### Haifa

This is Israel's chief port and third largest city after Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. While not mentioned in the Bible, Haifa is located on the Biblical site of Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18), which we will examine separately. The first mention of the city is in the Talmud. Church historian and topographer Eusebius spoke about the city, calling it Sykaminos. The crusaders captured the city in 1100 AD and named it Caiphas. Centuries later the British took Haifa in 1918 and it became part of the Mandate in Palestine. The Arabs surrendered the city into Jewish control on 22 April 1948.

Haifa is home to the University of Haifa (1964) and the Israel Institute of Technology, known as the Technion (1924). It also serves as world headquarters of the Bahai religion and hosts the magnificent terraced Persian Gardens (it is

worth coming to Haifa just to see it, as well as the awesome view of the Mediterranean). The city's population is over 250,000 and has a diverse population, including a large Arab minority.

### Acre (Akko [Hebrew] or Akka in [Arabic])

This ancient port city sits at the northern end of Haifa Bay, and provides an intersection with major roads inland. Acre is considered one of the oldest continually inhabited cities in the world. It was subject to invasion and occupation during the centuries; here the Crusaders made their last stand, calling it *St. Jean d'Acre*. The surrender of the city to the Muslim armies in 1291 AD signaled the end of the Crusader kingdom in Palestine. Today Acre has 50,000 residents and welcomes pilgrims from the Bahai religion.

Acre has scant Biblical reference, one in the Old Testament and one in the New. It is mentioned in passing in *Judges 1*, where it's called Accho or Akko. In the New Testament it was named Ptolemais, a Greek name meaning 'warlike,' named after Alexander the Great's general Ptolemy Soter. His was one of four kingdoms established after Alexander's death.

Josephus Flavius mentions it more than once in his book *War of the Jews* (Book 1 Chapter 20, 3; Book 3, Chapter 2, 4). When Paul made his fateful, final journey in Jerusalem, he sailed from Tyre in Phoenicia to Ptolemais:

*And when we had finished our course from Tyre, we came to Ptolemais, and saluted the brethren, and abode with them one day. Acts 21:7*

The city has only been in Israelite hands a short period during its long history, becoming part of the State of Israel in 1948. The subterranean crusader city is worth a visit, though it dates 1,000 years after the Bible.

### The Tribe of Asher

*Neither did Asher drive out the inhabitants of Accho, nor the inhabitants of Zidon, nor of Ahlab, nor of Achzib, nor of Helbah, nor of Aphik, nor of Rehob: But the Asherites dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land: for they*

*did not drive them out. Judges 1:31-32*

While the Plain of Acre has little Biblical reference, it still part of the tribal allotment of Asher. Another name for it could be the 'Plain of Asher,' son of Jacob and Zilpah, Leah's handmaid (Genesis 30:13). Asher was meant to possess the plain but apparently his military did not break through to the Mediterranean.

Asher was Jacob's 8th son and his name means 'happy.' Like Simeon, this tribe does not have an illustrious history. It provided no judge, deliverer, or great leader. It is given an honorable mention in the tribal lists (Genesis 35:26; 46:17; Exodus 1:14). Asher grew during the wilderness sojourn. Its boundaries are described in *Joshua 19:24-31*, containing some of the best agricultural soil in the country, but it failed to capture these according to *Judges 1:31-32* (quoted above).

Despite its obscurity and mediocrity, Asher has a brighter future. When Jesus was dedicated in the temple in Jerusalem, Simeon prophesied over the infant that he would be the Lord's Messiah. Immediately, an elderly woman, a prophetess like Miriam, Deborah, and Huldah (II Chronicles 34:22), who never left the temple but prayed and fasted day and night, confirmed Simeon's word with thanksgiving. She gave encouragement to all who looked for Jerusalem's redemption. Her name was Anna, daughter of Phanuel, from the tribe of Asher (Luke 2:36-38). In *Revelation 7:6*, Asher is numbered among the 144,000 and gets a pearly gate in the New Jerusalem (21:12).

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Ha-Hagana St, Acre, Israel. | Photo: Unsplash



# 5,000 Portions of Manna



Ludmila and Boris, who struggle for survival even without Covid-19



82-year old Valentina in Kiev – “You brought me hope”

**Anemone Rüger**  
Project Coordinator - Holocaust Survivors in Israel & Ukraine | Christians for Israel

**Stepping up support for needy Jewish people in Ukraine**  
“Which plague will be next?” a secular Ukrainian news platform asked recently in a report about the devastating wildfires in the north of Ukraine. The fires had released a 16-fold emission of radioactivity in the troubled Chernobyl region and temporarily made Kiev the world’s smog capital.

The reference to the ten plagues which befell Egypt on the eve of the Hebrews’ exodus from slavery is not too far-fetched. In *Jeremiah 23: 7-8* we read of a time when the exodus from Egypt will no longer serve as a point of reference, but rather man will say: “As surely as the Lord lives, who brought the descendants of Israel up out of the land of the north.”

“For the first time since the opening of the Iron Curtain in 1991, the synagogues were closed for Passover this year,” said Koen, who is in charge of the work of Christians for Israel in Ukraine. “Everyone observed the Seder quarantined at home in their Soviet flat” – much like during the first Passover night, which the Israelites were instructed to observe each in their houses, ready for departure. “At every Seder, the family members express their wish, ‘Next year in Jerusalem.’ Maybe this year, for many people here these weren’t just words.”

In the meantime, Koen and his team are taking care of the manna. Since the Corona pandemic reached Ukraine

and largely paralyzed public life at the end of March, thousands of Jewish elderly are confined to their four walls, including many holocaust survivors. This brings back terrifying memories. Those over 60 were instructed not to leave their houses at all, if possible. Public transportation has been curtailed to near-zero. Except a few supermarkets, most shops have been closed, including also the low-cost daily farmers markets.

**Food and hope on wheels**  
“I realised that it wouldn’t take long before the soup kitchens would be closed here as well, putting many Jewish people in a precarious situation of entirely depending on external help,” said Koen as he recalled making initial preparations as early as the beginning of March. “Then we kicked off ‘Meals on Wheels.’ We mobilised all our staff, volunteers, and vehicles. We started out with 100 meals in Vinnitsa, then 200. Today we work with more than 25 soup kitchens all over Ukraine, which prepare and deliver 5,000 kosher meals every other day.”

“Thank you for not leaving us alone in these difficult times,” said Ludmila, deeply touched by another delivery of meals. At age 73, she still works in a hospital in order to afford the medication for her bedridden husband, Boris. “We are so grateful to you, and to God. We couldn’t make it without your help.”

The warehouse of the Baptist Church in Vinnitsa – the packing station for food parcels and an integral part of each working trip – never empties out for more than a few hours these days until the next wholesale delivery arrives.

“We packed more than 10,000 food parcels with our helpers in the last two months, transporting them across thousands of kilometers,” Koen said. This was made possible by the support of many faithful donors.

“Our old people are overwhelmed. They don’t know what to say,” said Rabbi Dan expressing his appreciation. He chairs the Jewish community of Kropyvnytskyi, formerly Kirovograd. “For many recipients, this is more than food. The fact that someone thinks of them gives them a new will to live.”

Valentina, an 82-year old cancer patient in Kiev, is also on the list for a visit by our team member Natalia. “She still cannot say the word ‘Holocaust’ – it still hurts so much. She lost a large part of her family,” Natalia explained. “Since she cannot leave the house, she is also losing precious time for her direly needed chemotherapy.

“Valentina is all alone. We took her under our wings. I bought chicken, eggs, milk, butter, bread, tea and vegetables for her. You should have seen her eyes! When we said good-bye, she said, ‘You didn’t just bring me food. You brought me hope!’”

The image of Passover is ever-present these days, also reminding many of the liberation from the Nazi regime during World War II. 9 May, or Victory Day, is still one of the most important holidays in post-Soviet Ukraine.

It carries a deep personal meaning for many. One of them is Faina, chair of the Bratslav Jewish Community, whose father suffered through unspeakable horrors at the Pechora death camp as a child. “My father always said, ‘This is the highest holiday for me – to think that I survived such terror!’”

Faina transitions to her good wishes without blinking. “I bow before you in deep appreciation for everything you do for us. May God reward you 100-fold. May you be blessed for a thousand generations!”

Emergency help is not limited to Holocaust survivors. “Thousands of Jewish people who want to go to Israel are stuck here, waiting for the strict Corona measures to be lifted,” said Koen. “They have sold everything, sitting on packed suitcases waiting. We help them, too, get through this difficult time.”

*For €5 or US \$5, a nutritious meal will be delivered at the home of an elderly member of the Jewish community in Ukraine. Please support Meals on Wheels by completing the coupon on the back page.*

## Hineni Jerusalem



Benjamin Philip of Hineni recently wrote to us: “Dear friends, because of the coronavirus, we have been very busy distributing thousands of meals and hundreds of Pesach packages. I would like to thank all the friends of Christians for Israel who help us to provide food and assistance to Holocaust survivors, the frail elderly and other people in need. I am also grateful that the mayor of Jerusalem, Moshe Leon, together with his wife, offered to volunteer at Hineni and helped prepare packages at our centre. In this way, a difficult period also becomes a meaningful time. Thank you so much!”



With your help we could help people like Aaron and Maya with our Meals on Wheels



Making Aliyah during Covid-19

Jewish Agency for Israel

On 10 May 2020, 53 olim from Ukraine were able to make Aliyah to Israel. Upon arrival, they entered quarantine for 14 days. We would like to share with you the touching story of the Shternstein family whose late father dreamt of making Aliyah. And now they are fulfilling the dream. Yevgeniy Shterenshtein shares his story:

I had been aware of my Jewish roots for quite a long time. I was raised on the stories of my late Grandfather – Israel. My father Konstantin told me a lot about the life and traditions of the Jewish people and maybe also because of the name of his father, Israel, he always dreamt of one day coming to the land of Israel. In the 1990s, when I was a child, we were planning to make Aliyah to Israel, my father was an active member of the Donetsk synagogue, but unfortunately, he died before we could fulfil his dream.

Only in 2018, my cousin Nikolay decided to make Aliyah. He began the process with applications to various governmental authorities, to regain the documents. It was a very difficult task, because part of the Donetsk region had been occupied by then, and we could not receive any certificates from archives, etc. The Jewish Agency for Israel was a great help and support all the way through. Nikolay and his wife Viktoria finally made it to Israel in July 2019, and for me, it was a sign that nothing is impossible. A road of a thousand miles begins with one step.

In March 2020, another cousin, Alexander Shterenshtein, with his wife Yana and daughter Milena, moved to Israel. They managed to catch the last flight to Tel Aviv before the regular flights were cancelled due to corona restrictions.

My own family also began the process of preparation for Aliyah, in late 2019. The Jewish Agency coordinator in Mariupil’ offered us to participate in the seminar dedicated to Aliyah programs, which was organized by the Jewish Agency in Kharkiv together with Christians for

Israel. Besides tons of information on the life in Israel, we were also introduced to the traditions of Shabbat, and felt the connection with other families who were at different stages of their “road of a thousand miles”.

In January we received an appointment with Israeli consul in Dnipro, who was supposed to decide whether our documental proof of Jewish roots was sufficient. If yes – he would give us a visa. Our trip to Dnipro (about five hours’ drive from Mariupil’) was organised by a Christian charitable organization which helps Jews to make Aliyah. Finally, we received an OK from the consul and the long-awaited visa.

And now, despite the pandemic restrictions, and global lockdown, my family and I are making Aliyah on May 10 – and I can’t call it anything but a miracle. We are thrilled, and excited, and can’t even believe that this is finally happening. My father’s dream has become mine, and I am living it now!

The prophets of the Old Testament tell us that the Jews will return to the land from the four corners of the earth, in preparation for the coming of Messiah. We can see these prophecies being fulfilled before our eyes. You can help us in this exciting fulfilment of Biblical prophecy by completing the coupon below.

Photos: Yevgeniy’s family.
Photos: Jewish Agency for Israel / Svetlana Soroka



YES! I Want to Support Christians for Israel

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- First Home in the Homeland
- First Baptish 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

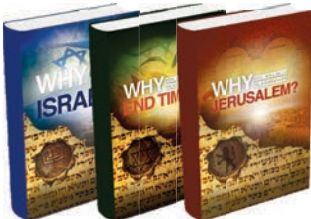
TOTAL DONATION

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 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (One-off Collector’s Magazine)
- Israel: Covenants & Kingdom (Book) by Willem JJ Glashouwer
- Why Israel? (Book) Why Jerusalem? (Book) Why End Times? (Book)
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